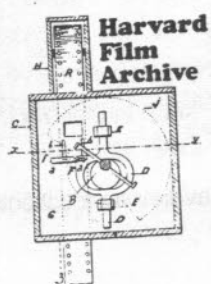
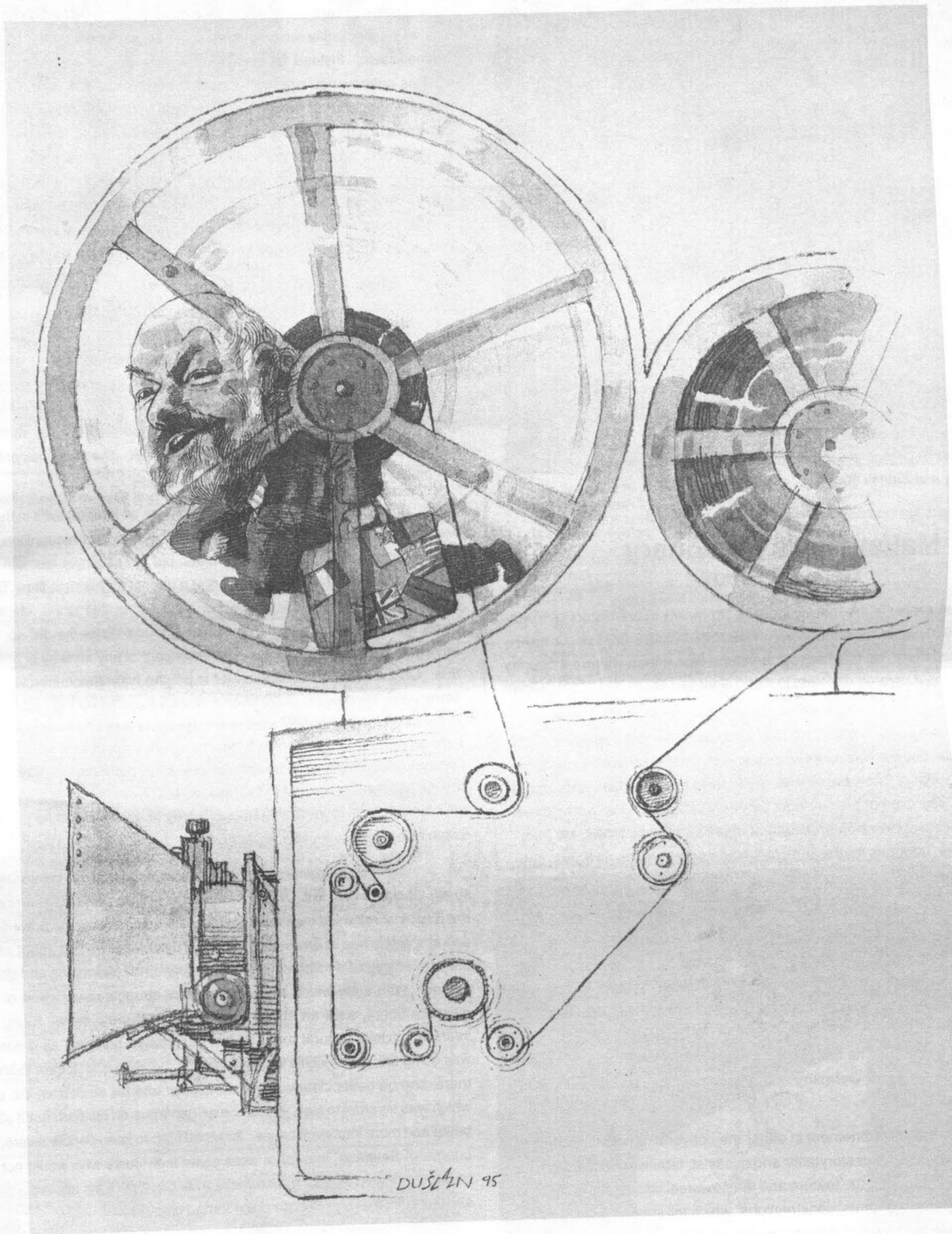
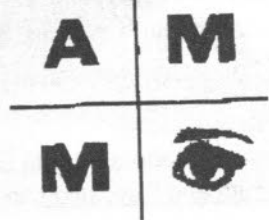


# Makavejev Fictionary

The Films of Dušan Makavejev



Harvard Film Archive  
American Museum of the Moving Image  
Film at the Public



Spring 1995





Dusan Makavejev and Bojana Marijan

## Makavejev's Fictionary

Gerald O'Grady

Dusan Makavejev is the most important filmmaker in the history of Yugoslavia. Since 1971, when his famous *WR: THE MYSTERIES OF THE ORGANISM* was banned there, he has been at the same time a man without a country and one of the most revered directors in world cinema. His life has hardly known normalcy.

Born in Belgrade in 1932, he has witnessed the disintegration of the monarchy, ravaging by the Nazis, resistance and civil wars, liberation and domination by the Russians, Tito's break with Stalin, and now the dismemberment of his homeland. The core of his nomadic career is LIBERATION - from sexual repression, political suppression and cultural oppression in all forms. He interrogates ideologies, debunks myths and challenges sanctions on all fronts, satirizing the hegemonies of both capitalism and Communism.

Dusan Makavejev made four films for the Kino Klub in Belgrade (1953-1958), became an award-winning documentarian with sixteen films between 1958-1964, and in the next six years (1965-1971) made four features which brought him international attention: *MAN IS NOT A BIRD* (1965), *LOVE AFFAIR, OR THE CASE OF THE MISSING SWITCHBOARD OPERATOR* (1967), *INNOCENCE UNPROTECTED* (1968), and *WR: MYSTERIES OF THE ORGANISM* (1971). Since then, he has made six more features in France, Canada, Sweden, Australia, Holland, Germany and, finally back in Yugoslavia, just as his country began to explode.

He has refused confinement in either the conventions of Hollywood or European film narrative. Both storyteller and essayist, fabulist and moralist, he mixes the documentary with the feature and the newsreel with digital animation into multilayered, discontinuous "constructions" which tell several tales at once. He views his "films" as states of consciousness continuous with our lives, and, like them, full of multiple meanings and, much of the time, nonsensical. These films move through our minds like turbulent electro-chemical processes momentarily fused between order and chaos.



I wish to thank the makers, Dusan Makavejev and Bojana Marijan-Makavejev, the curators, Vlada Petric and Bruce Posner of Harvard Film Archives, David Schwartz of the American Museum of the Moving Image, and Fabiano Camosa of Film at the Public, and the W.E.B. Du Bois Institute for Afro-American Research at Harvard University.

Editor: Gerald O'Grady

Design: R Design, Cambridge, MA

## THE CASE OF DUSAN MAKAVEJEV

by Lazar Stojanovic

By just a bit of intervention consisting of several footnotes of a sort, the first Serbian talkie shot in the early 1940's, *Innocence Unprotected*, was turned into a very modern, highly original epiphany of film which perfectly fitted into the late 1960's. It was conceived and boldly executed by Makavejev, assisted by a small group of collaborators who trusted him and the project. There was no script. His assistant and director of production worked like crazy to fill in the details for which Makavejev did not seem to care a lot. It was his third feature, he had a free hand, and everyone was expecting something more commercially oriented, based on a clear and dramatic story. Instead, he opted for the underground. It proved to be a bull's eye shot as nobody, not even the guru of filmmakers at that time, Godard, dared to spend a budget on arranging a ready-made of dubious market value. So this film became a unique piece of independent art for those times, filmed in professional 35 mm format and in full color, while keeping the original black and white. It worked wonderfully with both connoisseurs and with the common audiences, thus fulfilling the dream of every artist, to be acclaimed by experts and be interested in general audiences. *Innocence Unprotected* can be safely labelled as one of the core pieces of the neo-avantgarde movement which marked the late 1960's. Chapeaux!

Spring and summer of 1969 were the pivotal points of the most liberal period in communist Yugoslavia, particularly in Belgrade where Dusan Makavejev used to live and make his films. People who cared for cultural, political, emotional and corporeal liberation, for freedom of expression and the emancipation of the individual never had it so good there. Never before and never since. There was always quite a bit of struggle and risk, but risk used to win over the odds. Consequently, Makavejev's local career had developed favorably up to that point, and started sliding downhill only with his next film, *WR: The Mysteries of the Organism*, completed in 1971.

Growing repression at home made him an internal exile in the culture. His international career grew faster than before. All sorts of recognition, awards, and honorary positions started to accumulate, but the essential element was missing. He always had trouble when he needed a budget for his next film. The constantly repeating artistic successes were not enough. In this world, divided into small protected cinemas, sometimes resembling feudal times, he did not really belong anywhere and his budgets were not the concern of any ministry or national foundation. On the other hand, Makavejev is not the type of commercial artist in which some profit-oriented producer sees a chance to generate big profits. The glimpse of the fall of the communist regime in Yugoslavia was so short that many doubt if it ever happened. Today, Dusan is absolutely not a member of any nationalist group there and this seems to be an unforgivable sin at the moment. Even if the Serbian cinema happens to recover in the next several years, which is quite unlikely, there will hardly be any room for Makavejev's way of thinking. Looks pretty desperate, doesn't it?

Well this is where the most valuable aspect of his personality begins to show. Check his last film, *The Gorilla Bathes at Noon*, and his self-portrait, *Hole in the Soul*, just released by the BBC. They are so optimistic, so powerful, full of life, and absolutely free of any sort of hatred. These films are just about as cheerful as they are analytical in relation to the post-communist characters and situations concerned. With a life which is one permanent struggle never short of reasons for disappointment, such an attitude is admirable. Furthermore, during all of these years of obvious cultural exile, Dusan has always behaved as if nothing special was going on. He regularly visited Belgrade, he always took care to show his films there, and he never clearly detached himself and his work from the environment which was so cruel to him. It surely was generous on his part, but it also served a better and more important cause. It helped both to keep people aware, both in and outside of Belgrade, that there were some individuals who would not reject their background even when it turned really evil. Such persons are living proof that not all of us from that unfortunate place turned crazy.

I know that Makavejev has a head full of films, pressing to get on screen. Taking into account his energy and his proven demonstration, I am sure that he will manage to contribute new films regularly as he always has, even in spite of all kinds of obstacles. I am happy about that, not only because I think that he is a great artist, but also because his films have a great potential to encourage anybody who cares for individual freedom, for human rights, for developing personal awareness.

History has many examples of artists who had to undergo some ordeal which proved beneficial to their art. So far, Makavejev has been a clear case of this kind, and he has every good reason to steadily keep to that track.

New York, February, 1995

Lazar Stojanovic collaborated with Dusan Makavejev on a collection of essays and articles, *Film and Revolution*, in 1971.



## Yugoslav Acts to Indict a Key Film Maker for Derision

By RAYMOND H. ANDERSON

Special to The New York Times

BELGRADE, Yugoslavia, Feb. 3 — Yielding to demands by World War II Partisan veterans indignant over allegedly having been called Stalinists, the Belgrade prosecutor has moved to indict a leading film director on a criminal charge of derision "of the state, its agencies and representatives."

The director, Dusan Makavejev, made the remark about Stalinism, the veterans charge, during an interview with a West German newspaper about the banning of his controversial film combining explicit sex and politics.

The film, finished two years ago, is titled "Wilhelm Reich: Mysteries of the Organism." Although it won acclaim from critics at the Cannes festival in 1971, the film has been shown only to a few selected audiences in Yugoslavia.

It was reported this week that the veterans association in the autonomous province of Vojvodina had asked the Belgrade prosecutor to open criminal proceedings against Mr. Makavejev.



Dusan Makavejev

The veterans protested that Mr. Makavejev had told the German interviewers that his film had been banned in Yugoslavia because of the opposition of the Veterans League, which he reportedly said was "most eager to return to the Stalinist period."

The prosecutor replied to the veterans that he lacked competence to take action and where the film was produced,

that they should file a private complaint.

The veterans declined to act as a private group, insisting that Mr. Makavejev was guilty of "hostile acts" against the state and the veterans, led by President Tito, "who by their struggle, blood and life, created Socialist Yugoslavia."

The prosecutor's office, in a statement, indicated that it had changed its mind. It reported that a proposal had been made to the Belgrade district court that the 40-year-old film director be indicted "for having committed a criminal act punishable under Article 174 of the criminal code."

The article says: "Whoever brings into derision the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, a Socialist Republic, their flag, coat of arms, their highest agencies of authority or representatives thereof, the armed forces or the supreme command, shall be punished by imprisonment for not less than three months."

To add to Mr. Makavejev's problems, workers at the Neofanta studio in Novi Sad, the veterans that he lacked competence to take action and where the film was produced,

decided this week that "Wilhelm Reich: Mysteries of the Organism" was "ideologically harmful" and should be banned permanently from sale abroad as well as showing in Yugoslavia. The sexual teachings of Dr. Reich, the Austrian-born psychiatrist, provided Mr. Makavejev with his theme.

The film tells a love story of a Yugoslav girl and a Russian, with scenes of sexual intercourse, and presents a political message related through the use of newsreel clippings and scenes from old films.

In remarks to an interviewer at the Cannes festival, Mr. Makavejev was said to have remarked in reference to pornography and politics: "I find Stalin a terribly pornographic figure. Any man responsible for killing all his friends and associates, for putting millions into concentration camps, and then saying, 'Now we are happy,' is obviously indulging in a kind of pornography."

One scene in the film shows an American having his phallus cast in plaster. As the mold is opened, a character depicting Stalin proclaims: "The first step to Communism has been achieved."

## At Least 6 Killed in Night of Violence in Belfast

REMEMBER THE NEEDIEST!

NEW YORKER FILMS 43 West 61st Street • New York, NY 10023 • Tel. (212) Circle 7-6110

Mr. Richard Burton  
Chalet Ariel 3780  
Gstaad, Switzerland

February 6, 1973

Dear Mr. Burton:

Your address was given to me by John Springer. I am the owner of the New Yorker Theater in Manhattan as well as a film distributor. I am writing to you in order to make an urgent plea for help with regard to the forthcoming trial of Dusan Makavejev. I'm enclosing an article about this matter which appeared in the Sunday Times a few days ago.

The reason I am appealing to you is that I have read about your film on Tito, and I am told that you are very friendly with President Tito.

This is a serious matter, one that involves not only artistic freedom of expression but also the kind of cultural repression that can only cause more moral blight in the world as well as being tremendously dangerous for all our artists.

I know Dusan Makavejev very well. He is a great film artist. His works have been applauded at film festivals the world over. He is surely among the most exciting film directors of the last 10 years.

He feels very strongly about his film, *Wilhelm Reich: Mysteries of the Organism*, and about the repressive manner with which it has been dealt in his own country. There is no doubt that unless something is done on his behalf, he will go to jail.

I spoke to him today. He will remain in Belgrade. He has no intention of fleeing his country. Furthermore, he is not a coward. The chances are almost certain that he will be put in jail. This would be intolerably tragic.

He assures me that he wants no harm to come to his country and he feels that his film represents the most progressive cultural interest of Yugoslavia.

I have enlisted the help of Bernardo Bertolucci and Roberto Rossellini, as well as many French intellectuals, all of whom will be speaking to Yugoslavian ambassadors in the West.

May I prevail upon you to personally speak to President Tito about this matter? If anything tragic should happen to Makavejev, we will be the losers in as much as he represents everything that is innovating and artistic in modern filmmaking. He has made so far four feature films:

*Man Is Not a Bird*  
*Love Affair* (or *The Case of the Missing Switchboard Operator*)  
*Innocence Unprotected*  
*WR: Mysteries of the Organism*

He has been a powerful force in his own country in helping other Yugoslavian filmmakers. Through Makavejev I myself have given the Yugoslavian government a number of films to distribute in the Eastern Block.

I could go on forever about Makavejev. Suffice it to say that he needs help urgently, and I appeal to your good conscience to do whatever you can for him. Many thanks.

Cordially,

Daniel Talbot

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CENTER FOR FILM MAKING STUDIES OF CALIFORNIA EXT 2223 FULTON  
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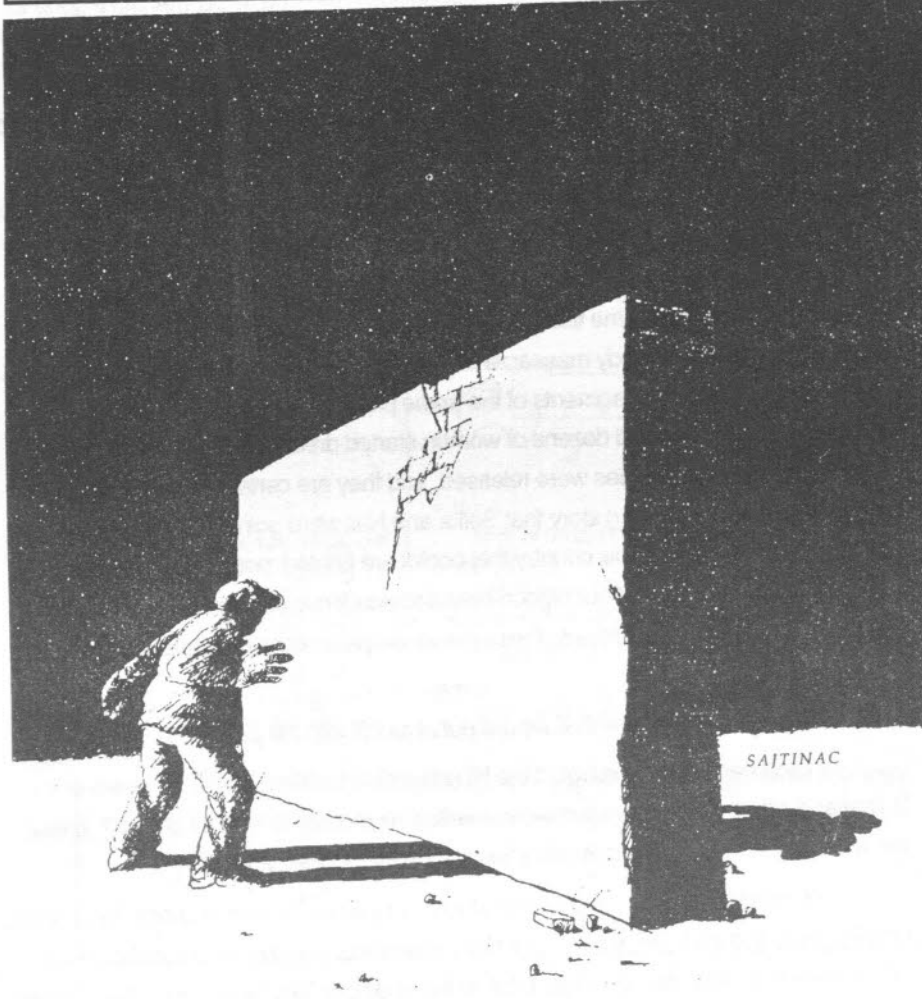
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WASHINGTON DC 20013

AS ASSOCIATES OF DUSAN MAKAVEJEV IN THE AMERICAN FILM COMMUNITY  
WE ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THE EVENTS REPORTED IN THE NEW YORK TIMES  
OF FEBRUARY 4TH STOP WE TRUST THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF YUGOSLAVIA  
WILL CONTINUE TO ACCORD MAKAVEJEV THE FREEDOM TO PRACTICE HIS  
ART AS HIS CONSCIENCE DEMANDS

SAN FRANCISCO-SCOTT BARTLETT, MARK BERGER, JAMES BROUGHTON,  
GARY BURSTEIN, ERNEST CALLENBACH, FRANCIS FORD COPPOLA, NORMAN  
K DORN, STANLEY EICHELBAUM, ROBERT GREENSFELDER, CLAUDE JARMAN,  
LARRY JORDAN, EDITH KRAMER, PAYNE KINCKERBOCKER, LENNY LIPTON,  
TOM LUDDY, CAMERON MACAULEY, JAMES ROY MACBEAN, ROBIN MENCKEN,  
JEAN MILLER, GUNVOR NELSON, SHELDON RENAN, ROBERT SITTON, CLYDE  
B SMITH, BEN VAN METER, JOHN WASSERMAN, BERNARD WEINER, PRESACOTT  
WRIGHT, NEW YORK-BERNARDO BERTOLUCCI, JUDITH CRIST, PAULINE  
KAEL, ARTHUR RUBINE, WILLIAM WOLF, LOS ANGELES-HAL ASHBY, JACOB A  
ATLAS, STEVE BLAUNER, PETER BAGDANOVICH, JANE FONDA, RICHARD  
KAHLENBERG, ARTHUR KNIGHT, GARY KURTZ, BILL NORTON, JOHN PRIZER,  
BOB RAFELSON, BERT SCHNEIDER, BEVERLY WALKER, HASKEL WEXLER



Tito and Richard Burton



SAJTINAC



## An Interview with Dusan Makavejev by Lorenzo Codelli

*During the last year or so, your film WR: The Mysteries of the Organism competed under the Yugoslav flag at 12 world festivals. Do you now feel like a champion player who is sitting it out behind the touchlines?*

When you play a dirty game, you must take time out once in a while.

*What is the lowdown on your new project?*

The name - *A Sweet Movie*, genre - erotic comedy with a slight off-flavor of anti-psychiatry; starring in principal roles - Milena Dravic; the idea, scenario, screenplay, editing, direction, additional dialogues - Dusan Makavejev; producer - Dunav Film, headed by director Vicko Raspor; executive production - a dynamic group within Dunav Film, led by Aca Stojanovic and Dejan Djurkovic; assistant director Bojana Marijan-Makavejev; shooting to be done mostly in Yugoslavia and a little elsewhere, too, it all depends; the advertising slogan - Try Me, I'm Delicious!; filming to begin at the end of September 1972; the first sound print - middle of 1973; the world premiere - May 1973, Cannes.

*Please explain the "erotic comedy". Aren't all your films erotic, and aren't you already tired of comedy?*

Do you remember that beautiful old Ukrainian man in Dovzhenko's *The Earth*, lying on a magnificent bed of apples? He eats an apple and dies. I suppose Eros is something juicy, something to do with life.

I have an impression that comedy happens somehow by itself, it comes unbid. Even now, look what I have inadvertently stepped into. I happened to mention the Ukrainian old man, and there I notch one up for Veljko Bulajic who at the time of the mass movement used to spread the "reliable" report about me to the effect that I was a Ukrainian Jew (supposed to be known for their anti-communism.) So that's just my luck; I go for apples and I come up with a rotten one...Do you remember Charlie Chaplin happily rolling blindfolded on his roller skates along the edge of a precipice?

*This looks more like psychiatry than comedy.*

That's what I mean by "with a slight off-flavor.." The English psychiatrist, Ron Laing, says that our civilization represses not only our instincts and sexuality but also "every possible form of transcendence". Men with an experience of other dimensions, says Laing, constantly risk being destroyed or are forced to deny themselves. Here he does not only mean lunatics but also poets, inventors, visionaries of all types. Let's not think that it only happens somewhere else, where a union of writers passes a pistol to Mayakovski. We, too, have planted that tree for Branko Miljkovic in Zagreb.

"In the context of the present day madness, which imbues everything and which we describe as normality, health, freedom, whatever we call on becomes ambiguous and uncertain." - Ronald Laing.

It is easy for us to say that people in London must think that way, because look at all the things they do to the Irish in the name of their Queen and democracy.

However, I don't want to jump to any conclusions. Miljkovic, so sensitive to a "Very strong word", instead of having the dialogue with the tree could well have gone to have a glass of beer; Mayakovski could well have become a children's writer, or a writer of encyclopedic historical novels like so many others. I am on the side of life, which, as we know, in each case lasts until the dying day. I love to see people waxing enthusiastic and nostalgic about *Bonnie and Clyde* while at the same time calling for the death penalty against similar young and savage outlaws operating among ourselves.

The latest hit in Atelje 212 is *The Wounded Eagle*, in which young Petrovic, Ckalja's son, plays the love-smitten air force officer, and everyone is rolling in the aisles with laughter while at the same time my practically closest neighbor air force officer Desimir Kojic, makes a bloody massacre of his wife, child and mother-in-law... How to piece together the broken fragments of the same picture? When crowds pushed in fascination to see Sefka and dozens of women started dreaming about marrying Nail strange and irrational energies were released, and they are certainly worth looking into. Remember also the amazing story that Sefka and Nail were going to get married! It is about things of this kind in this country that books are printed, poems are written and records mass produced, but our pigeon-breasted academic culture hardly notices this creativeness, these public prayers, these grandiose projections of human needs and dreams!

*Do you mean to say that we are out of touch with the people?*

Look here, have you heard the hit song (now banned) about the death of the Bulgarian football players, or another best selling hit record, "Boy, Am I stupid"? (I met the writer of this song at Mirko Klarin's wedding in the Yugoslavia Hotel.)

In most of our films we have no stupid, no jealous, no hungry nor indeed happy people. People don't try very hard, don't kill themselves, they just sit around tables and talk. It does not pay to be concrete. Look at the ending of Vuk Babic's film *The Burden*. Its conclusion is - it is better not to buy a motorbike.

*Whom will you be attacking in A Sweet Movie?*

*Sweet Movie* will expect the audiences to exercise and sharpen certain senses which are rather seldom used. In this respect it usefully promotes the program of all-national defense, because it makes people prepared.

*Why is your project likened to sweet and sour pork?*

Because the combination of apparently disparate elements is a culinary art which we intend to follow respectfully in our film.

*Walking on a tightrope as a hobby?*

For many people, to do anything odd is to leap into the void. I hope to make a film that will be a manual for leaping into abysses, spaces beyond our familiar ken. Why should we only experience strange things in our dreams? *A Sweet Movie* will not be afraid of looking like a dream and will permit itself many oddities. It hopes to fling you from horror into joy and then again, quite unexpectedly to jerk tears out of you.

*What do you mean by starring Milena "in leading roles"?*

*Sweet Movie* will use the models of *The Three Faces of Eve* and *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, developing them in the direction of all life pleasures.

*So you will be making fun of the classics?*

When Eve White and Eve Black, to use the actual instance, begin with terrible headaches to fuse into a new personality named Jane, this reintegration and this civic peace are truly pathetic, producing a cute, Peyton Place Frankenstein. Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (do you remember the superb Frederick March growing hirsute before our very eyes, his teeth protruding out of his lecherously drooling mouth?) have more healthy evil and life in them, but the poor beggars lack humor. Bourgeois literature's eros about the emergence of a new man is all too tenebrous, chilly, scared. Everything is tense, feverish, doomed in a Faustian manner; the scenarist's main preoccupation is how to produce real thunder and to conceal a false moustache. In other words a transfusion of humor into the diseased arteries of classicism.

*It looks as if the film will be non-political?*

As non-political as a glass of milk, as an orange, as summer shit studded with cherry pips. All these are political events.

Whether they are of a special social significance is quite another question.

*Does this mean that Milena plays a schizophrenic?*

Milena's role in this film is exceptionally difficult and satisfying. There would be no charm at all if we were to pin a label to her behavior, and diagnose it as schizophrenic, paranoid, manic-obsessive or some other behavior. The diagnosis of the character played by Milena is - absolute normality. Milena's job is to create three possible personages which unexpectedly, but not without an internal logic, melt into one another, then into a third, then back again into the first, always at random and always highly convincingly, horrifyingly or amusingly, depending on what conditions we are dealing with.

We shall make use of all the possible clinical knowledge and experience, but always with the basic idea that the pathological picture in question is that of normalcy.

*Does this mean that the pathology or normality is to be condemned in your film?*

On the contrary, it will be forgiven, for it knows not what it does.

*How are Milena's characters named?*

Ruby Goldigger, a high-society lady, or more accurately, a high-class harlot, who lives a life of luxury as a confidence trickster and smuggler. She is often seen at Zmaiko's bar and around the railway station. Whenever she gets into trouble with the law, her mysterious protector, Sweet Dickie Mytipric takes her in his Citroen-Maserati to Jasmin House of Beauty, where she gets a perfumed bubble bath and changes her cosmetic and spiritual looks. Anesthesia Blank-Blank, an anonymous non-person, lost in the corridors of the Laza Lazarevi mental hospital, receives all the treatments where her contact with the outside world is interrupted until her encounter with her healer, Dr. Marcus Herbert, the creative antipsychiatrist, who with his special method provokes an explosion of health.

*What is her real name?*

It hasn't been decided yet.

*What is so enjoyable about A Sweet Movie?*

It is music to the tongue and a juicy treat to the eyes.

*How do you see the future of the Pula Film Festival?*

I have been informed that secret talks are under way among sane forces for the final liquidation of Yugoslav film. Instead of an unnecessary Yugoslav film review, next year's Pula will present an edifying retrospective of two stars: Liubov Orlova and Shirley Temple.

I am looking forward to seeing this program.

Reprinted from *Monogram* (October, 1975), from 1973 interview





## The Message to the Japanese Viewers

Long time ago, I learned about an usual murder case.

A woman was murdered by her husband's younger brother.

The man who committed and confessed the crime was an intelligent and attractive man, very close to his brother and his family. He was not able to explain his motive.

Peculiarity of the case was in the fact that the accused was a blind man, as well as all witnesses in the court who were living with the accused in the blind students' dormitories, and who were, together with him, frequent guests in the home in which the murder took place.

They all “witnessed” the development of an affair between their friend and his brother’s wife. It was happening, they all “knew.” They explained how the woman seduced their friend, they talked about his passion, guilt and fear. They perceived how the woman was teasing him with hints that they were “seen” or “almost caught,” inflaming thus his paranoia.

The judge was irritated and furious, asking constantly one blind man after another: "Tell me what did you see?" He could not allow them to claim the knowledge of the things unseen.

In the darkness of the screening room we stay blind for everything but what is on the screen. I would dare to say that in films, what we see does not count, however paradoxical it may sound. Film experience addresses a "blind man's sense" in a viewer.

In films we “see” the crime behind the beauty, and beauty behind the horror. We see and perceive, watching films, the lie of the obvious, fragility of power and strength, and wisdom of casual, illogical and accidental.

Old story is that films are “only shadows” and nothing more than 24 pictures per second. The lie of this truth is in the fact that 24 pictures per second we sit in the total darkness (while the pictures are replacing one another) - (half of the time actually spent in the cinema) and in this total darkness the action of the film takes place! “Only shadows,” once created, become indestructible and powerful, because they both represent and demonstrate the force of life. The force of life, as every butterfly can confirm, is in it’s absolute fragility, it could not be neither caught nor harnessed. It is useless as life itself. If you asked me, as irritated judge, “Did you see it? How do you know?” I can only say: “I could not see it, I only know.”

Thank you for attending Dusan Makavejev Retrospective Film collection presented by Mr. Nakagawa and his dedicated and skillful team from Comstock Company.

These are only shadows emanated from twenty five years of my past life.



Dusan Makavejev

MAKAVEJEV FILM COLLECTION vol.2

# DUSAN MAKAVEJEV

**ゴリラは真昼、入浴中。**

マカヴェイエフフィルム・コレクション  
vol.2  
**GORILLA BATHE AT NOON**

ゴリラは真昼、入浴中。 マニャスト コカコラキッド モンテネグロ

Great Moments at Noon  
★ 93・12・17 全12話

Maniast  
★ 93・12・17 全12話

The Coca-Cola Kid  
★ 93・12・17 全12話

Montenegro on Paper and Plastic  
★ 93・12・17 全12話

スウ・ムビ  
★ 94・1・7 全12話

WR: オルガニズム・神秘

保護の純潔

Bravissimo Magnifico  
★ 94・1・7 全12話

愛・調査、又・電話交換手失踪事件

人間は鳥ではない

Love Affair or the Case of the Missing Switchboard Operator  
★ 94・1・7 全12話

Man is Not a Bird  
★ 94・1・7 全12話

**94・12・24(土) ▶ 95・2・24(土)**

**上映スケジュール・SCHEDULE**

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7:00	ゴリラは真昼、入浴中	ゴリラは真昼、入浴中	ゴリラは真昼、入浴中	スウ・ムビ	コカコラキッド	モンテネグロ	WR: オルガニズム・神秘	WR: オルガニズム・神秘	WR: オルガニズム・神秘	WR: オルガニズム・神秘	WR: オルガニズム・神秘	WR: オルガニズム・神秘	WR: オルガニズム・神秘

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クリスマス・ロードショー!!**

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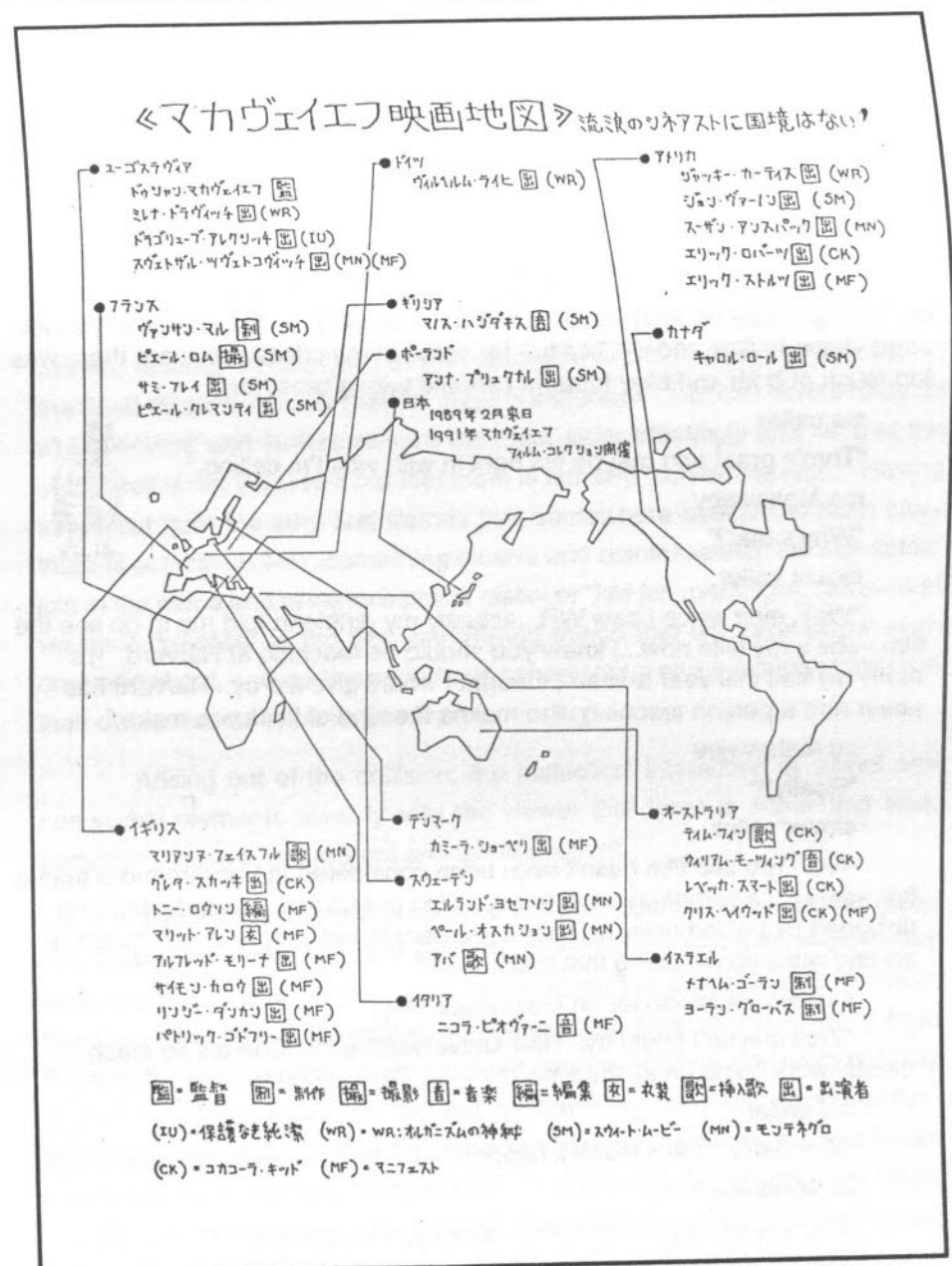
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## DEAR COMRADE - 1969

TELEPHONE 415 / 848-8650  
2533 TELEGRAPH AVENUE  
BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA 94704

TELEGRAPH  
REPERTORY CINEMA

Aug. 18

Dear Comrade:

I remember that when you were here you were studying Reich, so I thought maybe you would be interested in knowing that a "bootleg" edition of Reich's ~~a~~ long-out-of-print 1946 Edition of "mass psychology of fascism" is now being sold in Berkeley, in paperback.

I'm reading it now, and what a great and important work!!

Best

/ Tom Luddy

## ARTIST IN RESIDENCE - 1978

ms of a short but powerfully built man speaking gruffly into a telephone in the foyer of the Belgrade Central Psychiatric Hospital. He gesticulates rather grandly while talking...

"Yes, yes this is Makavejev. What do you want?"

mcu of caller

"I'm not sure why I'm connected with a Hospital. I wanted to speak to Dusan Makavejev the filmmaker. The one who made *W.R.: They Mysteries of the Organism*."

mcu of Makavejev

"That's me. I also made *Man Is Not a Bird*. Have you seen that?"

ms caller in light filled office with a LeCorbusier tapestry in bg

"As a matter of fact I have and I think it is really fabulous. What by the way are you working on at the moment?"

ms Makavejev he is looking up and down the corridors leading away from the foyer

"As a matter of fact I'm not working at the moment. I'm resting you might say. I would tell you more but I think they may be listening on this line."

ecu caller

"They?"

cu Makavejev

"Yes, the people who are giving me this rest so to speak. If you remember *WR*, you can understand better what I'm saying. In that it all pretty much came down to Sex and Politics but for some of my critics over here there was too much of both and they thought I should take a breather."

ms caller

"That's great and maybe fits right in with why I'm calling."

ms Makavejev

"Why's that?"

closer caller

"Well, ever since I saw *WR*...actually my girlfriend told me to go see the film - she's my wife now...I knew you should be teaching at Harvard. It's really my call this year and so I thought I would give it a try. Harvard has never had a person teaching who makes the kind of films you make."

cu Makavejev

"Really?"

closer caller

"No. You see film hasn't even been considered at Harvard more than a few years. It's sort of an experiment. They put up this wonderful building designed by LeCorbusier and got a few people together and said "practice art and while you're doing that teach it too"

camera tracks closer on Makavejev

"Well maybe I could try. I like Universities a lot. There's so much mental work going on all the time."

ms caller

"Wonderful. Let's make it happen."

cu Makavejev

"OK why don't you just tell me when you want me to..."

Another less pleasant voice speaking very broken English

mcu hand hanging up telephone

"Mr. Makavejev can't speak longer...sorry..." (click)

Robert Gardner 1995

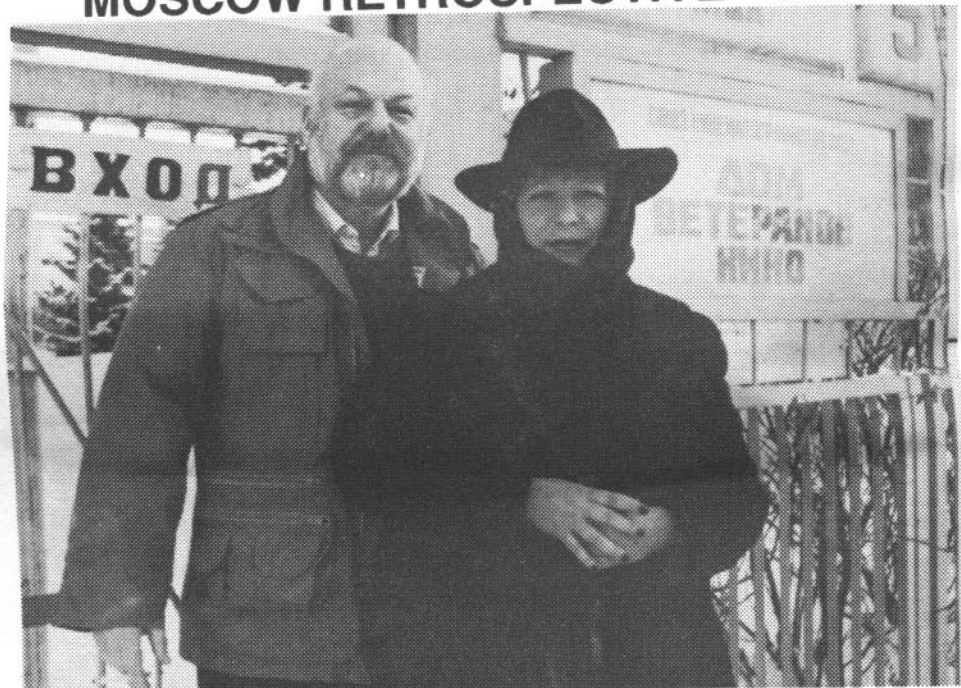


## LONDON - 1972



Bojana Marijan, Dusan Makavejev, Milena Dravic at the opening of *WR: Mysteries of the Organism* at the Academy Cinema

## MOSCOW RETROSPECTIVE - 1989



Dusan Makavejev and Bojana Marijan

## IN DEFENSE OF HAVEL- 1989

Sometimes it seems governments exaggerate enormously the danger created by art and artists.

Recently government of Czechoslovakia arrested its greatest living playwright Vaclav Havel to stop him from putting flowers on the place in which Jan Pallach ended his life.

For his graduation film *Plastic Jesus*, Lazar Stojanovic, student of Belgrade Film Academy got the best grades from his professors and three years in jail. He served them fully. It happened in 1972. Film itself was never publicly shown, before or since. I still feel the shame for not being able to do anything about it.

Rushdie's case I even do not know how to judge. I still remember vividly, respectful crew of Antenne 2 taking off their shoes while visiting Mr. Homeini in his shelter in the Paris suburbia. I remember old man's wise talk and his beautiful dark eyes.

So rarely films do more than nothing for concrete people that Errol Morris' *Thin Blue Line* looks to me like miracle. Errol's admirable persistence and courage turned a fragile film into a key that unlocked the cell in which an innocent man was expecting certain death. *Thin Blue Line* is very exceptional case. Most of the time infusion of too much sense and morals into our shadows that dance 24 frames per second, does more harm than good. And when some of our colleagues supposedly succeed, how does it change the world?

Maybe at this very moment, Vaclav Havel, with his fellow-prisoners, in some re-education program, watches S.M. Eisenstein's *The Cruiser Potemkin*, or some Joris Ivens' optimistic documentary.

Dusan Makavejev

Cannes 1989, Written for the protest gathering, 'Cinéma-Liberté', Cannes 1989



# HIGH DECIBEL DIALOGUE OF THE ELECTRONIC FAIRGROUND: MEDIATING COMMUNICATION BY TALKING ABOUT IT

By Donald Theall

McLuhan's *The Mechanical Bride* (and a less well known work, *The Astonished Muse*, by a colleague of David Riesman, Reuel Denney) first concentrated on how a dialogue between the arts and popular culture, and the treatment of popular culture as if it were art, would utilize this communication about communication as a critical strategy. Both McLuhan and Denney focused on advertising, the comics, the popular press, Hollywood, radio and the beginnings of television. Ragtime, cubism and symbolism illuminated the format and layout of the daily press; Dali, surrealism, and Disney confronted the movie mags; Li'l Abner, William Faulkner and *Finnegans Wake* provided a complex illustrating Al Capp's artistic success; D.H. Lawrence, Budd Schulberg, Edmund Wilson and Charlie Chaplin demystify the myth of the mechanical bride. With *Pogo* in the 1960's, comics reached a stage where they became a mode for questioning the intellectual establishment (e.g., Kelly's strips on the 'new criticism'). *Pogo* became a critique of political communication in the broadest sense (the politics of culture as well as government), to be followed by the more intensely satiric *Doonesbury* and *Boone County*.

In 1967 John Berger's BBC TV series, *Ways of Seeing*, made a considerable impact. In that series as well as the resulting book, Berger quite consciously extends McLuhan's strategy to a more direct critique through the juxtaposition of semiotic elements, art works, advertising and publicity images, cultural objects and commercial objects (categories which naturally overlap). Here communication's ideological dialogue is revealed; yet by implication that ideological dialogue is also revealed to be a necessary aspect of the evolution of communication. When Duchamp tampered with the image of the Mona Lisa, just as much as when he displayed a urinal as his Fountain, he opened the way for a more reflexively conscious awareness of the continuity between artistic activity and everyday culture. The semiotic, ideological and critical approaches to advertising - still more important, the very fact of taking advertising itself as a cultural object seriously - owes a substantial debt to the cultural dialogue generated by the arts.



The films of Makavejev and Fellini provide examples of cinema that contribute talk about and means for talking about communicative actions such as the ads that we have just examined. The poetic process in their works begins a critique that leads to a destruction of the facile and superficial manipulation of meaning such as that which occurs in the Oedipal Pepsi or the pancultural Bell ads. In Makavejev's deeply subversive film, *Sweet Movie* (1974) the fetishization of women's bodies is neatly presented as an example of the 'sweetness' of advertising rhetoric - one of many manipulative uses of rhetorical sweetness that this film examines in detail. But critiques of the ad world are by no means limited to such individual intensive treatments as *Sweet Movie*, for one can readily recall other examples, such as the scene from Fellini's 'The Temptation of Dr. Antonio' in *Bocaccio 70*, where Anita Ekberg voluptuously emerges out of her own image on a billboard advertising milk. Fellini's billboard or Makavejev's play with milk and sugar in *Sweet Movie* help make sense of ads, such as the Pepsi-Cola ad above, in a manner quite different from the way that the creator of the ad intended. The films magnify one's feeling that the images and actions in these ads are quite familiar having been borrowed after being used many times before. Conventions become dead conventions. Whatever play may be present is the play of repetition rather than the playfulness of discovery.

Makavejev, owing to the controversial nature of *Sweet Movie* and *W.R.: Mysteries of the Organism*, is not as well known as his abilities as a film maker would justify. Since he uses a Rabelaisian like comic and satiric perspective in his work and since he links some of his work directly to communication and popular culture, he is of central importance in understanding relationships between art and communication. The most genuinely penetrating examples of the ecological function of the poetic frequently invite the most stringent censorship, direct or indirect. Joyce's *Ulysses* is the classical literary example. The reason Makavejev's work, which is quite central to the contemporary ecological functioning of the arts, is not better known is that *Sweet Movie* met with direct and indirect censorship, from both Marxist and capitalist societies and

even from his star actress, Carol Laure and his colleague director Gilles Carle. The shocking transgressions of this film are too stark and striking in the way they reveal the paradoxical and ambiguous sources of the sweetness of propaganda and PR. The Rabelaisian and Aristophanic carnivalesque unfolding of the social unconscious can be deeply disturbing and frightening.

Makavejev's award film that immediately preceded *Sweet Movie*, *W.R.: Mysteries of the Organism*, won the unanimous approval from the jury for the World Council of Churches award for the best film of 1971. *W.R.* is a cinematic essay on the life and teachings of Wilhelm Reich, which like *Sweet Movie*, is simultaneously a study of communication, of film theory and of the nature of film practice. He weaves documentary material, historical film footage, ingredients of television advertising, Hollywood film, Eisensteinian montage, underground, porn, and pure poetry into a complex mosaic of sounds, actions and filmic ideas. Blending documentary reality and fictional narrative and dealing directly (often shockingly) with erotic material, he develops a multisensory and multi-sense (i.e., polysemous) mode of exposition that is not only essential to the making of his film, but which is affiliated with many of the strategies implicit in the dialectically conceived film essays of Godard.

Makavejev, who in the 1960s consciously challenged anyone who would dissociate art film from being a discourse about what matters in the world around us, noted that: '...concerning the political film by Eisenstein and Godard - I was conscious of it. But I wanted to do it with soul. To do it with feeling, to do it with humor, and to do it so you can feel that you can touch it. Not to have it as just images.'<sup>1</sup> Makavejev's own image of his productions as a network of connections is very close to the etymological sense of text as a web. His filmic texts, the product of his essay technique, like Brechtian theater, insist on an intellectual response from his producer-consumers through the use of cognitive estrangement within a context that simultaneously engages the audience as sensual and emotional beings.

*Sweet Movie* expands *W.R.*'s interest in the psychosexual and the erotic to link the ecology of sense and human sensuality to a concept of social therapy, for as Makavejev tells us, *Sweet Movie*: 'will be a pulsating film essay on HUMAN SENSUALITY... a research laboratory of micro-relationships, compels them to carefully look at, smell, touch, lick, taste, listen, carry and support each other. The idea of SENSUALITY commits the attitude of the actors toward speech as a SENSUAL ELEMENT: men feed one another with their speech; by aggressive speech a forced listener is 'sucked' by the speaker.'<sup>2</sup> *Sweet Movie*'s ecological and therapeutic aspects are involved with the manner in which the film pursues the understanding of 'sweetness.' This is achieved by Makavejev's conscious development of the semiotic multiplexity in this open text.

Commenting further on *Sweet Movie* he speaks in considerable detail about 'Film Structure,':

'In an open, non-authoritarian structure of film basic material is made up of non-verbal elements, ingredients and contents. The verbal elements, definitions, clichés, are that part of the material which helps the construction of the basic illusion, namely that the story is important. The non-verbal material which hovers and flutters around the main story titillatingly tells us that the story itself is not important but that there is actually "something else." Having found out from the very first frames that somewhere beside the main story there is something else, something elusive and quintessential, the spectators join in the game and at various points discover "hidden messages," those that we have "planted" in the film, uncovering things that we have never even dreamed about, and adding on various connotations and meanings based on their own personal experiences.'<sup>3</sup>

Arising out of the collision, the dialectical interaction of verbal and non-verbal elements actually tells the viewer that there is something else, something elusive, ambivalent and quintessential.

This film technique has been called dialectical montage, a description with which Makavejev concurs; for while criticizing the Russian revolutionary films, he argues that: 'They never thought about the montage and distance. Because when you pull together something from here and something from there in the same manner, then you have people recalling; you have not only a kind of one plus one equals two, but you have also two plus two equals five. If you take very distant things that have something in common, so people can be shocked at it and say, "Impossible!"...'<sup>4</sup> Makavejev's dialectical montage triggers a network of connections; connections in the verbal text, in the music, in the images, in the cutting. In doing this he believes that he is making a new kind of comic dialectic film that uses many of the major strategies of Eisenstein and Godard. Polysemic multiplexity rather than simple juxtaposition is the



textual principle of Makavejev's films; for there is a complex relationship between dialectical films, fiction, musical form and the essay, as Godard suggested when speaking of *Deux-ou-trois choses que je sais d'elle*: 'Actually, when I come to think about it, a film like this is a little as if I wanted to write a sociological essay in the form of a novel, and in order to do this had only musical notes at my disposition.'<sup>5</sup> Sound, image, verbal design and motion pervaded by a comic sense of incongruity interact to produce Makavejev's complex film.

Dream is also a central influence on his filmmaking, for one of his primary effects is to create shapes that are overlapping which bring his audience 'close to this feeling, these hypnagogic images that you have when you dream and wake up.' This technique involves major connections between the beginning, middle and end 'like a network of ideas,' using 'shifting gestalts' so that in different viewings the audience may see different connections. He is clearly aware of the relation of these double images of dreaming and waking with the work of Surrealists such as Breton, Magritte and Dali who shared an interest in the psychological effect of dreaming and hypnagogic imagery. The creation of such 'borderline experience by means of this double image is actually your the emotional content put into some shape that is really something else.'<sup>6</sup>

In *Sweet Movie* (1974), Dusan Makavejev probes the complex interplay of the sweetness of rhetoric, the erotic seductiveness of sweetness in sugar and candy, the sweetness of sex and polymorphous perversity and the implicit threat in the manipulation of sweetness that can sometimes result in death. The film plays this quality of sweetness off against simulations and manipulations of sweetness in the world of advertising, propaganda and persuasion. The heroine of *Sweet Movie* ultimately drowns in a vat of chocolate while making a TV ad. In a parallel plot in the film two young children and a sailor are slaughtered by Anna Planeta, the enthusiastic, prosletyzing, socialist, who is captain of the Karl Marx, a riverboat carrying sugar and other sweets.

Carefully managed mass publicity media events, one of the manipulative activities of the controllers of advanced capitalism, are re-focused through satire by the use of hyperbole. An early scene in Montreal features a milk bottle, perched on the top of a dairy to advertise the purity of milk, which becomes an ambivalent symbol of pseudo-purity - a theme that first arises in the opening scene of the film, a TV beauty contest for the most desirable virgin, to be Miss World 1984. This event is sponsored by Mr. Kapital's mother, Martha, Chair of the Chastity Belt Foundation (played by Jane Mallet), who preaches voluntary self-restraint: 'YOUR OWN BODY KILLS THE ANIMAL!' and features an on-camera examination of the contestants by the eminent gynecologist, Dr. Mittlefinger, who when he encounters Mademoiselle Canada with her glittering sex radiating light exclaims 'A Rosebud!' She wins the prize - the power-hungry, frozen-phallused Mr. Kapital (played by John Vernon), who offers her Niagara Falls. This hyperbolic device dramatizes the fetishistic use of the female body as a commodity, always implicit in such events.

Makavejev then uses the natural landscape transformed by tourist promotion (in this case Niagara Falls) to exhibit the sweetness of commercial exploitation. The Falls are revealed as the artificially exploitative nature show that they have become. When Mr. Kapital takes Miss World above Niagara Falls in his airplane, he expresses his desire to possess them as he does her and to convert them into the world's greatest *son et lumière* (a wish filmicly reinforced by a jolting cut from the billionaire on his wedding night urinating through his silver-clad penis, back to a shot of Niagara Falls). After a failed wedding night followed by a failed murder attempt on Miss World by Kapital's mother, she is taken by an Afro-Canadian bodyguard up into his apartment in the large model of a milk bottle above the dairy in downtown Montreal where the purity and sweetness of the milk is counterpointed with the black comedy arising from the racial tensions between the two of them.

Paralleling the odyssey of Miss World who travels from Niagara to Montreal and then France and Netherlands, there appears the complementary figure of Captain Anna Planeta with her folksy boatload of sweets, representing the earthy sweetness of Eastern block dogmas. The critique of capitalism now extends to the false seductiveness of the official Communist party messages of the Eastern Block; posters of Stalin, Eastern European propaganda material and pix of movie stars decorate the quasi-Romantic seductive sentimentality of the interior of the boat captained by this mentally unstable, ritualistic, serial killer Anna Planeta - the craft on which she hawks sugar, chocolate, sweets, sex, popularized Marxism and ultimately death. Throughout the film there are a multitude of other allusions to sweetness and its proximity with deception or death, ranging from incidents on the use of advertising sentimentality to the intricate interplay with milk, chocolate, and sugar. The filming by a British pro-

duction crew of the Mexican singer, El Macho (Played by Sami Frey), on the Eiffel Tower with Miss World comically exposes how commercial persuasion utilizes popular national or ethnic music for an affect of false sentimentality.

From this interplay of sweetness and death, Makavejev weaves a labyrinthine network of signs, which interrelate transversely throughout the texture of the film. When Anna Planeta seduces and then murders a young sailor in a vat of sugar, the murder had been symbolically anticipated in an earlier scene in which we see the sailor being bathed by Anna in her bath tub. Both scenes will also later be echoed in the climax of Miss World's odyssey when she drowns in a vat of chocolate during the filming of a TV advertisement. All these death motifs are also linked with the documentary film footage that shows the corpses of Polish soldiers that had been massacred by Soviet troops in Katyn Forest being dug up. One of the 'moral' ambiguities of war and persuasive propaganda is represented by the words of Sir Owen O'Malley concerning this Katyn Massacre, written in a letter to Anthony Eden, 11 February 1944: 'Let us think of these things always and speak of them never.'<sup>7</sup> Ultimately, the film's web weaves paths that trace all of these deaths back to the machinations of Miss World's billionaire husband, the milk and sugar king whose fortune has resulted from the commercial 'sweetness' of marketing products, and to his Soviet counterparts.

One of the apparently least sweet scenes in this film is a shocking Rabelaisian type orgy at the Milky Way Commune, a psycho-therapeutic community organized by the Austrian filmmaker-psychoanalyst, Otto Muehl. Even though many of the specific practices of this particular radical commune will revolt the average audience, this orgy scene, featuring a 'shitfest' (Makavejev's own term) banquet, celebrated to the accompaniment of Beethoven's 'Ode to Joy,' hints at some implicit, though ambivalent, modes of salvation within the exploitative society through the openness of genuine and uninhibited, but perhaps covertly totalitarian human communalism. Sweetness becomes a sign through those redefinition a whole radical re-thinking of society should take place; a rethinking which challenges the 'sweet talk' of advertising, propaganda, false rhetorics, and the empty formulas of most politics. The modern grotesque is permeated by the interior, the depths, the unconscious, which are part of the discourse of the Twentieth Century. That is why *Sweet Movie* involved filming the Milky Way Commune, a post-Reichian phenomenon that still can be related to the erotic philosophy of *WR*.

Defending these Commune scenes (which have frequently disgusted, even repulsed, rather than amused film goers since its first showing at Cannes), Makavejev makes three telling points: (1) the non-participatory nature of the documentary camera in handling this material; (2) the use of the camera as an agent and a constituent of behavior which therefore becomes a deliberate stimulant and brings a sexual offering to the audience — an offering relating to the broad and diffuse perspectives of polymorphously perverse sexual stimuli which pervade the rest of *Sweet Movie* and *WR* as well; (3) the total effect is to reveal a veiled and distanced 'pit of existential despair.'

This 'voyeur-lens,' as Makavejev calls this effect, becomes a means of communicating the bitterness within the sweetness of the confusion of Eros and Thanatos within the audience's world and the way in which this excludes them from understanding the deep processes of socialization through which the Milky Way Commune members are seeking salvation and an awareness of self. While there will be an ongoing debate as to whether Makavejev's shocking scenes in the commune, where the camera is a participant observer, work or not, their affinities with Bataille's understanding of the erotic and the intensity of communication accomplished by his transgressive camera are indisputable and particularly relevant to the development of communication about the contradictions within desire.

The scenes with the Milky Way Commune also present a carnivalesque world where in a quasi-Rabelaisian contemplation the camera presents individuals who are ritualistically acting out inner conflicts which they experience. The insertion of this event into a fictional story, and the insertion of the tragicomic heroine of that story into the documentary, construct a filmic machine for probing the extent of the contradictions of the 'sweet;' Makavejev speaks of adopting an 'amorality principle,' a starting from zero or minus, the beginning of a negative dialectic with the more apparent sweetness of other parts of the film:

All that starts as an expression of horror, awe, despair, nothingness, etc. (and that is where we shall arrive at) all that each person hides and will not admit even to himself, when looked at through the eye of the camera will become beautiful, shall reveal its freaky charm,





its truthfulness and ATTRACTION. Thus, the horror shall be transformed into poetry, humour and charm.

Do not worry, it's going to be funny. It's going to be dreadfully funny.<sup>8</sup>

The anal, orgiastic, gorging activities of the feasts and dances, the shitfest and the breast feeding, all have a highly functional place in this anti-Oedipal, post-Freudian Rabelaisian style vision. It is the purging of the de Sades, the Hitlers, the Stalins by descent and degradation, instruments of the grotesque which must always invoke the lower elements of bodily life. In the context of the Twentieth Century this differs radically from that of the sixteenth, which is precisely Makavejev's power as a post-Marxist and an historian.

Makavejev's filmmaking is directly related to the Freudian problem of eros and civilization. Seeing the erotic principle as a prime civilizing and liberating principle in man's society, he consciously identifies the artistic avant-garde as revolutionary. Makavejev's camera and microphone deliberately explore 'polymorphous perversity,' illustrating in the process an affinity between the discovery and development of film and more liberated communication and the emergence or re-emergence to the consciousness of the 'polymorphously perverse' aspects of people's nature. The contradiction and pervading irony of *Sweet Movie* is the confused relationship between Eros and Thanatos that has emerged in the contemporary world; a world where 'sweetness' conceals only as through a veil the essential aggressiveness which results in the sugary death of Luv (the *Potemkin* sailor), the children and Miss World. In his earlier film, *WR*, his heroine, Milena (who is decapitated by her lover, Vladimire Ilyich, a Russian super-star, figure skater) is comically resurrected at the conclusion when her decapitated head starts speaking in the autopsy room - an allusion to an earlier autopsy scene in his film, *The Switchboard Operator* (1967). Both of *Sweet Movie*'s odysseys - Anna's and Miss World's - characteristically lead to death and destruction; but they also result in a resurrection which preserves the comic quality of the whole. Anna Planeta as a ritual murderess, seduces children and other innocents and buries their corpses in the sugar she carries on her boat. At the conclusion of *Sweet Movie* these children (the Innocents) murdered by Anna Planeta on her boat (the 'Karl Marx') are resurrected, rising from the body bags in which they had been laid out by the police along the shore of the river, unlike the victims in a true story of a mass murder of twenty-seven children that was discovered in Houston, Texas in August 1973, to which the filmic situation alludes. So these resurrections are counterpointed against deaths without resurrection. In *WR*, Reich's death in prison is a real death, and in *Sweet Movie* neither the sailor nor Miss World undergo a resurrection at the end. Makavejev deliberately moves transversally across the border between pathos and comedy, between light and dark satire, a movement that is closely associated with his constructing a contemporary filmic equivalent of Rabelaisian satire relevant to the Twentieth Century.

Makavejev uses myths ancient and modern as part of the equipment of a social and cultural criticism in encounter with the here and now and with the immediate history of the present day world, not to establish the archetypal structure of a mythicizing film. Eros and Thanatos are not mere abstractions borrowed from Freud, but forces like those of Bataille that permeate his films. The contents of an egg sensuously passed back and forth between people's hands in the opening movements of *WR* may be suggestive of folk cult or Orphic mysteries yet still be the focus of a highly sensual tactile experience. Film's kinoaudiovisual capacities permit Makavejev to develop a poetic for making sense by means which are simultaneously sensory, sensual and intellectual; producing both a form of revolutionary ecological therapy (social as well as psychological) and a dialogue of liberation.

Speaking of Makavejev's particular sociological filmic essays, I have on occasion referred to Makavejev and his 3 M's: Marcuse, Marx and McLuhan. His cinematic psycho-sociological discourse shows a keen awareness of McLuhanism and the concept of a media revolution, as well as manifesting a deeper understanding of advertising and propaganda and what is concealed behind the apparent sweetness of its persuasion: 'persuade' and 'sweet' share the same root, IE\*swad (sweet). While Makavejev had satirized Coca Cola and Maybelline ads (among others) in *WR*, an obvious Godardian kind of touch, *Sweet Movie* presents a world of sell, show, and advertisement, moving towards a conclusion with the complex ambivalent denouement of Miss World's death by drowning in chocolate. As that fatal ad scene begins, the producer instructs her: 'I want, when people buy chocolate in the future, and eat it - at least this particular brand - I want them to feel as if they were eating you.'<sup>9</sup>

In this sequence, as Miss World drowns in the vat of chocolate, the cameraman (who continues to roll his camera), remarks that 'chocolate selling will never be the same.' Makavejev is fully aware of the mock communion aspects involved and wants also to show the ambivalence which makes the techniques of 'sweetness' work: 'Every move [he says] even drinking a coke or moving a camera, has some little particle of the general joy of life, some kind of play, excitement of Doing Something that has Never been Done Before.'<sup>10</sup> Eating and speaking, taste and persuasion, are motifs fundamental to communication. In *Sweet Movie* this goes further, for the drowning in chocolate is transversally related to the eating of feces in the earlier orgy scene involving Miss World, which takes place at the Milky Way Commune where she has sought refuge from Mr. Kapital.

Art, whether it occurs as part of everyday life or as the dedicated activity of individuals or groups of individuals, can be crucial in establishing the marks and traces which unmask distortions and inadequacies of communication conceived in the interests of hegemonic power. While ads and other products of cultural industries will to some extent provide their own unmasking (an unmasking that can be intensified through decontextualization, as Barthes and McLuhan have demonstrated), it is only the sensitive semiotic range made available through the arts and the festive energies of the people that exposes the critical problem implicit in contemporary mass communication: the mock or pseudo-communion. While the sensitivity of poetics certainly is not a substitute for those queries advanced by historical studies, critical theory or a hermeneutics, such queries ought not to proceed in complete innocence of comic contemplation, for their practice will be considerably enriched by a thorough understanding of the theory and practice implicit in comedy, carnival and poetry.

#### Notes

<sup>4</sup> Makavejev, *Sweet Movie*, Original Screen Play, XV

<sup>5</sup> Makavejev, *WR: Mysteries of the Organism*, 16

<sup>6</sup> Makavejev, *Sweet Movie*, Original Screenplay, xv

<sup>7</sup> Makavejev, *WR*, 17-18

<sup>8</sup> Godard, *Godard on Godard*, 242

<sup>9</sup> Makavejev, *WR*, 21-2

<sup>10</sup> Makavejev, *Un Film de Dusan Makavejev: Sweet Movie*

<sup>11</sup> Makavejev, *Sweet Movie*

<sup>12</sup> Makavejev, *Sweet Movie*

<sup>13</sup> Makavejev, *Sweet Movie*

Excerpted from Chapter 14 of the forthcoming book by Donald F. Theall, *Beyond the Word: Reconstructing Sense in the Joyce Era of Technology, Culture, Communication* (University of Toronto Press, 1995).



## REFLECTIONS ON MAKAVEJEV THE ART FILM AND TRANSGRESSION

By Bart Testa

### I. A Preliminary Remark regarding National Films and Commercial Cinema

The broad question raised by several papers at the McMaster University conference on Soviet and Eastern European film directors working the West, and debated at length in the concluding round-table, orbited around the problematic relationship between national film practices in European Socialist countries and the international style of commercial cinema centered on Hollywood. The point of the question is what happens when filmmakers from Eastern Europe emigrate to the West and try to resume the practice of their art.

Schematizing the conference discussions in a simple way, I think this question faced in two directions, one descriptive and the other critical. The descriptive question concerns the account to be given of the changes film directors undergo when they move from the national film culture in which directors were trained, financially and institutionally supported and, to some degree, repressed, over to the international commercial film industry in which market-driven apparatuses of film finance, production and distribution define the conditions of filmmaking. In coarse outline, the directors' common trajectory, from Socialist, state-sponsored film cultures to Capitalist film industries, suggests a general structure into which these parts might be fitted. However, blocked-out stereotypes like "national film culture" and "commercial film industry" need much filling in and, soon, refinement breaks then down into segments, sub-segments and particles with their own historiographic issues.

Nonetheless, when those at the McMaster conference made a working distinction between national film culture and international commercial film industries, they were marking out a valuable heuristic difference. However, the critical face of the question was made more difficult because of the sharpness of that difference. The critical question was put this way: Does the work of an Eastern European director decline when he or she enters the Western industry? The answer, made most insistently by Vlada Petric at the conference, is that such work does go into decline because the *aesthetic* integrity of the director is necessarily compromised by the necessity of submitting his/her art to the codes of narrativity prevailing in Western commercial cinema. Although at any moment that narrativity is undergoing development, conventionalization of nar-



rative filmic practices is continuous and so narrativity seems to operate in the West as a prisonhouse of film language within which the film artist must toil. In Petric's highly prescriptive and deductive argument, the emigré director is defeated aesthetically before he or she has begun filmmaking in the West.

No counter-argument was made to Dr. Petric. There was no critical defence of films made in the West as superior to those directors had made in their home film cultures. Conference participants agreed that Eastern European film cultures are committed to the "art film" that arises out of national cultural traditions while directors in the West have to work within genres and conventional narrative codes. For me, the most arresting reply to Dr. Petric, made at the concluding round table discussion, was to say that Eastern European cinemas now need to transform their filmmaking to make them conform to the commercial practices of the West.

The present paper consists of reflections on the first emigré period of the Yugoslav director Dusan Makavejev, which began in 1973. Parts of this paper were prepared prior to the McMaster Conference but were rewritten in response to the stimulating discussions there. These reflections treat a relatively minor issue suggested by the broad question raised at the conference: the state of critical discourse on the "art film" during the mid-seventies when Makavejev's *Sweet Movie* (1974) first circulated.

Although the director had shot a significant portion of *WR: Mysteries of the Organism* (1971) in the United States, Makavejev's emigré career was initiated with *Sweet Movie*. Both works are firmly entrenched within the so-called "Black Cinema" moment of progressive Yugoslav filmmaking, so at first it seemed that the director could continue, even expand his national-artistic project in the West. However, the critical and commercial scandal of *Sweet Movie* stalled the director's career and it was only resumed in 1981, with *Montenegro*, a film far less daring in the disjunctiveness of the montage with which the director was associated in the early seventies and far less intellectually aggressive. It also was well received. Critics seemed glad Makavejev was back and the art-house/festival audience caught on to the film as a bizarre sex comedy. Makavejev's experience could suggest a test case of a film director who moves to the West, tries to carry on his ambitious artistic project, fails and, after a delay, retreats into a more conventional narrative cinema and recuperates his career.

As a step toward making such a test, I attempt a discussion, first, on the context of the negative reception of *Sweet Movie*, which I think can illustrate a crisis of the "art film" concept emergent in seventies film culture that is still with us and still affects definitions of "non-commercial" national filmmaking. Second, by focusing on *Sweet Movie* as a latter-day Surrealist film engaged in the revival of montage valorized under a Brechtian banner, I want to suggest that its aggressiveness punctures "art-film" decorum.



## II. The Sins of *Sweet Movie*

Before *Sweet Movie* circulated in 1974-1975, Makavejev was hailed as a film artist among the most impressive of the post-New Wave generation. After *Sweet Movie*, Makavejev was dismissed as a charlatan, even a pornographer. Richard Roud, director of the New York Film Festival and editor of *Cinema: A Critical Dictionary*, called Makavejev a vulgar opportunist, arguing that there was always this side to the filmmaker, but with *Sweet Movie*, that side has taken over.<sup>1</sup> To cite another dismissal, Robert Phillip Kolker, in *The Altering Eye, Contemporary International Cinema*, declares,

In the early seventies, the Yugoslav filmmaker Dusan Makavejev received some recognition for his lunatic investigations of sexuality and politics in films that mixed documentary and fiction, acted sequences and archival footage in a formal collage that brought some of Godard's techniques to a curious dead end.<sup>2</sup>

Something had gone very wrong with *Sweet Movie*. It eclipsed Makavejev as effectively in the later seventies as its predecessor, *WR: Mysteries of the Organism* had spotlighted him at the start of the decade. If we step back a moment, to the days of "some recognition", we encounter Makavejev's name in the list of directors that Ian Cameron drew up in preparing his hopelessly entitled anthology *Second Wave*.<sup>3</sup> As its title indicates, Cameron's book sought to discern in the cinema at the end of the sixties a new generation that would, in the next decade, continue the ambitious developments of the *nouvelle vague*. By the end of the seventies, progressive film culture settled for Germany's *Das Neue Kino*, which replayed the first New Wave a decade after it in a conscious register of secondariness, as the films of Rainer Werner Fassbinder and

Wim Wenders make abundantly clear. If today we were to attempt an anthology similar to Cameron's *Second Wave*, we would encounter serious problems of both historiographical and critical kinds. These problems involve the twin notions of film movements and the art film.

The historical assumption behind the notion of a "second wave" is that "film movements" were fated to unify in a coherent thrust in world cinema. This role of film movements arose from the fact that they form a central concept with which film critics thought about the development of post-War world cinema. The national outburst of a *cinéma des auteurs* in country after country in the decades following the Second World War seemed crucial to the vitality of film art. The first to formulate the ambitions of film movements was André Bazin. His realist "evolutionary" film aesthetics were intimately linked to Italian Neorealism and Bazin's writings on this movement virtually invented the modern film movement idea.<sup>4</sup> Bazin's influential concept rested on a paradox. Film movements are national, and indeed nationalistic. They seek to restore the nation's filmmaking by turning in a new way to the realities of national life and national culture. At the same time, film movements emerge out of the fundamental *telos* of cinema and are, therefore, world-cinema developments. National films that focus on a specific time and place also make an aesthetic leap forward for cinema as a whole.

Why? Because the intervention that arises from the artistic will to reclaim cultural and social home turf is conceived, first, as a revolt against the dominant institution of cinema, the commercial "classical" narrative film whose capital is Hollywood; and second, as an evolutionary advance in the art of film *per se*, toward realism, initially in social terms, later mainly in cultural terms. Neorealism, the *nouvelle vague*, *Cinema Novo* and the new cinemas of Eastern Europe are all appropriated under this critical programme as evidence of the continuing seriousness of film.

Formulated as both an aesthetics and a politics of film, the film movement, then, has served progressive film culture, since the fifties, as a cinematic counter-discourse of international proportions that was seen to have energized cinema and promised the eventual overthrow of the hegemonic Hollywoodized commercial film industry. In the sixties especially, the film movement was seen to break with conventions, to go where commercial cinema was too cowardly to go, was too bound up with dominant ideology to go, was too formally conservative to go.

As a critical construct, the concept of the film movement was bound up with the notion of critique and we should recognize, in the light cast by essays like Annette Michelson's "Film and the Radical Aspiration",<sup>5</sup> that critique in the sense used by those writing ambitiously on modern film was conceived within the setting of a humanist modernism rooted in Enlightenment critiques of doctrine and ideology. Moreover, the film movement came to be seen as always coincident with notions of authorship, expressivity, organicity, political and social critique and a variety of realisms both naive and critical.

Within the critical construct of the film movement I am sketching here, this critique is also copacetic with Romantic concepts of art as organic expression. Its crucial manifestation is the "art film". The art film mounts a critique of the myths and values of mass culture and false consciousness from its position of the open and authentic artistic vision, the vision of the auteur, first in concert with the liberating national film movement, where the critique draws its strength from national traditions and aspirations, and later, through the individuated auteur's sensibility. Realism undergoes a parallel transfiguration once artistic sensibility and not a social realism is the focus of interest, as the standard critical histories of Italian film attest. As with other values of aesthetic modernism, however, the art film remains, despite this transformation of types of realism, the true defender of the integrity of film art against the kitsch of non-art cinema, Hollywood and its international imitators.

Kolker's *The Altering Eye* is at the other end of the critical tradition that Bazin instigated. Indeed, Kolker starts with a Bazinian recapitulation of Neorealism as the first post-War film movement. As a whole, his book constructs a critical history of post-War cinema on the Bazinian premise: in terms of its resistances, critiques and interventions against Hollywood; and in terms of the aesthetic trajectory of film style through which the cinema defines its integrity. But, by the end of the book, Kolker rather sadly abandons any real hope for the overthrow of Hollywood or for the sort of political-aesthetic art of the future the modern cinema should have engendered. National movements and strong auteurs successively take position against the empire of Hollywood narrative cinema. But the history of their rises and falls is a history of repeated "dead ends". Kolker's depressive evaluations of Antonioni, Bertolucci, Godard and others are not as summary as his dismissal of Makavejev, but the logic of



his argument is the same. He attenuates advanced cinema prospects for any liberating critique. Indeed, critique becomes endlessly prefatory, as Godard and Straub in the sixties, and Schroeter and Fassbinder in the seventies show. Some directors turn from this prefatory work back to conventional filmmaking, as Brazil's Cinema Novo directors, recent German films, the current French cinema, and the later films of Bernardo Bertolucci illustrate.

Kolker's account conforms to a critical orthodoxy of the "art film" and the now-classic history of film movements pervasive in academic film studies (and this was reflected at the McMaster conference). This account can be brought under questioning but I believe that Kolker is a critic in a long line of film history and criticism and he is quite representative of the position already well formed in the mid-seventies when Makavejev's *Sweet Movie* appears.

The "second wave" was perhaps the last piece of the "art film" construct and perhaps the most adventurous. But that was part of the problem brewing in progressive film culture in the aftermath of the sixties. The de-codification of narrative cinema undertaken by Godard and then developed by Oshima, Straub and Rocha and others, together with the search for new forms both in the service of critique and national/auteurist expression had reached a crisis. Godard was the exemplary filmmaker (as he is for Kolker) and Makavejev was one of the intriguing followers.

Then Godard abandoned his auteurist status and the art-film mode to practice semiotic counter-cinema in his Dziga Vertov period. His rejection at the hands of former supporters like Richard Roud<sup>6</sup> parallels the dismantling of the humanist apparatus of film criticism. Two things then happened: a re-theorized film criticism took up semiotics in the cinema, as exemplified by *Screen*, and rejected the art film to take up ideological analysis of Hollywood classical cinema; and, in the film journalism-film festival consensus, the idea of the art-film regressed, a process marked by the success of *Das Neue Kino*, and, a decade later, by the success of a cinema-retro instanced by *Diva*.

In one obvious sense, both Godard, with *Wind from the East* 1969) and Makavejev, with *WR: Mysteries of the Organism*, had already broken with the art film construct that had provided their work with a context. By foregrounding ideology and rhetoric, these and other filmmakers were pushing against the concept of "film as art", conceived as auteurist expressivity and realist organicity of form. Within an emergent semiotics of the cinema, Godard was recuperable as a politicized formalist, but, with *WR* and *Sweet Movie*, Makavejev did something that Godard did not do. Makavejev transgressed the "decorum" of the art film.

A self-avowed humanist art-film critic, Robin Wood, writing on *WR*, suggests how notions of organicity and expressivity constitute the art-film's decorum. Wood has two problems with *WR*. First, he believes Makavejev emphasizes the "ludicrous excesses" of Wilhelm Reich's later years and scants the psychoanalyst's unification of Marx and Freud in the twenties and thirties. Second, Wood argues *WR* displaces what he calls the "exploratory 'realist' narrative" style that Makavejev had perfected with *Switchboard Operator* (1967) and instead uses "stylized, mostly comic charade".<sup>7</sup>

Wood's description is right on both points. Makavejev believes that Reich betrayed his early work when he abandoned Marxism and took up the Orgone Box. The director views the later Reich as someone who fell into what he calls (and despises) "spirituality". The parodic aspect of the film's portrait of Reich indicates Makavejev's thinking at the time. In his lectures during the mid-seventies, Makavejev traced a history of Marxist cultural theory in search of what he called "anti-metaphysics". He fixed upon Freudianism, Formalism and Surrealism. He shaped a syncretistic thinking into an opposition between "spirituality" and "anti-metaphysics". This opposition structures the textual work of both *WR* and *Sweet Movie*. A student of the Belgrade school of Surrealism in the fifties, Makavejev later came to the view that the traditions of Marxism should be clustered around a Surrealist sensibility that could be systematically subversive and still systematic. As a latter-day Surrealist, Makavejev dispensed with ideas of art, affirmed the powers of non-art cinema (the Hollywood musical and the porno film, for example, as fantasy machines) and broke with humanism in cinema.

Wood's complaint that Makavejev becomes schematic is implicitly a complaint about the director's abandonment of a humanist style. This style, characterized by realist film language and naturalistic acting, is always closely connected to, often isomorphic with art-film values of aesthetic integration, emotional wholeness, and auteurist self-revelation. At the level of style Makavejev effectively, if not purposively, effaces the art film when he overthrows the decorum of a humanistic style. This is the heart of Wood's criticism: *WR* does not engage the empathy of viewers, nor an appreciation of the film's

"art". *Sweet Movie* goes even further in sinning against these basic critical values of the art film. Its cruel humour, extreme sexuality, heterogenous stylistics and often awkward bluntness constitute an open provocation against these critical values.

Makavejev moves toward the possibilities of transgressive cinema that serves a concept of therapy, not art, one in which hilarity and outrage, juxtapositions of horror and erotic delight become favorite strategies. The object of Makavejev's provocations is "spirituality". In his conception, it comes in two potent political forms: the obsessive-compulsive/aggressive erotic behavior that Norman O. Brown names "the excremental vision" in the West; and the eroticized revolutionary sacrifices that the director associates with Stalinist culture. In the first of these Makavejev would find the object of his caricatures the West's commodification of sexuality, and in the second, the erotics of a revolutionary death cult. *Sweet Movie* is a site on which Makavejev attempts to collide these forms of "spirituality" and in that collision he exposed humanism and art-film aesthetics into a highly rhetorical, intellectualized Surrealism that sometimes looks and behaves like Brechtian cinema.

### III. Brechtian Cinema, Provincial Surrealism and *Sweet Movie*'s Style

Martin Walsh's *The Brechtian Aspect of Radical Cinema* is one of the few studies to emerge from semiotics to treat films that formerly were examined in the art film context. Walsh enlists Makavejev's later films in an emergent new Brechtian cinema. He argues that the form of a Brechtian film will dislocate the smooth progression of part of a film narrative toward catharsis. It will do so in order to construct the work "vertically" through an ensemble of effects that engender that intellectual activity which Brecht sometimes called "abstraction."<sup>8</sup>

Walsh opens up comparison between Brecht's epic theatre and the "epic retardation" characteristic of Eisenstein's montage in *Battleship Potemkin* (1925) and *October* (1928). Walsh interprets some famous passages — like the bridge-raising sequence and Karensky's climb up the steps in *October* — as "paradigmatic" moments in "historical demonstration". He believes these moments arise from a specific cinematic origin, namely, montage disjunction, which serves as the base-line of Brechtian cinema. It is through montage, Walsh believes, that the cinema activates its specific capacity for alienation effects. However, Eisenstein's particular stylistics are not prescriptive and the possible radical projects open to Brechtian cinema become numerous. It was Walsh's intention to provide a full analysis of these projects but this was interrupted by his untimely death in 1977. Yet the thesis he sought to develop remains suggestive. Of Makavejev Walsh writes that he moves "toward a provocative subversion of our normative concepts of reality, both textually and behaviorally," and he included him, on the strength of *WR* and *Sweet Movie*, in the new Brechtian cinema.<sup>9</sup> Walsh does say more, specifically that Makavejev's montage of diverse film materials — documentary, archival oddities, cinéma-vérité and Brechtian dramatic tableaux (such as the courtyard sequence in *WR*) — cracks the "illusion of reality."

Interestingly it is not essential for Walsh that Makavejev deploys such canonical Brechtian usages. For Walsh, what matters is the project of an intellectual cinema that provokes in the spectator a critical state of reception through disjunctive formal strategies. The importance of Makavejev's films in the early seventies lies in the director's montage methods and the break they occasion with an organic form and humanist-empathetic style of filmmaking. So, what Walsh sees as virtues, critics like Wood see as Makavejev's sins against the art film.<sup>10</sup> This dichotomy in critical values manifests the ongoing crisis of the art film, of film movements and indeed of the idea of contemporary cinema.

Here, however, we come to a turn. *Sweet Movie* is notorious for its dislocation of "realist illusion", not because of its formal usages but because of its sexual transgressions. The infamous "Milky Way" segment of the film, in which Otto Muehl's therapeutic commune engages in enthusiastic rituals of regression into pissing, shitting and vomiting, is the most glaring example. Makavejev does not conceive of "anti-illusionism" in the formal terms that Walsh indicates, but in Surrealist terms, as tactics of transgression against taste, art and sexual codes. In his lectures Makavejev interprets even Eisenstein himself, not in terms of the montage aesthetic, but in terms of an erotics arising from Makavejev's own Surrealist suspicions — about the black/gold/red color scheme of *Ivan the Terrible, II*, and especially about the myth of revolutionary sacrifice in *Battleship Potemkin*, suspicions prominently put into practice in *Sweet Movie*, a film that is partly a re-reading of *Potemkin* itself.

Makavejev has explained that he was interested in combining Eisenstein and Surrealism. Makavejev's Surrealism differs from both the classic Parisian and the Hispanic schools. The distinct tradition of Surrealist art of the Belgrade



school is to embrace the subversive possibilities of anti-art as a liberation enacted in the already revolutionary situation of Titoist Communism. So, whereas Parisian Surrealism positioned itself as a transgression against capitalist culture and its aesthetic sentimentalism, Belgrade Surrealism confronted the waning culture of Stalinism. The Yugoslav Surrealists sought to be liberated from "left fascism". They placed extraordinary emphasis on the body and greatly simplified notions of the psyche, in the place of the discursiveness of classical Freudianism that underlay French Surrealism's literary emphasis. For them, Surrealism was no longer the linguistic cultivation of the marvelous but a therapy engaging the emotions and the body directly in the liberation of the material self from ideological repression.

*Sweet Movie* explores the possibilities of such a liberation, through this is expressed in a Brechtian parodic-yet-tragic register. The film is structured on two parallel stories but the montage joins between their interleaved segments complexify that parallelism. Miss Canada (Carole Laure) undergoes the trials women in the West endure, while the sailor Lev Bakunin (Pierre Clementi) — also addressed by his "collective" name as Potemkin after Eisenstein's famous battleship — descends into the psyche of the East. What Miss Canada endures is a picaresque tour through the excremental sexual aggression of Capital. It begins with a TV show where she must not only win a beauty contest but pass an inspection as a virgin conducted by her future mother-in-law. The millionaire marital prize (John Vernon) is an obsessive compulsive who washes Miss Canada thoroughly with alcohol after taking her to bed where he promptly pisses on her with his literally golden cock. Unsatisfied, he turns her over to his henchman, Jeremiah Muscle, for disposal and she winds up in a flightbag travelling through the chutes at Air Canada's terminal before flying off to Paris. There, she winds up on the Eiffel Tower where El Macho, a matador/pop singer (Sami Frey), interrupts shooting a tourist commercial to have sex with her, but the two wind up like stuck dogs and have to be separated in a restaurant kitchen.

This story is constituted as a sort of catalogue of images concatenated as a series purity/shit/gold/phallic aggression/commodification of sex. The vehicle Makavejev devises is a crude parody of a TV beauty contest, richman lifestyle, and several broad allusions, in the Paris section especially, to *Un chien andalou* and *L'age d'or*. Miss Canada finally arrives at the memorial extreme of sexual culture in the West — Germany. The notorious Muehl section of the film takes us to a utopia of regression: here Reichian theory finds a most extreme application. In a setting which is curiously medieval (and the shooting shifts from a fixed-camera high-key brazenness to an almost gloomy, hand-held *cinéma-vérité* style), the commune works directly on the body, ritualizing therapy as hysterical action. We recognize the sequences as real curiosities: a German, yet another German, rejection of the Enlightenment enacted through yet another regressive enthusiasm.

There is more to this association than its curiosity, more to the meaning of the segment than mere outrage. When Makavejev shifts styles, he detaches Miss Canada's tale from the parodic progression to a documentary mode. Actually, the film grinds to a halt there, for the documentary force of the passage, which is disproportionately long and extremely powerful in its vulgarity and humanity, collapses this parallel narrative under its spectacle. The patently artificial sections before this are just cartoons; this section is relentlessly brutal and even its theatricalism (as one of the Milky Way members chops his huge, false penis with a cleaver) bluntly violates taboos. Moreover, Makavejev interrupts the section with archival footage of "baby gymnastics" shot during the Nazi era. The montage specifies the commune historically: its members are the babies of the Nazi regime. Recalling Reich's theory of the "armoured body" and the fascist personality, these images of babies are the sign of the fascist body literally being made. So, Makavejev would have us understand that the Milky Way group are undergoing their own infancy, undoing an historically specific fascist information of the armoured body. Placed in a direct concatenation with the Capitalist media culture, these therapy sequences elaborate on the typology of the excremental as the root eroticism of the West. After this, Miss Canada disappears from the film until its coda when she appears in a vat of chocolate squirming to death as the cameras roll to record her for a TV commercial.

Potemkin's parallel story is prepared for by archival footage of the exhumation of Polish officers who were murdered by Stalinist troops and dumped in mass graves during the Second World War. Potemkin arrives in Amsterdam and is greeted by Captain Anna Planeta piloting the ship *Survival* through the city's canals, its prow boasting a face of Karl Marx that shed one big tear. Potemkin hardly comes aboard before he enjoys some great "proletarian" sex with his hostess, the beginning of a tryst that ends when she savagely and erotically stabs him to death in a bed of sugar and sex. Then, too, as Planeta tells him, *Survival* is a ship full of corpses, the dead of the revolution, of Marxist history.

The "baby gymnastics" and the Polish footage, placed as hinges between the two narratives, are set out as equivalents from two different but parallel histories of the repressed. Potemkin cries out: "Fascination! Forward! Optimistic Tragedy!" And when he is murdered, he dies in an ecstasy that is not just sexual, but liturgical: he dies as a revolutionary sacrifice. He has another revealing line, "I felt so jealous when Vakulinchuk died," delivered just as Planeta bites viciously into his neck, the immediate prelude to his murder. The love/death in the sugar bed is another figure of regression, and one which is historical but this time not an undoing. Potemkin regresses into the masochism of the revolutionary martyr. His name is a tip-off, for he is the heir to the primal hero-victim of the revolution, Eisenstein's Vakulinchuk, the agitator aboard the *Potemkin* who falls to his death in the rigging in a *Pieta*.

Makavejev follows this sexual murder with a shot of people gathered around an organ singing a revolutionary anthem and follows this with people dancing to the music. Then, suddenly, he cuts to a shot of a single boot, the transition to long-take hand-held shots of a riot that accompanies the arrest of the murderess. What Makavejev has done is to reconstruct, by parody, the Soviet cinema's primal imagery of revolutionary sacrifice in *Battleship Potemkin* — the death of Vakulinchuk, followed by the dyptich Odessa Steps sequence, where the people gather to mourn and to celebrate solidarity with the revolution, and are cut down by tsarist marines. The shot of the boot serves the same function in Makavejev's reconstruction as the intertitle "Suddenly" does in the Eisenstein original: to divide the sequence into two opposing parts. The ensuing riot is his version of the Odessa Steps slaughter, using the style and rhythms of late sixties TV news reporting in place of the constructive editing of the original.

Makavejev's treatment of the Potemkin-Planeta narrative makes that story the Communist parallel to the Miss Canada picaresque and both stories unfold the erotics of two kinds of anti-human politics of the body and systems of representation, the Capitalist-excremental and the Communist-heroic. However, Makavejev does not really succeed in combining Surrealism and intellectual montage. While a few work well, the juxtapositions of material are often awkward and the style of the film woefully uneven in realization. There are several reasons for this. In *Sweet Movie*, Makavejev overreaches his capacity as a stylist and so the intellectual conception is not matched by its execution. The montage that Makavejev attempts is underdeveloped: he tries to juxtapose materials while also leaving the materials assembled intact. Eisenstein's classic caution that the realism of the cinematic image is obstinate and does easily surrender to montage assembly is ignored at a director's peril and Makavejev fails to devise a style that can give the film the aural-visual unity-in-diversity it requires. What he rather grandly terms his "meta-montage" and described operationally in his lectures fails to function either rhythmically (in Eisenstein's sense of a montage of the images' formal compositions) or textually (the connative and allusionsitic field is broken up and too jagged). The partial success of *Sweet Movie* lies in its articulate parody (like the *Potemkin* section discussed above) that allows us to grasp its textual intention. The problem with *Sweet Movie* as a montage film is that its transgressions are not relentless enough, so that the system of "meta-montage" never becomes the engine of outrage.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Richard Roud, afterword to Robin Wood's piece "Dusan Makavejev" in *Cinema: a Critical Dictionary*, Volume Two. London: Secker and Warburg, 1980, p.657.

<sup>2</sup> Robert Phillip Kolker, *The Altering Eye: Contemporary International Cinema*. London: Oxford UP, 1983, p. 325. In a footnote on p. 326, Kolker admits to never having seen *Sweet Movie* but goes on to add, "By all accounts it continues his inquiry into sexual liberation more graphically, moving further into pornography, as he does with his more recent *Montenegro*." The ease with which Kolker, usually a meticulous critic, writes "by all accounts" underscores the pervasive dismissal of the director among art-film critics after the mid-seventies.

<sup>3</sup> *Second Wave*, edited by Ian Cameron. New York: Praeger, 1970, see pp. 7-33 for Robin Wood's essay on Makavejev. The other directors discussed in the anthology are Skolimowski, Oshima, Guerra, Rocha, Lefebvre and Straub. A similar, but smaller galaxy of filmmakers is gathered by James Roy MacBean in the second part of his *Film and Revolution*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1975. MacBean's early chapters are devoted to Godard and he makes obvious the way Godard "after '68" forms the context for his consideration of the "second wave." The third part of his book is his critical rejection of semiotics of the cinema.

<sup>4</sup> André Bazin, *What Is Cinema?* Volume Two, edited and translated by Hugh Gray Berkeley: U of California P, 1971, see especially "An Aesthetic of Reality: Cinematic Realism and the Italian School of Liberation", pp. 16-40.

<sup>5</sup> Annette Michelson, "Film and the Radical Aspiration", *Film Culture Reader*, edited by P. Adams Sitney. New York: Praeger, 1970, pp. 404-422.

<sup>6</sup> Richard Roud, *Jean-Luc Godard*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1970, chapter 6.

<sup>7</sup> Robin Wood, "Dusan Makavejev", in *Cinema: a Critical Dictionary*, pp. 656-657. Wood's very positive essay in the Cameron anthology concentrates on *Switchboard Operator* and the piece in Roud reprises that material before discussing *WR*, a film not made by the time of the earlier essay. Wood does not discuss *Sweet Movie* and has never seen the film.

<sup>8</sup> Martin Walsh, *The Brechtian Aspect of Radical Cinema*. London: The British Film Institute, 1981, see the chapter "The Complex Seer: Brecht and the Film", pp. 5-21. This anthology of Walsh's writings was published four years after his death.

<sup>9</sup> In "Draft Outline: The Brechtian Aspect of Radical Cinema," *Brechtian Aspect*, pp. 129-131. Walsh intended to devote an entire chapter to Makavejev, to be called "Subversive Cinema" and he wanted to follow it with a chapter on Straub, "Ascetic Cinema". Of these later chapters only the work on Straub was developed to any extent and the writing on Makavejev consists of a suggestive fragment.

<sup>10</sup> Also see MacBean's chapter in *Film and Revolution* on *WR* in which he rejects the art-film Reichianism of Visconti, Petri and Bertolucci in favor of Makavejev.

Reprinted from Graham Petrie and Ruth Dwyer, eds., *Before the Wall Came Down: Soviet and Eastern European Filmmakers Working in the West* (New York: University Press of America, 1990).





# 1. Man Is Not a Bird, 1965.



## MAN IS NOT A BIRD: Shades of the Gray by Dusan Makavejev

The 1964 was one of the last years the films were shot in black-and-white. Avala Film Studio in Belgrade decided to engage several first time directors, hoping for new approaches and new stories. As soon as I was asked 'what I would like to do' I said that I would like to make a story situated in famous copper mining basin of Bor.

The working conditions were quite horrible there. Acid smokes would decompose nylon stockings off the legs of female members of the crew within an hour. We like these smokes because it looked great on the screen. We did not have the color but we had seventeen shades of gray!

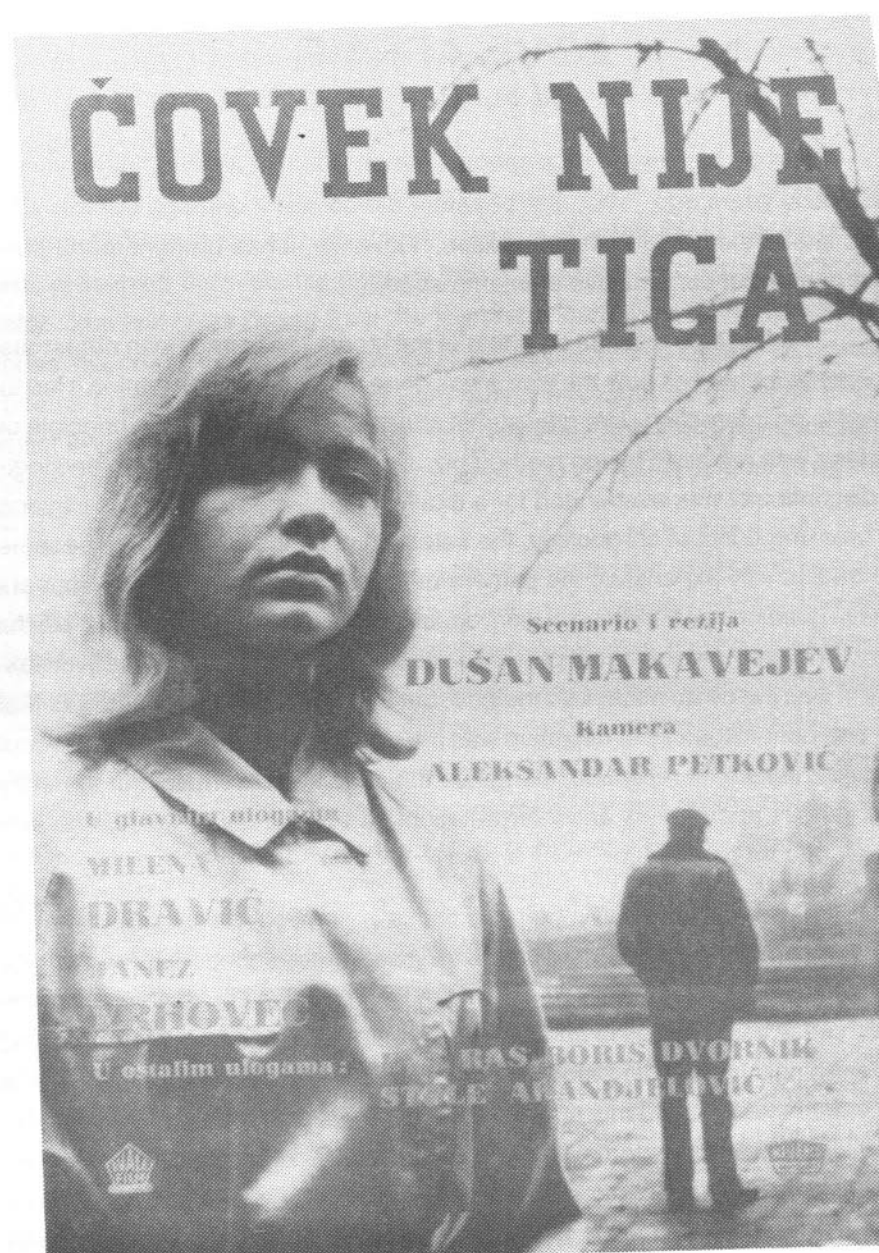
Whole film was shot on location, in record 36 days. Intertwined stories of loving/hating couples and triangles, mixed with scenes of real traveling third rate circus showmen and a real magician-hypnotizer, the famous Roko, culminated in parallel editing of solemn philharmonic performance of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony for four thousand workers and lovemaking scene of a hairdresser girl (Milena Dravic) and a truckdriver (Boris Dvornik).

The film expressed my beliefs the only acceptable socialism would be the one with human faces and bodies. Among gigantic constructs of Production and History, individuals live like sad mice, sometimes stealing a little happiness for themselves, condemned to loneliness and uncertainty.

I still enjoy watching this film for its magic, its raw energy and cascade of surprising twists in the story. Even then I felt that real film *creates itself*, I was *only a conductor*. This strange and literally dark and dirty place was emanating charming vitality and unexpected humor.

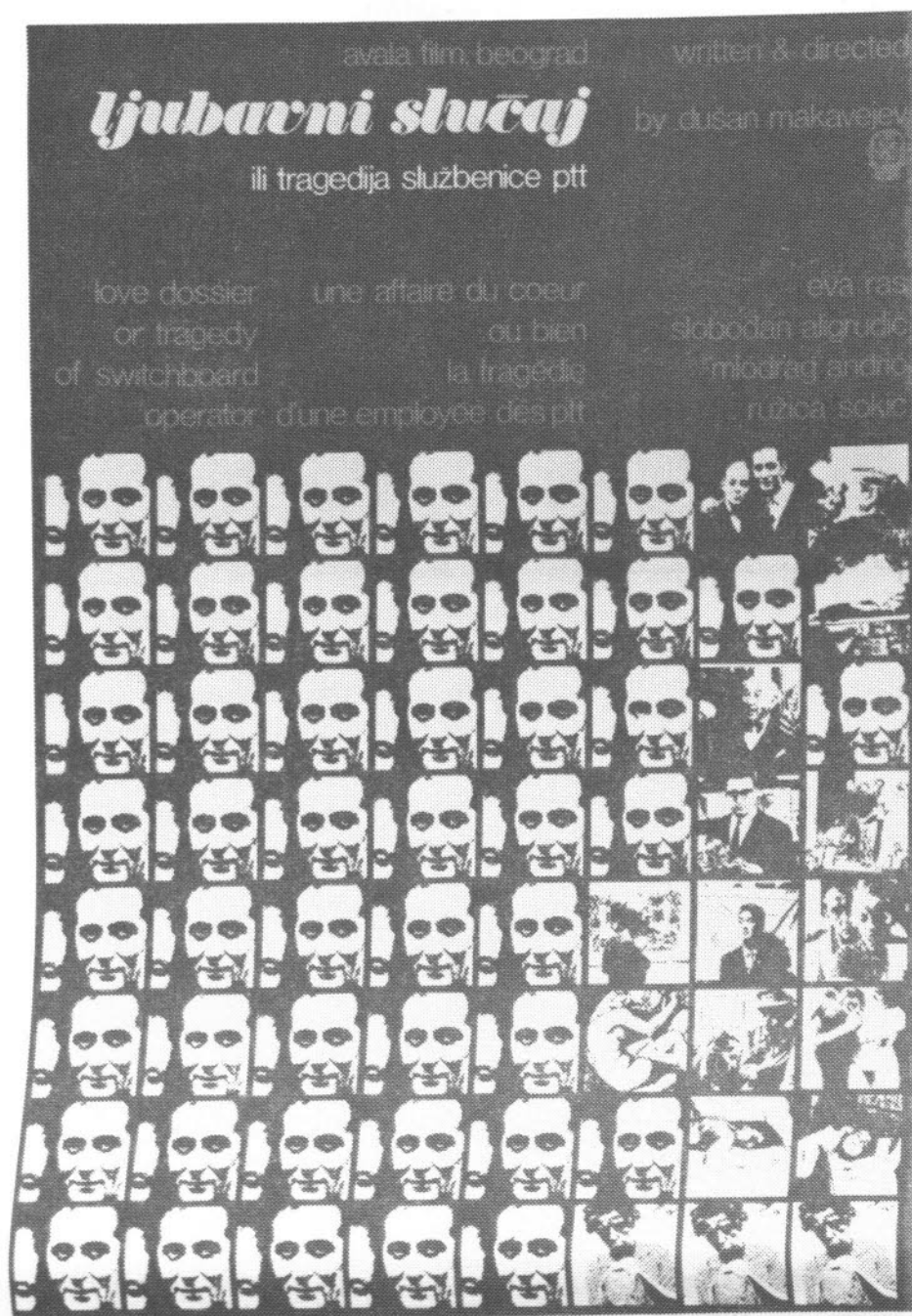
I was driven by my curiosity and conviction of the importance being a witness. I wanted to march in steps of John Dos Passos, John Steinbeck, Caldwell and Jack London. Babel and Pilnyak, as well.

I was unaware of its strong style. When late Louis Marcorelles called it "direct cinema", I just liked it. 1994 - For Second Retrospective in Japan





## 2. Love Affair, or A Case of a Missing Switchboard Operator, 1967.



### LOVE AFFAIR by Yvette Biro

"Europe is haunted by a specter, the phantom of antifilm," the cry was heard many years ago. Well, the phantom did do some damage but was unable to shake the world to its foundation. However, it has brought to the surface a number of constructive elements as well.

The first step was the crushing of the story. There had been numerous precedents for his, but now the way it was done and the new integration it led to proved to be interesting. We may sum it all up very briefly thus: the principle of montage was replaced by the method of collage; the earlier narrative and logical discontinuity was exchanged for a totally heterogeneous texture. Beyond the breaking down of chronology, the selection of all the components became anti-traditionally expansive: the camera became omnivorous. It now appears to have gobbled up everything: fiction, documents, notes, story fragments, playful commentaries, and animated parodies - absolutely everything. At first, mistakenly, it was called an essayistic method, but in truth all that happened was that the one-dimensionality of depiction was relegated to the background in favor of a multidimensional reflection; alongside the sketchy presentation of the story and various approaches and interpretations, a second and a third dimension were added.

The most illustrative example of this is perhaps Makavejev's *Love Affair*. The film opens with a sexologist's treatise, whose seriousness we have no reason to doubt. Still, the peculiar tone and overly scientific approach immediately cause associations of another, more ironic meaning. And then begins the astonishingly insignificant story: the love affair of a telephone operator and a rat exterminator. Suddenly obscurities and dark spots intrude; little fragments flash up: a dissecting room with the unrecognizable corpse of a young woman, a necklace, and underwear held as material evidence. And then another dry, scientific lecture, this time in the jargon of criminology, but it is so detailed that we cannot make out the case itself. In the meantime, the affair proceeds on its

banal way: cake-baking, lovemaking, waking together in bed, turning in together at night, etc. And then comes another layer: the events in the life of the little town as they, too, peek into the story: preparations for a May Day demonstration, emblems of a forcibly politicized public life, all interestingly linked with television programs of similar inspirations.

Were we to analyze the structure of these layers, we might distinguish two main axes. The first would be a horizontal one proceeding on the path of regular melodrama, where event follows event: love, jealousy, infidelity, and death. But this progression is continually up against a counterpoint of various retarding interruptions: scientific, criminological, and historical viewpoints offering themselves as explanations. This is the second axis, a vertical one, for it is consciously independent of the dimension of time, and it keeps contact not only with the story but also with the several layers of alternating hierarchical positions. The result is a peculiar relativity: the harmony is nothing but some sort of mocking and playful irony.

How charmingly limited each partial explanation becomes! The more expansive they try to be, each in its own way, the more obvious it is that the effort is greater than the result, for the rights of the other explanations cannot be denied either. And thus, the multitude of motivations turns into a huge question about the irony of motivations. One certainly remains - that of facts, which speak of the secret nature of human emotions, or, if you like, of the ignorance with which we view - scared and confused, humble and haughty - the unpredictable.

Makavejev's method is far more complex than the apparently irregular ways of Godard's films. In the former's work the commentaries mentioned above embody real and functioning explanations of existence, and their mutual allusions and interdependence give them a completeness - I emphasize again, an ironic completeness. They speak of the ignorance of knowledge, of the relativity of our efforts, but without reaching a stage of total denial or resignation. In the very core there is something unspoilable: the simple vegetative quality of everyday life, its passionate yet grotesque intensity born of melodrama. In this light, the trivial is also meaningful, for death endows the most modest things with a serious tone. On the other hand, the serious can hope only for a fallible end: competence and scientific ambition are surpassed only by obtuseness. Ultimately, all these elements create a puzzlelike master structure, in which forward motion is realized through continual inferences and countermovements. And we understand that the passing of time is ceaselessly charged with retrospective allusions, since whatever is unfolding before us is only an irreparable memory of the past.

Makavejev's film is a precise illustration of a wry witticism concerning deep shallows and shallow depths. It turns traditional values upside down, yet keeps them together and makes them reflect one another - and what is this, if not the reconstruction of the groping nature of our thinking, the uncertain pendulum swing of the inquiring mind? The cleverness of the method lies in that it shows how everything is realized by the grace of contact and its unexpected gestures. Thought lives only in the oscillating severance and reestablishment of ties, in dark spots and illuminating fragments. And thus the common, the unconscious, acquires a secret meaning and real depth, while the sophisticated are super-brainy is seen as comic and transparent. Still, they are complementary and belong together, and, just as in ballet, their shifting positions are never final but are rather the very essence of the event at the moment.

Reprinted from Yvette Biro, *Profane Mythology: The Savage Mind of the Cinema* (Indiana University Press, 1982)





### 3. Innocence Unprotected, 1968.



#### INNOCENCE UNPROTECTED

The new edition of a good old movie  
prepared, ornamented and annotated by  
Dusan Makavejev

In 1942, in occupied Belgrade, locksmith and acrobat ALEKSIC made a FULL LENGTH feature film about HIMSELF. Sad and pretty orphan Nada is being pushed into the arms of rich and repulsive Mr. Petrovic by her shameless step-mother. Nada's true love - acrobat Aleksic - saves her after many breath-taking feats of daring.

ALEKSIC was organizer, script writer, director and star. This film deals with bodily strength and will power, social injustice and tender love. All deadly feats and attractions are real. The film is naive and cruel at the same time; primitive make-up is constantly being mixed with real blood and tears.

A peculiar cinematic time machine is set in motion by this material enriched with new color footage and contemporary moral confusion.

"Innocence Unprotected" is a document of human emotions. It is a film about:

1. Innocence which falls a prey to unscrupulousness and low intentions;
2. Strength and feats as an ideal;
3. The courage of a poor man, who comes into conflict with a man of a higher social status whose intentions are to exploit;
4. The victory of love and happiness.

"Innocence Unprotected" is the art of a city 'demimonde', a world of workman and artisans, who in normal conditions live on the margin of an industrial and off-the-peg culture and morals, between café and circus entertainment and cheap social literature and melodramatic trash.

The occupation, with its moral anarcho-liberalism and chances for semi-legal transactions, enabled these people to express themselves both in busi-

ness and art. I am sure that such a hopeless and loud melodrama as "Innocence Unprotected" could have been made only in a society free of hypocrisy, or with a thin layer of pretence as was Serbia during the war.

The film "Innocence Unprotected" is interesting as the story of a hero who really exists, and who plays himself. The film is the author's poem about himself; the poem presents only facts at the most exciting moments: documentary shots.

The film does not take the viewer for a fool.

Explanation of the genre: following the film, the viewer, will spontaneously take sides in accordance with his own predisposition. He will believe he is following a melodrama with adventure and moral dilemmas, to which certain documentary material has been added, like some kind of film footnotes, which can be ignored. Others will be convinced they are following a modern document on the still living creators of the first Yugoslav talkie, combined with a large number of quotations from the film itself... Feel free to side with one or the other view: it depends exclusively of what you consider the first and what the second; whether you start from the present towards the past or from fiction towards reality. The third approach which would make me the happiest, I would call the rotating one: the film is fiction at one moment, a document at another, and he who watches it has to re-tune himself. During this time, or additionally, he will notice that the borders fade, that there is a lot of the present in the past, and something from the past that still lasts, that reality is full of illusions and documents full of fictitiousness, and to what extent illusions are real and constitute a kind of document.

In fact, a montage of attractions, an amusing and intelligent treatment.

Dusan Makavejev, 1968.

#### CARNIVAL PARODY AND INNOCENCE TRANSCENDED

By Andrew S. Horton

Makavejev is most often identified with a postmodernist tradition bounded by the satiric surrealism of Luis Buñuel, on the one hand, and the dialectical play of documentary and illusionist elements found in Dziga Vertov and Jean-Luc Godard (Eagle). Such remarks are not a disservice, but they do not go far enough. For Makavejev is the cinematic heir to a long Serbian tradition of folk parody and humor, which means his films are premodernist as well as postmodernist.

Simply stated, the facts are these. Serbia was under Turkish domination from 1389 until the late nineteenth century. During this occupation, the Serbs preserved their identity through their language and their oral folk epic poetry. The folk epics dating from the fourteenth century fall into several categories, but one of the most popular is known as the "Marko cycle." This group of poems features a hero who is a Serb outlaw ambiguously working for and against the Turks. He is a slave to no one, however, and manages to triumph through deception and guile more often than not, although he is at times the butt of the jokes and abuse of others.

A sense of folk, carnivalesque parody and humor expressed in such an "outlaw mentality" has thus long been of immense importance to the Serbian national character. According to Yugoslav scholar Svetozar Koljevic, Serbian folk laughter was clearly a defense mechanism against the despair of life under the Turks. As such, it emerged as a fantasy or carnivalesque triumph over the oppressive enemy. "Laughter thus becomes a kind of power for the helpless," he writes, "and this ancient function of comedy in life and art is nowhere so richly mirrored in Serbo-Croatian epic singing as in the poems about Marko Kraljevic" (209).

In the poem "The Wedding of Marko Kraljevic," for instance, Marko is a complete parody of the traditional epic hero. In his freewheeling speech, this Balkan outlaw mocks the most sacred customs and norms of Serbian patriarchal culture. He cannot find a woman to marry who pleases both him and his mother. But when he finally finds such a bride, he is forced to contend with the lustful ambitions of his best man. When he discovers his trusted friend has attempted to seduce his wife-to-be the night before the wedding, Marko kills his best man in a scene that becomes a parody of a romantic death scene, ending with the ironic line, "And of one body, he made two bodies."





As examples of folk poems, composed anonymously and passed down from generation to generation, these works are clear examples of parody on a carnivalesque level. Furthermore, they are oral folk songs that were sung at festive occasions, including carnivals. Thus, Marko emerges as a double-edged folk hero: he is both irreverent fool and popular hero, a trickster tricked and a triumphant common man able to survive under oppressive circumstances.

Such a double vision reflects the power of the carnivalesque to celebrate the individual's potential while critiquing his or her limitations. Finally, the outlaw mentality of Serbian parody is a statement through laughter against oppression of any persuasion. The outlaw exists happily and gloriously outside all sociopolitical norms. And yet, as in the case of Marko's wedding, the outlaw lends validity to the rituals he parodies by his participation in them.

Obviously there are other forms of carnivalesque humor in Yugoslavia including a popular surrealistic strain in art and printed literature. Most recently, for instance, Milorad Pavić's innovative novel *Dictionary of the Khazars*, published in "male" and "female" editions, playfully evokes such a tradition as it invites the reader to experience the "narrative" in any order he or she pleases with the least satisfying approach being, according to one reviewer, the straightforward, traditional method (Coover).

Keeping in mind Bakhtin's twin perspective of celebration and critique, we should adopt a double approach to Makavejev as well. On the one hand, as I have already suggested, we should consider the degree to which Makavejev's films are part of a long tradition of carnivalesque culture. It's worth noting, for instance, that Makavejev introduces the carnivalesque into his films beginning with the first scene in his first feature, *Man Is Not a Bird*. At a carnival in a small Serbian town a magician appears who lectures the crowds on "magic," suggesting that under his hypnotic spells, they can learn to liberate themselves from earthly cares and "fly."

I wish also to explore how his films function as metafilms critiquing film language and history while simultaneously celebrating cinema's potential as a form of liberated personal expression (Rose). Finally, and even more significantly, we then will be in a better position to appreciate how such carnivalesque parodies critique the levels of political repression Makavejev exposes as operating within his country and, in *WR*, abroad as well.

In *Innocence Unprotected*, Makavejev manipulates six narrative levels to create a critique of an early Serbian film and the dimensions of Nazi destruction and Quisling collaboration as well as a celebration of film as a medium of liberation and self-expression. Briefly told, the film's title is actually that of the first feature sound film made in Serbia. Ironically it was not made by a filmmaker but by a Serbian daredevil entertainer, Dragoljub Aleksic, in 1942 during

the German occupation of Yugoslavia. Makavejev uses a number of sequences from the original black-and-white film, which is a naive romantic melodrama involving Aleksic's love (yes, he stars in the film as well!) for a young beauty, Milica, whom he must protect from a lusty old fellow, Mr. Petrovic.

Employing the original film as his basic text, Makavejev cross-cuts between Aleksic's film, documentary footage of the German occupation at that time (also in black and white) and contemporary (1967) interviews in color with Aleksic and others who worked on the film a quarter century earlier. There are also documentary sequences of Aleksic performing daring feats around Belgrade in the past and as an aging man in the present.

But this is not all. Makavejev's carnivalesque collage goes two steps further: as the film progresses, some twenty years before the American "colorization" process for old films, he begins to hand-paint objects within the frame of Aleksic's film (the overly red lips of the heroine in one scene, the golden wine on the table in another; both with the color splashing out of the confines of the object as in a child's first efforts to "stay within the lines"). And he makes use of the sound track to juxtapose incongruous popular and political songs to add aural as well as visual complexity to his parody.

The effect of such a seemingly random cinematic scrapbook is one of liberating laughter and of unexpected pleasure in the savoring of the multiplicity of incongruous "texts" that emerge in our, the viewers', minds. Such a free-for-all format that is so strongly anti-Aristotelean and counter to classical Hollywood narrative invites us to enter the text wherever we please. As Makavejev has said, "What I smuggle into my films, does not necessarily have to be what you smuggle out of the film for yourself" (Oumano, 254).

Consider Makavejev's presentation of this protagonist, Dragoljub Aleksic, the man and the entertainer (daredevil and filmmaker/actor/performer). Like Marko the outlaw, Aleksic emerges as a popular hero/fool/entertainer. A simple man who has risen to fame on his own merits, Aleksic is obviously an exaggerated reflection and parody of the Serbian people. His strength lies not in politics, poetry, public service, or religion. Rather, he has the ability to hang from airplanes by his teeth (chomping a swing at the end of a rope dangled from the plane), explode sticks of dynamite in his mouth, be shot from canons, or balance various objects on a high wire without a net below. As an actor, of course, he is laughable, but his "innocent" energy and daring rescues cannot help but entertain us and the Yugoslav audiences who first saw the film.

When one adds the 1967 interviews, a portrait of a man with an insatiable ego emerges. Is Makavejev simply satirizing Aleksic using the man's own words and film to create an auto-critique? Certainly we laugh at Aleksic throughout the film. He is so completely without a sense of irony himself, so unaware how bizarre his stunts appear to us, particularly because time itself works against him: the 1967 footage shows him pumping iron in a ludicrous attempt to maintain the body that is now long past its prime. But in a spirit similar to the freedom of carnival, Makavejev draws no conclusions, makes no easy judgments. Aleksic—daredevil, youthful actor, and again man—simply is. And certainly on a level beyond laughter the audience is free to admire this "outlaw-hero" as a survivor and as someone who obviously has enjoyed himself entertaining others.

Makavejev's interjection of history (the Nazi occupation) adds a much darker hue to his carnivalesque collage. He skillfully cuts, for instance, between a shot of the evil Mr. Petrovic lustfully approaching the young heroine and documentary footage of the German entry into a bombed-out Belgrade where countless dead lie strewn in the rubble (20,000 died on the first day of bombing in 1942). Other cuts are to the Quisling Serbian government.

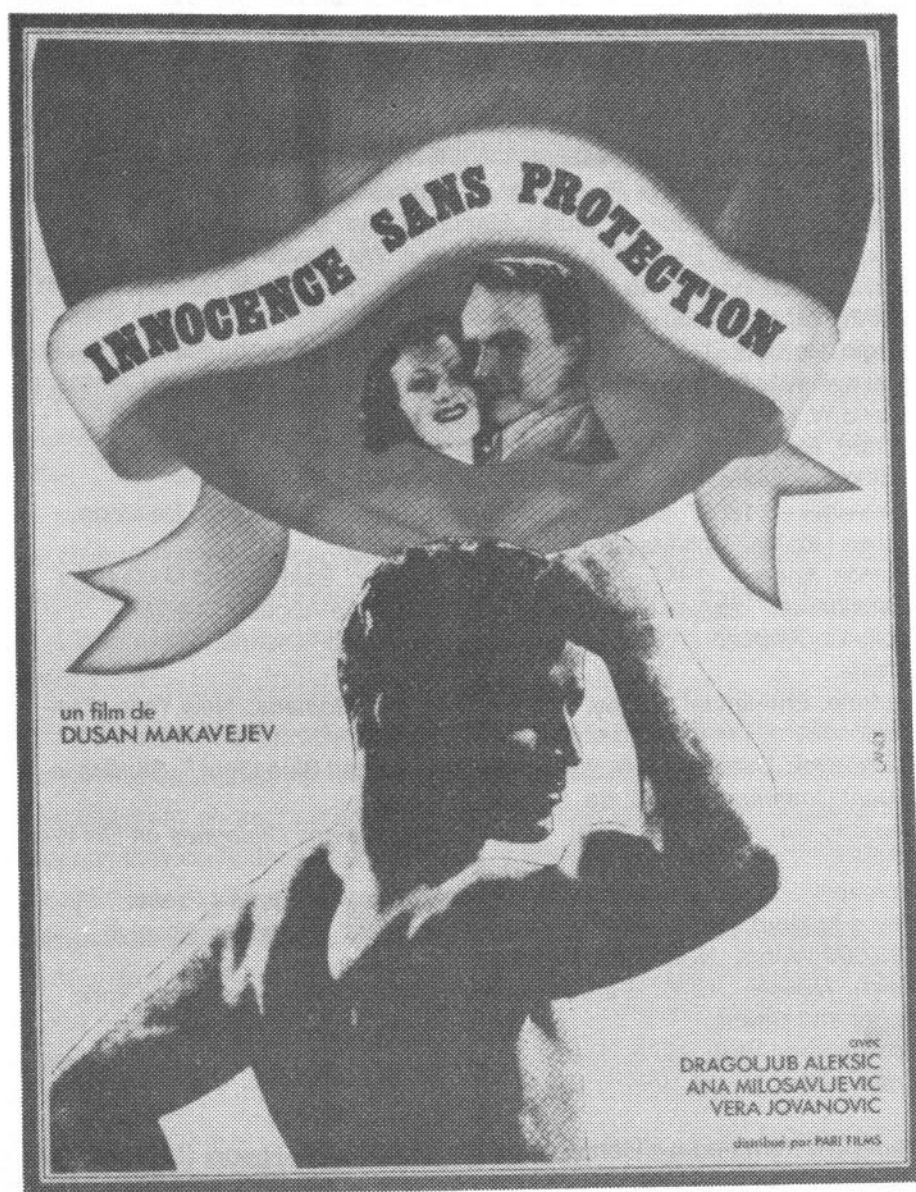
How are we to read such jarring juxtapositions between melodramatic cinema and tragic history? Bakhtin would suggest that the importance of ambiguity in carnivalesque laughter is that it can be read in multiple ways. In carnival, therefore, ambiguity itself becomes a virtue, a form of freedom from limitations, dogma, didacticism. Such a polyphony is for Bakhtin at the heart of carnival because it means that under the spell of the carnivalesque, the potential for surprise and delight is never lost. Thus, such a multiingredient narrative gumbo as Makavejev serves up keeps alive the possibility of change, of a fresh perspective, of a new experience.

In the case of *Innocence Unprotected*, we can locate at least six layers of possible response:

1. The triviality of Aleksic's film viewed against the horror of history (world War II, the occupation)
2. The surprising similarity between the simplistic "good versus evil" scenario of Aleksic's pop film and Hitler's master plan.







3. The "innocence unprotected" of both the Yugoslav people in the wake of the Nazi invasion and the Quisling rule and that of the young heroine, Milica, within the 1942 film text

4. The power of film (art), no matter how silly or trivial, to reflect the desire of a people to transcend (escape) crushing social reality

5. The political implications behind a seemingly unpolitical work of art or entertainment (at one point during the documentary footage of Aleksic's stunts, Makavejev alternates songs of praise written for/about Aleksic—themselves a parody of hero songs in a pop vein—and the Communist Internationale as well as a Soviet hymn, "Wide Is My Native Land")

6. The questionable self-promotional tactics used by those of whatever political ideology, which can be seen as no more sophisticated than Aleksic's more naive and therefore acceptable and honest self-absorption

For those unaware of Yugoslav history and culture, Aleksic appears as a self-parody of a kind of Balkan Charles Atlas crossed with a ham Hollywood actor, yet his irrepressible energy and optimism are contagious. For Yugoslavs the semiotics, the reading of the film's images, is more complex. For in the spirit of the traditional Marko outlaw mentality, Aleksic embodies the innocence, strengths, illusions, and weaknesses of the Yugoslavs (especially the Serbs) themselves. Makavejev's cross-cutting between history and film forces us all to see this parody in its sociopolitical-historical context as well. And the common realization that the arts in central Europe and the Balkans have become metaphorical and allegorical out of a need to transcend shades of censorship imposed by socialist/communist regimes prompts us to go even further (although clearly Yugoslavia had the most censorship-free culture of these socialist nations).

*Innocence Unprotected* was released in 1968 at the height of the Yugoslav cultural renaissance that was just as extensive if not more so than the more publicized cultural boom in Czechoslovakia during the same years. By that time Makavejev had already made an international name for himself with his first two features. But *Innocence* is an even more significant film than many realized at the time. In that all important year, 1968, this film by a leading practitioner of the Black Cinema group was a glance backward to the origins of Serbian cinema, a critique of the political and artistic naivete of those origins as reflected in Aleksic's film, and a comment on the ongoing uneasy relationship between art and ideology. Furthermore, it is Bakhtin who helps us appreciate yet another level—that of festivity and celebration—that such an ironic sense of parody embodies.

In this sense parody embraces the tradition it has spoofed. An ongoing dialogue with the artistic and political/historical tradition has been established. It is this dynamic interaction with a tradition that Bakhtin describes as "the dialogic imagination." Carnival laughter becomes a metatext extending the tradition of Aleksic's original text in new ways. Makavejev, after all, calls his film by the same title as Aleksic's film rather than, let's say *Innocence Revisited*. If Aleksic is a naive folk hero/fool, Makavejev in his own way is also an ambiguous folk artist, but one who must undo the constructions of various forms of "logic" in order to become naive again. As in the sanctioned freedom of carnival, Makavejev parodies but does not destroy the object of laughter. Thus, the Yugoslav New Wave builds on a carnivalesque spirit of irreverence, naivete, and energy, with one important difference: as contemporary artists aware of international politics and art, these filmmakers are self-conscious about the innocence around them. Innocence, like anything else viewed through carnivalesque laughter, becomes both a positive and a negative characteristic.

On a political/ideological level, "innocence" is a double-edged attribute. On the one hand, there is the innocence of the people duped by the politicians, which is often not innocence at all but a lack of courage to speak out. On the other hand, there is the simpleminded political innocence practiced by tyrants/fascists who are self-absorbed and unaware of the subtleties of any complex reality. It is on this last political level that Makavejev's films would have been seen not only as a playful parody with serious implications concerning the occupation but also, by extension, of the more recent Yugoslav political reality. The use of Russian hymns as Aleksic performs his feats of derring-do could not help but imply Joseph Stalin, for instance.

Indeed, the echoes reach out to Marshal Tito himself. Nowhere is such a connection directly made. But simply because of the way in which Makavejev forces us to constantly contrast and compare, critique and celebrate a world of film and of politics, the possibility is there. Those in the Yugoslav audience were aware that Tito was very much a self-made man, and a fine showman at that. As a "strongman," Tito, like Aleksic, was made up of many of the contradictions that a peasant "innocence" bestowed upon him. He was a savior, a lover, and an outlaw (as a communist in the 1930s, he was constantly hiding and running from royalist officials and laws). But obviously even for those in the audience who connect Aleksic with Tito, that leap of association remains within the confines of carnivalesque parody rather than as a direct political critique.

Finally, let me suggest the exhilarating effect on the audience of Makavejev's carnivalesque narrative collages. His seemingly random dialectical cutting appears to be a form of spontaneous and whimsical tomfoolery. Such ease deceives. Like the best work in the tradition of parody, *Innocence* is actually carefully and intricately orchestrated and calculated. But the impression is of an almost total sense of freedom seldom seen on the screen anywhere.

Makavejev calls war, repression (political and sexual), and all forms of fascism into question. But he is too subtle and, yes, carnivalesque a director to end his film with, for instance, the "logical" upbeat choice of footage from the liberation of Belgrade at the end of World War II. Instead, we are treated to yet another surprise: Aleksic's film triumphs over a Quisling newsreel. Some of the documentary sequences used are from the "official," compromised newsreels of the time, and so on yet another lever of parody, Makavejev proves that time and the liberation of Yugoslavia have not been kind to the orchestrated scenes of hyped-up victories of the Nazis and happy, productive, pro-Nazi Yugoslav factory workers and peasants.

Toward the end of Makavejev's film we see newsreel footage of the funeral of a Quisling official intercut between the wedding celebration of Aleksic and Milica. The funeral is inserted between the dancing of the most popular traditional of all Yugoslav dances, the kolo (circle dance), and shots of the wedding feast in which one girl's dress is colorized by hand to match the blues and whites of the Yugoslav flag. The funeral is, of course, a foreshadowing of the death of the occupation: the official buried was murdered by a partisan. In a significant manner, Makavejev's film holds true to the carnivalesque pattern of parody in "The Wedding of Marko Kraljevic." The traditional and romantic rituals of the marriage ceremony are both celebrated and disrupted by the murder of a threatening force. The overall tone of both poem and film, however, remains one of joyful exuberance.

For better or for worse, individual freedom is championed throughout *Innocence Unprotected*. Like the Balkans themselves, Makavejev emerges as a complicated and curious combination. In his work we can trace Marxist influences (the dialectical structuring of his film owes much to Sergei Eisenstein





and Vertov), Wilhelm Reich's emphasis on personal/sexual liberation, and, as I have begun to document, a rich Serbian tradition as exemplified in the outlaw Marko. All of these forces find a twin focus in carnival parody. But after such knowledge—the destructive power of the occupation and of time—what salvation? The answer is given in carnival laughter. Laughter of the people, by the people, and for the people as individuals emerges as a form of salvation.

As metatext, parody seldom remains pure. The tendency, as in *Don Quixote*, is to spill into something else, and that something else in Miguel de Cervantes and in Makavejev is a bittersweet sympathy for the central character. It is Makavejev's remarkable accomplishment that having celebrated and critiqued so much on so many levels, he is able to leave us with emotion for Aleksic. The contemporary interviews reveal an aging man who is still able to smash boards on his head and bend iron with his teeth. But as the camera pulls back in the closing minutes, we see he is standing on crutches: a sudden admission that he has not only aged but that one of his stunts backfired.

Strongman and clown, Aleksic is nevertheless human. As he hobbles away awkwardly, Makavejev ultimately leaves us beyond comedy itself. Death is the metatext of metatexts and the last, dark laugh. But the joyful laughter that has gone before guarantees we will not take this quiet ending as sentimental. Makavejev shows us that innocence can be protected through knowing laughter.

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Reprinted from Andrew Horton, ed., *Comedy/Cinema/Theory* (University of California Press, 1991)

## 4. WR: Mysteries of the Organism, 1971.



#### SUMMERHILL SCHOOL, LEISTON, SUFFOLK

(Founded 1921)

(Proprietors: A.S.N. Ltd.)

Telephone: Leiston 830540

Principals:

A.S. Neill

Ena Neill

21 Dec 71

Dear Pallanca,

Here is my sincere opinion. If it is to be published I want it to be uncut. I am most grateful to you for letting me see it.

Yours,

Neill

Pardon my bad typing, the only sign so far of senility at 88.

### The Mysteries of the Organism

I have never seen so much controversy over a film. The British press unanimously praised its artistry but many Reich followers were driven to fury over it, calling it obscene, anti-Reich, emotionally plagued. I was too old and frail to go to London to see it, but the management very kindly and spontaneously sent the film 100 miles to my local cinema for a private view, feeling, I suppose, that after twenty years intimate friendship with Reich my views might be of value.

I can imagine Makavejev's saying to himself: "I have discovered a great man with a great message, that the world is sick because its sex is sick. Humanity cannot love; it can only fuck, and its guilty sex gets transformed into all sorts of hates - expressed in stiff stomachs, brutality, rape, crime, war, in short everything that is anti-love and therefore anti-life. I want the wide world to know of Reich's message. I shall make a film that will tell the story pictorially."



The producer suffered from a handicap. He had read all that Reich had written but he never knew the man personally, so that he could not know of traits in Reich's character that in a way said more than his written words.

I think the film succeeded in portraying the evils of sex repression, the juxtaposition of free bodies and flashes of stiff hateful Communist speakers, although why only Communists? The stomach of a British soldier is as stiff as that of a Russian one. Sex hatred is outside politics. I thought the story of the life-hating Russian ice skater not only dramatic but true. When, after giving way to his sex impulse, he beheaded the girl with his sharp skate he was telling the story of every sex murder; he was telling the story of the American journalists who began the process that led to Reich's death by writing poisonous articles. They were no more evil than the Russian skater was; they were poor, warped people whose sex had been made dirty and guilty in their cradle days and when Reich came along with his sex of love and tenderness, like the skater, they could not face it; like him they had to kill what to them was the Devil. The film gave this part of the story exceedingly well. (cf. Wilde's: "Man kills what he loves.")

It is when the producer tries to show the positive, healthy side of sex that he falls down, but, to be fair to him, no one else could have succeeded. I have told many photographers who came to my school that they could not film freedom; they could snap happy faces but they could do that in the playground of a strict school. So with sex. You can film perverted, sick sex, snaps of rape or flagellation, but I cannot see how healthy sex can be made pictorial. You could snap a Reich couple in bed but if you snapped a dozen sick sex couples in bed who could tell the difference? There was only one way to show what Reich meant by healthy sex and it was the wrong way. Some scenes gave the impression that sex freedom meant a free fuck for all. I know that Reich would have been furious at some of the scenes. The picture of the girl manipulating a penis so that she could make a plaster cast of it would have driven him to fury. For Reich was a puritan about sex. He hated sex jokes; he hated words like fuck, lay, screw... "Male aggressive sex with no tenderness, no love, no consideration for the pleasure of the partner. Women don't fuck."

And the crowds of naked youths in sex attitudes would have sickened him. In his *Listen, Little Man* he tells of a student in his lab in Organon who came out of an orgone accumulator naked in the presence of women, tells of his anger against the erring youth. In Maine he would not allow me to accompany him when swimming, but that may have been due partly to his skin disease about which he was naturally sensitive. In view of Reich's hatred of the word fuck I think it was a mistake to use it so often in the captions, for to a sick viewer it could give the impression: "If you want to be happy fuck and fuck freely."

I am not blaming the producer; I am not throwing accusations at him of plague, pornography etc., words that can mean anything. I am taking him as a sincere artist who believed in Reich but failed to illustrate Reich's message because, as I say, it cannot be shown pictorially. He has been accused of laughing at Reich, sneering at him, making him a sadist. The film did not give me that impression but the too protracted screaming of Lowen's patients could have given the layman the impression that orgone therapy meant cruelty. By the way Lowen's technique had no resemblance to that of Reich when I took his therapy in 1937, and frankly, I don't think that the scenes were typical of Lowen's methods.

Some shots appeared to me to be irrelevant... Reich's talk about space-ships, the Rangeley shopkeepers and their tattle, Time was too short. After hearing Peter and Eva Reich, Lowen and Sharaf I am sure that no layman could have got the faintest grasp of what Reich stood for. I think the film should have had a simple introduction.

"Wilhelm Reich said that the world is sick because it can not love, and it changes healthy sex into hate and crime and war. This film is an attempt to illustrate by its art what the genius meant."

I can understand why the press thought the film a masterpiece. By the way no paper in England called it pornographic. It is a work of art and its photography is outstanding. It is being shown to crowded houses in London and I wish someone would buttonhole the viewers and ask them what they thought of it. Some have said to me they laughed like hell but I saw no fun in it myself. Although it did not touch children the film was almost a dramatization of *The Mass Psychology of Fascism* which told how the powers in any state see to it that their underlings will never challenge their power by using home and school to castrate the young, to make them guilty about sex and authority, so that when adult they are castrated sheep, hence a nation's following a super-anti-life Hitler. Indeed, had the film dealt with the murder of children it would have reached a bigger audience of troubled parents.

It is a fine film but it isn't Reich, or at least only Reich in part - the discoverer of stiff stomachs and anti-lifeness. But it may have a salutary effect in this way, that it has brought to light the conflict about Reich that has raged since his death. I once wrote him saying that one day they will make him a saint - St. Willie, and my prophecy has come true. Communism became a religion with its high priests and its heretic diversionists...sent to prison or a madhouse. There are too many signs that Reich has become a god. Sects have arisen, orthodox and heretical, and unReichian abuse is thrown around. Partly Reich's fault in coining the phrase emotional plague which has taken the meaning of sin in the Christian church. One accused me of emotional plague when I said that Reich had no evidence that his trial was engineered by Red Fascists in Moscow. I know now why Reich so often said that he wanted no disciples.



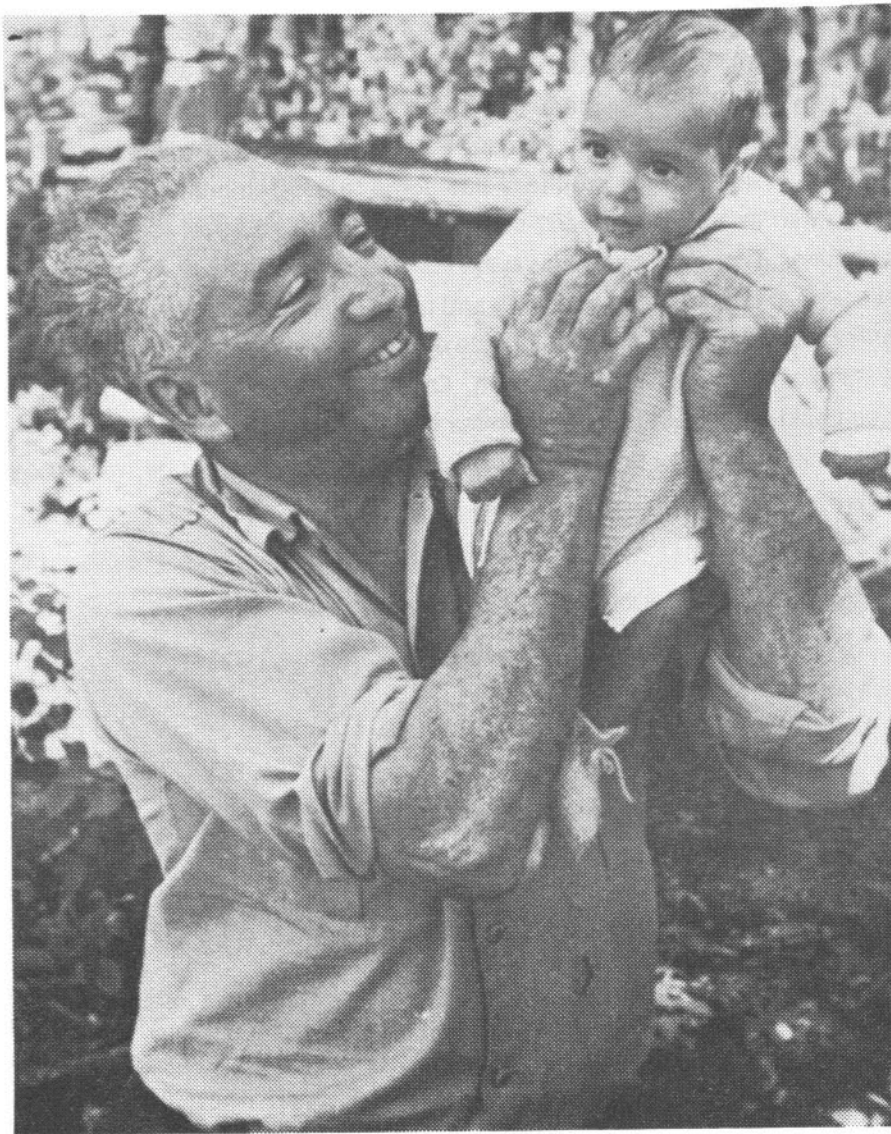
But what has all that to do with the film? This, that an emotional approach to it is the wrong one. Here I am sure that Old Reich would agree. To cry that Makavejev is a plague merchant out to kill Reich is not criticism; no one can tell what another's motives are, conscious or unconscious. To me Reich is the greatest psychologist since Freud, but when I criticized him for flying off the handle over some trifling incident at the breakfast table, was I indulging in plague? So I cannot judge this film by thinking of possible motives in the producer. If I were to criticize I could ask the warring Reich sects to examine the plague in themselves. I have tried to see the film from my own point of view and from the view I think that Reich would have taken. The film is a masterpiece that came short in picturing the Master. It bit off more than it could chew...it takes years of mastication to get the taste of the Reich fruit. Whether it will encourage viewers to read Reich I cannot say. I do not think it will harm Reich, for it isn't Reich; it is Reich plus Makavejev, just as *Richard III* is Richard plus Shakespeare. The most honest opinion, as I see it, is that the film was excellent in showing what is anti-life, but found it impossible to depict healthy love pictorially. Maybe it would be charitable to say that the producer in all his reading of Reich failed to see the puritan in him.

It may be that the higher animals do not make atom bombs and beat their children because their sex is healthy. Cows and horses don't rape and strangle. Reich was a higher animal. He kept guns to protect himself from enemies of the Ku Klux Klan type, but he never killed animals; in Organon there were No Hunting notices. Of all men he was pro-life and his possible verdict on this film might have been..."It is a brave attempt to give the world my message that genital love is necessary if man is to survive, but fucking is not the answer. Intercourse is only the supreme factor in a love relationship and the film does not, cannot show that by fucking in groups or masturbation. I have often been asked if children should see their parents embracing in bed and my answer has always been, No, the embrace is a private matter between two lovers. This the film could not show."

A.S. Neill







## DIRECTOR MAKES GODARD TACTICS WORK

By Roger Ebert

It is an item of faith in many serious film circles that Jean-Luc Godard is the most influential movie director of our time. Well, maybe so, maybe not. The problem is to decide who, or what, he has influenced. After spending five or six years making films that were revolutionary in style, Godard began about 1965 to make films he actually intended to further revolution.

Most of these films have played to campus groups or film buffs, and that's about it. The most successful, *Weekend*, was admired for its style but its political content was ignored. Nor have any of his radical films had any visible effect on real events. As the French director Louis Malle observed at this year's New York Film Festival: "Godard has been making films to inflame the masses, but in a style to bewilder them."

If Godard has not influenced events, however, he has certainly influenced other directors — mostly for the worse, alas. While the unique cutting and shooting style of early Godard like *Breathless* has been effortlessly absorbed into the film vocabulary, Godard's extreme recent stylistic experiments have proven indigestible in the hands of other directors. A few critics advanced the possibility that Godard, like James Joyce, had carried his style to its theoretical limit; that other directors might imitate it, but never extend it.

That was before the work of a strange Yugoslavian genius named Dusan Makavejev began to make itself known. He was overlooked at first because Yugoslavia wasn't exactly thought to HAVE a national cinema.

It was with *Innocence Unprotected*, which won the first-place award in the 1968 Chicago Film Festival, that I first became aware that Makavejev existed. It is an awareness I'll never be able to shake; Makavejev is the only director I'm familiar with who has been influenced to the good by Godard. Who has successfully managed to use the Godard vocabulary — especially his montages of real and imaginary people, events and quotations — and still express his own personal vision. Moreover, Makavejev's films are wonderfully funny and entertaining, something that cannot always be said about Godard.

Makavejev's newest feature, *WR: The Mysteries of the Organism*, was featured at this year's New York Film Festival (and is scheduled for the Chicago festival in November). It seems likely to be his first commercial success in America, although I didn't find it quite so insanely brilliant as *Innocence Unprotected*.

That movie contained the entire footage of the first Serbian talkie, an anti-Nazi 1942 melodrama about an acrobat.

There is a man in it who states: "Gentlemen, I assure the entire Yugoslavian cinema came out of my navel. In fact, I have made certain inquiries and am in a position to state positively that the entire Bulgarian cinema came out of my navel as well."

The director might well have been Makavejev, whose new film takes on the Soviet cinema the way Tito took on Stalin. To the degree that it can be described, it expresses Makavejev's belief that Wilhelm Reich's theories about orgone energy, if properly applied, could cure what ails Soviet Marxism. But that is the briefest of summaries.

Makavejev has, in a way, taken on two state religions, Marxism in Russia and psychiatry in America. He thinks Reich is the answer to both. Or he pretends to. In fact, by juxtaposing the completely incompatible elements in his film, he seems to be trying to reduce everything to the absurd — a level at which ideologies cease to exist and people can simply live and love.

Because his films don't take their subjects seriously (indeed, because the SUBJECT of his films is that nothing should be taken too seriously), Makavejev seems to have found an interesting way out of Godard's dilemma. Godard, who has been taking politics very seriously indeed, discovered all the same that he persists in being a filmmaker after all, and not a theoretician. Maybe Makavejev knew that about him all along.

Reprinted from *Chicago International Film Festival*, November 5-20, 1971.

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originality. Must be  
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**Seeing WR is a joyride—  
the most exhilarating  
trip of film surprises  
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**Brilliantly original.  
Gleeful irreverence.**

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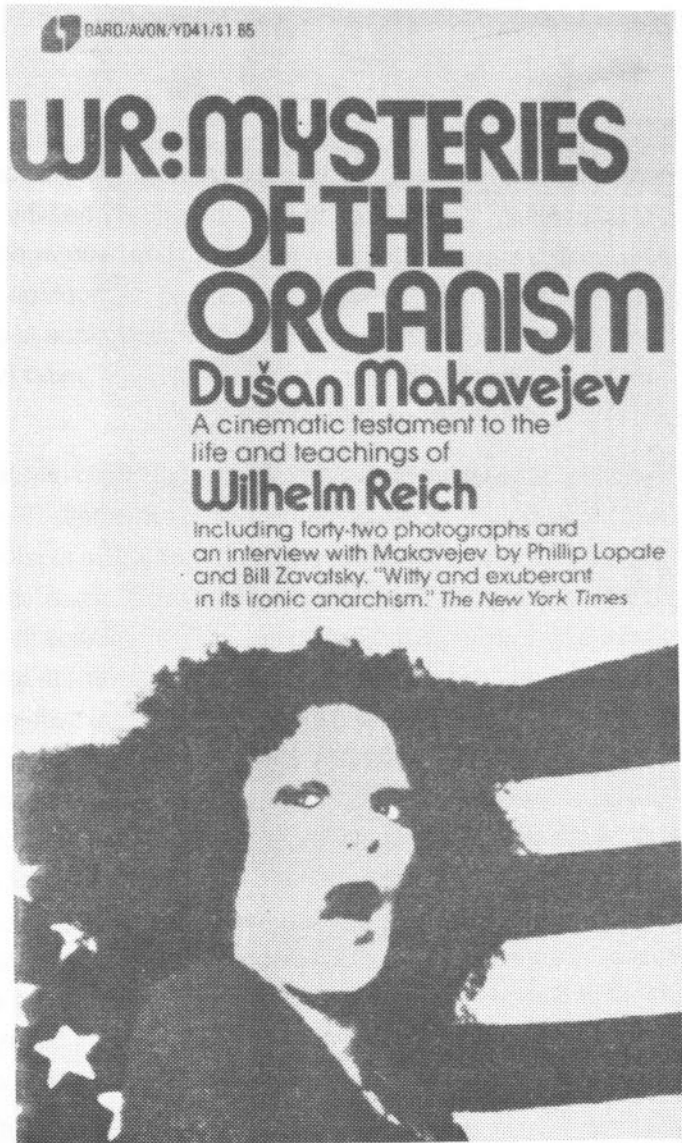
**WR—MYSTERIES OF  
THE ORGANISM**

ⓧ

THEATRE







## DUSAN MAKAVEJEV

by Basil Wright

Meantime, whooping like a Red Indian brave, Makavejev gallops round the ideological encampments of both East and West, and in his encirclement shows them to be in many ways indistinguishable from each other. A prophet of joy rather than doom, he points out the idiotic and masturbatory bases of this era of the concentration camp and the closed mind. Prophet of *joie de vivre*, he hands to Jeremiah a box of balloons, streamers and fireworks; to Ezekiel a do-it-yourself taxidermist's kit. Where Godard constipates, Makavejev induces a blessed liberation in the bowels.

He has invented his own technique of cinematic collage, the effectiveness of which has increased film by film, and perhaps came to fruition in *W.R. — Mysteries of the Organism*. It is a system which allows him to juxtapose almost anything with anything; and there has probably been nothing like it in cinema since Eisenstein's orgiastic *Strike*, Dovzhenko's kaleidoscopic *Zvenigora*, and Buñuel's first two bombing attacks on the Establishment — *Un Chien Andalou* and *L'Age d'Or*.....



We see, we listen afresh. Here is a codification aimed at the heart as well as the intellect. The passages which ought to be shocking — Nancy Godfrey and Buckley's erection; Andric and Kaloper having off all over Dravic's apartment; the intercutting of Nazi experiments on the mentally sick with American women moaning and groaning as they perform their orgasmic Reichian exercises — are not shocking in the obscene sense. The shock is that of a cold shower, of a sudden clearing of the brain.



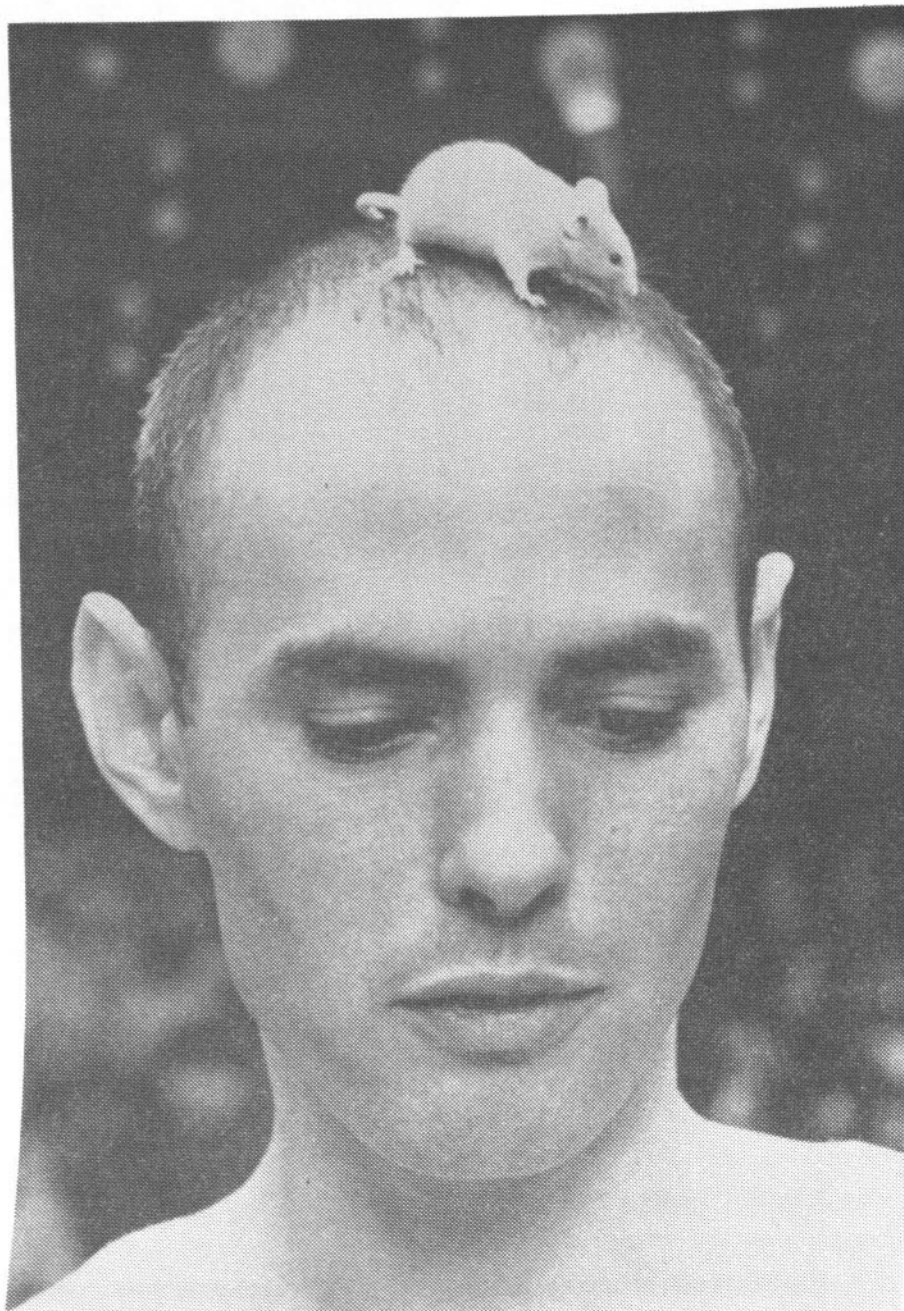
The film is not, of course, a defence of the actual orgone theory. However valid Reich's earlier philosophy may have been, the delusion that orgone- or bio-energy were actually 'universally present and demonstrable visually, thermoscopically and by means of Geiger-Müller counters' led him into unnecessarily improbably byways and, finally, into gaol. Here Makavejev noted, no doubt, that Reich's fate at the hands of American justice bore some resemblance to that being meted out currently to dissident Soviet intellectuals who are incarcerated in 'mental hospitals' for 'special treatment.' Certainly Reich, after his imprisonment in 1954 for contempt of court (he refused to withdraw his claims for his orgone boxes which the courts had ruled fraudulent), 'was diagnosed paranoid and transferred to Lewisburg, which was the only penitentiary with psychiatric treatment facilities, where he was however declared "legally sane and competent."'

Makavejev's pity for Reich causes him to end the film with a stroke of real genius. After the all-out attacks on the Isms of this world, on the artificial separation between sex and societal organization and on the mindless injustices resulting therefrom, he mounts a macabrely ridiculous climax and instantly melts it into a coda of elegiac loveliness. Earlier we have attended on Dravic's constant attempts to seduce Vladimir Ilich, the pretty-boy Soviet ice-skater, which climaxes in his striking her because she is grabbing at his genitals. The next thing we know is that after an orgy of sex with her (the post-mortem reveals so much semen in her that the possibility of mass-rape is considered), he has decapitated her with one of his skates. While her severed head, on the mortuary slab, still proclaims the joys of sexual passion, we see him, lonely, lost, *but free at last*, wandering in subtopian scrublands amid the unfinished artefacts of modern engineering and among groups of the dispossessed sitting round extempore fires, while he sings a song to Almighty God. The song outlines to God the simple needs of men and women and begs Him to grant them; and at the end of each verse comes the refrain, 'and please spare a small thought for me'. And as he wanders to the sound of this extremely beautiful song, Vladimir Ilich finds himself face to face with a white horse — lone, unharnessed — and somehow this confrontation brings a feeling of tearful liberation and a purging of prejudice and anger.

Reprinted from Basil Wright, *The Long View: An International History of Cinema* (London:1974).



## 5. Sweet Movie, 1974.



### GAGA

by John Gianvito

In his famous treatise *The Praise of Folly*, the Dutch humanist Erasmus distinguishes between two kinds of madness: one which inspires all manner of crime and terror including the "burning desire for war and unquenchable thirst for gold", and another "far different kind (which) occurs whenever a certain pleasant mental distraction relieves the heart from its anxieties and cares at the same time soothes it with the balm of manifold pleasures." Another way perhaps of evidencing the principles of Thanatos and Eros in the world, both mad strains of which course wildly together in Dusan Makavejev's 1974 film *Sweet Movie*. Like the majority of Makavejev's work, it is a film built upon opposites and parallels, disruptions and associations, frankness and subtlety, poetry and polemic — in other words a dialectical film; yet beyond any other Makavejev film, it's dialectical line of attack is more grounded in the sensorial than the cerebral.

A former student of Makavejev's told me that he'd once been advised by Makavejev that if the student didn't have enough time to look at a particular film and wanted to quickly decide if the film was eventually worth looking at that he should run the film at high-speed on an editing table starting from the back of the film forward and view it upside down. If after this it still appeared interesting than probably one should take a look at it.

While I can easily think of numbers of important cinematic works for which this technique might fail (imagine *Gertrud*, *Jeanne Dielman*, *Antigone...*), there's no doubt how Makavejev's own work would fare in such a test, and certainly *Sweet Movie*, a rollicking roller coaster of a movie for the id, if ever there was one.

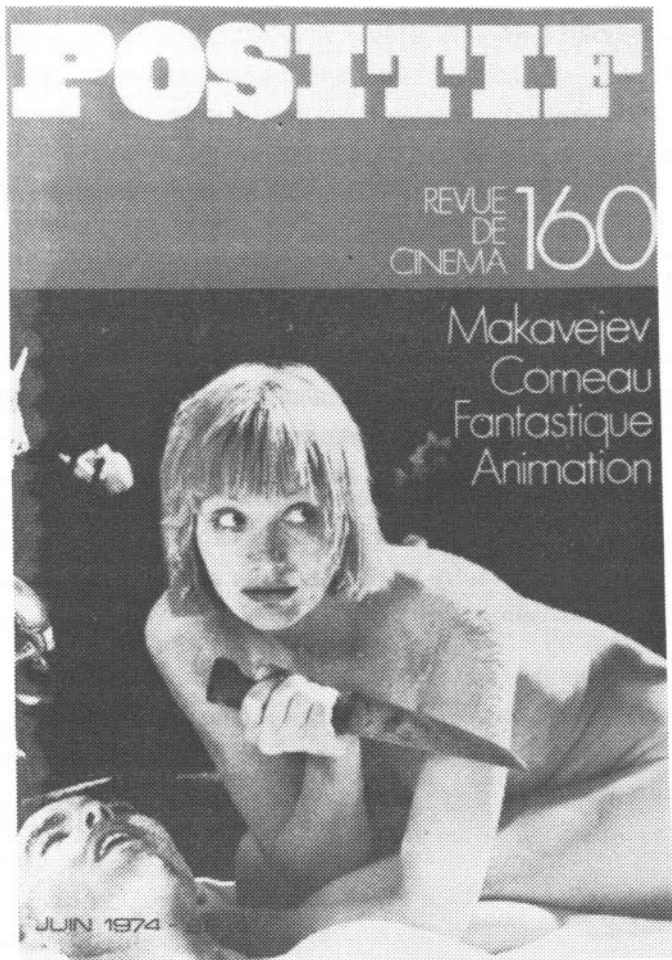
*Sweet Movie* is a film meant to open eyes (and as a consequence, minds). There is nothing safe about the film. It is a film engineered, booby-trapped even, to push buttons in people. It's brilliance is in how it goes about doing to people what most would rather not have done to them, or think they'd rather not. At the same time the outrageous onslaught of unusual images and behavior in *Sweet Movie* sucks you in, fixes you to the screen, feeding you a

delightful mixture of humor, eroticism, music and adventure, glorious color and spectacle, there is, carefully slipped into the mix, and equally healthy dose of defilement, death, politics and social taboo. While much has been written about Makavejev's editing style and the forcible juxtapositions of montage in such films as *W.R. Mysteries of the Organism*, and while this technique is certainly at work in *Sweet Movie* there is a refinement in the push-pull "mind-fuck" approach of *W.R.* about which I've seen little comment.

In the process of watching *Sweet Movie* the relationship one is having to what is taking place on screen is constantly being subverted. Practically every new sequence provokes a readjustment. Just how is one to take what's going on? And what's going on is absolutely unpredictable. There is nothing here that a veteran screenwriter could anticipate. In *Sweet Movie* the means by which Makavejev keeps the viewer both engaged and yet off-balance is achieved less through the device of editing than through a more built-in dramatic smearing of expectations. Virtually every sequence is deftly built to pivot in emotionally unexpected ways leaving most viewers unprepared and defenseless in its wake and consequently more open to ingest 'unprocessed' material. When, for instance, early in the film Mr. Kapital embarks on his wedding night ceremony of first cleansing himself than his virgin wife Miss World with burring alcohol, dressed only in socks, cowboy hat, and cherry-decorated boxer shorts, most audiences, I think it would be fair to say, find the absurd, satiric tone of the scene amusing. Even when Mr. Kapital drops his shorts as Miss World shrieks and reveals a "golden penis" the element of surprise tends to incite greater laughter. Yet just as rapidly within the humorous flow of this scene we see that same gold penis pissing upon the beautiful new wife (off-screen) while Mr. Kapital whoops with delight and calls out the window to his mother. You gag on the gag. Before you can catch yourself, in mid-laughter this altogether disturbing image unfolds and just as soon passes. Later there is a sequence on the ship "Survival" where the sailor Luv Bakunin shares a bath with Anna Planeta and another woman. It is a warmly lit, sensual and playful scene in the midst of which Pierre Clementi (Bakunin) lurches in pained grimace as if suddenly struck dead, falling back into the soapy water. This upsetting emotional shift enables the moving transition into the documentary sequence of images of the exhumations of the assassinated Polish officers in the Katyn forest. Soon however we are back in the tub and Bakunin awakens from playing dead and the scene bounces back to life as if no nightmare had unfolded. The film is replete with such shifts in feeling executed in a host of ways. Further complicating our reactions is the literal blurring of the line between documentary and fiction in *Sweet Movie*. No longer is documentary just cut away to, but at many times in the narrative real life runs right alongside the fiction, as when Bakunin screws Anna Planeta on the ship and the camera pans to on-looked from shore, or most indistinguishably when Miss World (known film star Carole Laure) partakes in the happenings of Otto Muehl's commune, filmed and unfolding largely in documentary fashion. Much of the *affects* of the film, when noticed, clearly appear to be done with real intentionality. The problem for many reviewers seems to be that in the face of so much broadly sketched social satire, the deeper content of the film, and the artful ways in which that content is being delivered, escape notice (although arguably is received nonetheless).





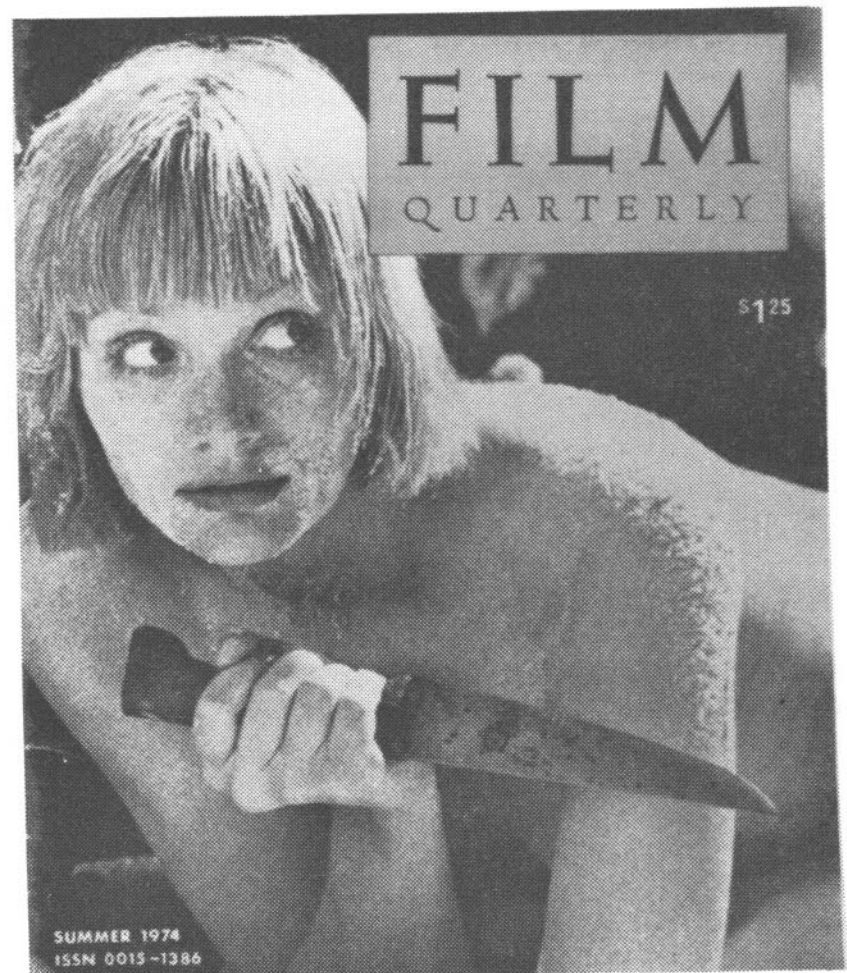


Despite, or rather I should say, in addition to, Makavejev's intentions, what makes *Sweet Movie* stand for me as Makavejev's strongest cinematic achievement to date is perhaps attributable to the unexpected fortuitous alterations in Makavejev's initial scenario and his willingness and courage to go with the flow of a new filmic structure, and thereby exceed his own expectations.

In response to a question posed to him just prior to the making of *Sweet Movie*, "Why is your project likened to sweet and sour pork?" Makavejev replied, "Because the combination of apparently disparate elements is a culinary art which we intend to follow respectfully in our film." Along the way however Makavejev loses his recipe (in part is forced to change his recipe as when Carole Laure jumps ship from the project), and finds himself directorally in uncharted waters. It is precisely the fruit of this investigation that makes me so mad for this film.

Makavejev: "I had incredible crises during the editing because I was telling myself that I did not really want to put these things into the film. But at the same time, I was saying to myself: 'That's not true; you probably were not conscious of it, but given that the things you recorded came out in these shapes...' My work was telling me that I had to keep certain sequences in. So at some point I stopped behaving like a responsible person in the sense of: 'I want to say this; I want to do this.' But I understood that there was a responsibility toward my work. Because if I, at that point, understood exactly what I was doing, I would have been too scared. Even with the sugar killing — to the end I was telling myself: 'This is like catsup; this is like Max Factor blood; this is not real.' But if the cinematic form is good, then that form becomes completely invisible and you are directly communicating inner content to people watching the film. And if I had understood this earlier, I would not have gone so far. But this is a question about creative experience. Because there is a point you come to when you feel that nobody is there. There is actually no way to go because it is uncharted. And that is incredible. You are totally free and on the other hand, you are not free at all. You are completely blind..."<sup>1</sup>

What *Sweet Movie* accomplishes like few movies I know is to seize hold of the fundamental Hollywood "formula" — sex and violence, along with basic Soviet socialist model — romance, revolutionary song, and sloganeering, and to distill, repackage, and serve the formula back to us with such a degree of emotional purity that most audiences choke and push their plates back.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless they have partaken of the meal, the ultimate outcome of which remains like that of encountering any true work of art — it is suggestive, subterranean and evolutive. Just as Makavejev speaks to the role the unconscious and intuitive played in the making of the film, so too do they play a role in the viewing of the film. In the face of such an audacious array of imagery, emotionally akin to leading an audience in one day through the Holocaust Museum, Disneyland, and a massage parlor, it is a shame that no one has ever compiled a record of the dreams moviegoers have the night after seeing such a film. Even a compendium of the conscious remarks audiences make coming



out of this film would be fascinating. I am convinced the responses would be different than the usual liking or disliking of the experience. By virtue of Makavejev's professed "open, non-authoritarian structure" in *Sweet Movie* the viewer is left to his or her own devices as to how to react to or even make sense of the experience. It thus can become particularly interesting to note which triggers release which reactions in people, for instance how very disturbed many viewers become by the images of people recklessly playing with food (more upsetting for some it seems than the exhumation sequence).

While it is often been remarked upon that film is a particularly passive medium whose very nature is one akin to hypnosis (the combination of sitting in a dark room staring fixedly at a flickering light, etc.), what is as often left out of the equation is the degree of passivity inherent in the dramatic restructuring of the films themselves. In the vast majority of films, certainly of the Hollywood mode, all the work is done for you. As a viewer you can strap yourself into your chair, sit back, and allow the film, like a well-engineered conveyor belt, to lead you through its range of experiences. By and large, everyone will laugh at the same junctures, cry at the same places, get excited at the same time, and be ushered gently back out on the street again, no thought required. This is the classic escapist model and it serves its function dutifully. The liberated form of *Sweet Movie* frees us from the yoke of traditional narrative construction, itself truly a form of madness imposing as it so often does an altogether unnatural posturing of the world and human behavior. Due to its construct, *Sweet Movie* affords each viewer their own avenue of response, as unique as the phobias, repressions, passions and peculiarities of each spectator. Far too simple to summarize the film as portraying the folly of the capitalist and totalitarian adventures since the real "meaning" of the film takes place individually within the viewer and like any true work of art can not be reduced to one simple set of ideas. Attempting such a reduction is itself one more folly.

While it is not altogether surprising that Makavejev's subsequent films have increasingly moved back to safer ground, at least with *Sweet Movie* Makavejev exploited the window of opportunity that still existed in the early seventies for such experimentation. In a world far more insane and maddening than any one film could render, Makavejev lovingly prepared a film to implicate us in the complex of our own manias, to throw us inside our own soups so we might get a taste. It is the work of a master chef preparing the ultimate bouillabaisse, a psycho-sexual one. Unfortunately it is also a film that has proven perhaps too meaty for the hyperglycemic audience for which it was intended.

February, 1995



<sup>1</sup> "I Have Been Fighting Narrative for Years..." (Interview with Dusan Makavejev by Elena Pinto Simon), *University Film Study Center Newsletter*, December 1975, Vol. 6, No. 2, Supplement Pg. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Related filmic attempts that come to mind include William Klein's *Mister Freedom* and Antonioni's *Zabriskie Point*, both films which paint portraits of modern consumer landscape employing the same garish palette as their subjects. Such mirroring of course is bound to be rejected, and, as with *Sweet Movie*, was by most audiences and critics alike.



## Sweet Movie Ship Hijacked

by Ken Jacobson



amsterdam (ap) — a yugoslav film director and the two legendary figures of the provo movement hoekert and grootveld, collided recently on an amsterdam canal boat.

the result, a mad, seagoing panic which occurred when the former provos hijacked the ship, shocked the director, reminded spectators of the amsterdam happenings of the middle 1960s and left confusion in the minds of all as to where moviemaking leaves off and life begins.

the shooting of +sweet movie+, the fifth feature-length work of director dusan makavejev, involved participants of 17 nationalities speaking almost as many languages. +it sounds+, said the 41-year-old yugoslav, \_a bit like the type of ships that float under the liberian flag.+

the houseboat makavejev rented, however, floats under the flag of the lowland weed company, an offshoot of the provo movement whose mirthful protests delighted young dutchmen and gave authorities fits a number of years ago. the boat's proprietors, kees hoekert and robert jasper grootveld, gradually made makavejev's stage their own.

while living out many of the principles makavejev wanted to explore in his film — in a style reminiscent of their provocative heyday — hoekert and grootveld ironically proved constant thorns in makavejev's die, up to the final moments of shooting when they brought their confrontation with the director to a climax by hijacking their own boat.

makavejev, director of the 1971 hit +wr: mysteries of the organism+ and of +man is not a bird+, a 1965 release which recently had its american premier in new york, came to amsterdam to finish shooting +sweet movie+ and conclude the film's three-year odyssey.

after trying for two years to get the picture off the ground as a yugoslav-west germany-french co-production, makavejev finally found support for an 800,000-dollar budget from maran film of munich, mojack films of montreal and french producer vincent malle.

to satisfy regulations of the canadian film development corporation, scenes originally set in yugoslavia were moved to canada and canadian actor john vernon (point blank, charlie varrick) and actresses jane mallet and carole laure were signed. also in the cast are french actors sami frey (cesar and rosalie) and pierre clementei (the conformist).

the plot of the loosely-scripted film concerns the travels of the beautiful winner of a chastity belt foundation's beauty contest, miss laure, who rejects the world's wealthiest man and after a series of adventures ends up a marxist prostitute on an amsterdam houseboat.

after shooting the second part of the film — including a multi-lingual sequenced involving a group therapy commune from vienna — in france, makavejev moved part of his company to amsterdam for the final episodes.

in amsterdam, makavejev's assistants rented a boat from hoekert and grootveld, the idea men of provo who made the white bicycle famous and did much to win worldwide attention for amsterdam's cultural life.

the pixieish provo style brings to life makavejev's ideal of +social action that starts from the personal level+, but, oddly, a clash between the director and his landlords began brewing almost as soon as the film's production crew began fitting out the boat for shooting.

hoekert played the first card. while watching workmen fashion an enormous head of karl marx on the prow of the houseboat, he recalled a chinese government protest over french director jean yanne's film \_the chinese in paris+ and told a newspaper reporter +sweet movie+ might hold grave consequences for dutch-soviet relations.

+the joke was very provocative, and good for the newspaper+, makavejev said. +but i didn't like it. i was too busy with a number of production problems to be pleased and enjoy the publicity game, and i also thought it was unfair to treat good old marx as the exclusive property of one country.+

still, makavejev, known for his love of improvisation, tried to profit from the incident. the crew put bandages over marx's eyebrow, added a big plastic tear to his cheek and readied for shooting.

however, new difficulties soon cropped up. miss laure, who had played a number of scenes completely nude, called her costume for the final scene — a chastity belt — +pornographic+ and refused to wear it.

makavejev found her attitude +paradoxical+, but nevertheless excused his leading lady from the remainder of shooting and went to work fashioning a new ending. in the alternative finale, a number of young boys board the ship and ride the canals with a second lady of the night, polish-born actress ania prucnal.

when hoekert heard about the new ending, he was ecstatic. +i have a 10-year-old son+, he explained, +and i thought it would be a great adventure for him to play in the film. a two-day tour with a prostitute on a boat with a head of karl marx . . . imagine, what a dream!+

however, hoekert soon discovered the trip would end with the boys being murdered and cast over the side in plastic bags. he was outraged.

+i didn't want to compromise the boat+, he said. +it is known abroad, and seen by thousands of tourists every year. and i didn't want to spoil the image of good, tolerant amsterdam.+

suddenly, makavejev found himself defendant in a lawsuit. hoekert and grootveld claimed representation. makavejev claimed he had rented a boat, and was not subject to his landlords' censorship. the judge promised a verdict within eight days.

+in eight days+, hoekert said, +they would have been done and back in france. so we decided to take action. we didn't want to take the law into our own hands, but just to give it a helping hand.+

hoekert and grootveld, who claim the boat was watched by a beefed-up security force at night, decided to make their entrance when least expected — in broad daylight. +we couldn't allow a situation in which we were not captain of our own boat+, hoekert explained. +so we decided on a hijacking.+

the boat, docked on the river amstel, was the scene of great activity. there were a film company of 30, a police guard, a number of ambulance attendants, and some spectators.

hoekert, grootveld and an american friend, +mickey mouse+, broke through the barriers and boarded the ship. +it was a mission doomed to failure+, said hoekert. +we figured we'd be lynched. but we were going to scream.+

commanding the deck, hoekert issued orders to abandon ship in four languages. grootveld cast off the line, and mickey walked the length of the houseboat roof smashing skylight windows with his bare fist.

+they were astonished+, hoekert recalled. +they never thought we'd try such a thing. but it was the sight of real blood that caused them to panic. everyone left immediately, and one cameraman was so shocked he jumped into the river, camera and all.+

during the action, a crowd of several hundred gathered. they thought it was all part of the movie. and the resilient makavejev, who has part of the panic on film, may prove them right by including it in the final product.

although upset at the time, the director takes his encounter with hoekert and grootveld philosophically. +one of the things i wanted to explore in the film is the right to be crazy, the idea that human insanity or lunacy is often the only way for some people to secure survival in this world of ours.

+these guys+ — hoekert and grootveld — +are great guys, they have preserved the wonderful capacity to be childlike, but i was a little unfortunate to fall into their network.

+psychologically speaking, + concluded makavejev, +movie-making belongs to their world. apparently i not only rented their boat, but activated all their fantasies.

+oh, well, there are different trips for different ships.+ (end)

Associated Press news story, 1980.





# DUSAN MAKAVEJEV INTERVIEW

by Edgardo Cozarinsky and Carlos Clarens

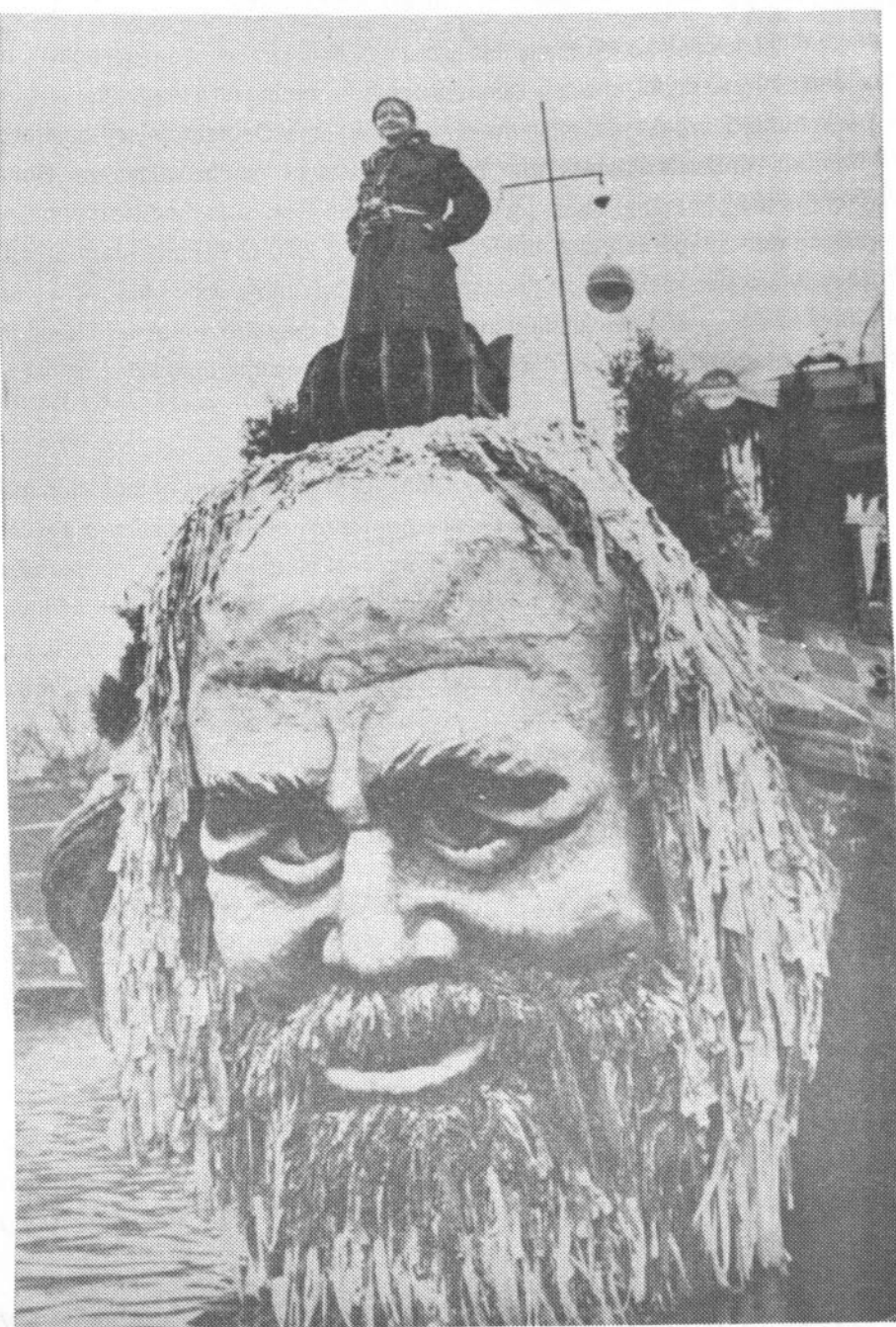
By far the most stimulating fare to be found at the Cannes Film Festival is at the youthful, politically unbiased *Quinzaine des Réalisateurs* which programs films hardly conforming to the socio-political chic of the main event, or to the requirements of that other splinter festival, *la Semaine de la Critique*, which limits itself to seven features by new directors. The *Quinzaine* easily accommodates such disparate efforts as *Marjoe* and *Céline et Julie*, Bresson's *Four Nights of a Dreamer* and Schröter's *Eikka Katappa*. It is also here that the yearly *succès de scandale* usually takes place, before a large, young, unpaying audience enjoying a temporary surcease from the vigilance of the French censor. Last year, the odds favored *Sweet Movie*, a Canadian-French coproduction directed by Dusan Makavejev. There was considerable expectancy fanned by word-of-mouth reports that the film featured scenes of vomiting and defecation as part of a group therapy session organized by Otto Muehl whose own *Sodoma Suite* had been the conversation piece of the *Quinzaine* back in 1970.

This was the first time that Makavejev worked outside his native Yugoslavia, with an international cast that included Carole Laure and John Vernon from Canada, and Pierre Clémenti and Sami Frey from France. Also intriguing was the fact that Ms. Laure had walked out in mid-production alleging that certain scenes were damaging to her dignity, both womanly and professional, a hazard that necessitated her replacement by a French-Polish stage actress named Anna Prucnal not to mention a revision of the original screenplay. On the screen, *Sweet Movie* unfolded in the fragmentary structure of previous Makavejev efforts such as *Love Affair of a Switchboard Operator* and *WR: Mysteries of the Organism*, with documentary interpolations breaking the original narrative at strategic points: a Nazi newsreel depicting the exhumation of a mass grave containing the elite of the Polish army is a factual footnote, and so is the sequence at the Otto Mühl commune although skillfully inserted in the development of the story. The two leading ladies appear in separate contexts, Laure as the definitive sex object defiled by men from Montreal to Paris, Prucnal as a socialist earth mother dispensing candy and death along the canals of Amsterdam. And there is the usual robust Makavejev humor: Laure and Sami Frey, who plays a charro pop-singer, become stuck in mid-fuck like dogs in heat and have to be disentangled by solicitous bystanders, among them a flock of nuns on a visit to the Eiffel Tower.

In Cannes at least, the one scene that really seemed to shock the audience was that of Prucnal, in the near nude, attempting to seduce a group of prepubescent children, a disturbing but valid metaphor. Even former Makavejev supporters were confused and disappointed by the film: to the Americans it may have seemed a belated, Mittel-European yippie yell. The French, as usual in such cases, came up with vague rhetorical reviews, but since the picture was being talked about it was decided to release it immediately. When it opened in Paris a few days later, filmgoers were treated to a process rarely seen on the screen since the early days of *Fatima's Belly Dance* (and also used to mask nipples and pubic hair in Godard's *Vivre Sa Vie*): black stripes, vertical or horizontal according to the case, covered the offending parts so that a visual pun on *Goldfinger* was totally lost along with many a plot point. There were cuts as well, but such was the censorship situation in France last May that audiences flocked to see the film at least during the first two weeks. Afterward, the attendance petered out and *Sweet Movie* closed.

The picture has yet to be released here, although Makavejev garnered some attention last summer as one of the three directors to be invited to the First Telluride Film Festival in Colorado, along with Leni Riefenstahl and Francis Ford Coppola. In Berkeley, the film aroused vivid controversy; for American audiences, its interest obviously resides in its political rather than its erotic content. Not so for the French; and from the hindsight of April 1975, *Sweet Movie* suddenly seems to have arrived too early rather than too late. There are signs of *détente* in censorial matters since Michel Guy took over the post of Secretary of State for Cultural Affairs. In March of this year, political censorship was relaxed somewhat to allow the release of Stanley Kubrick's 18-year old *Paths of Glory*, a test case, for no ban really existed, only a conservative notion that the film offended national honor and dignity. Pornography is something else, yet hopeful distributors have optioned a number of American hard-core films, both straight and gay. *Pink Narcissus*, gay, soft-core, and four years old, opened last December to good reviews and attendance.

Makavejev's own special brand of sexual reportage and political allegory would undoubtedly have benefitted from the new policy. The director now lives in Paris and prefers to work outside his native land. His relations with Yugoslavian film officials are friendly, at least on the surface, but *WR: Mys-*



*ies of the Organism* remains banned back home. Despite the relative lack of success of *Sweet Movie*, there have been offers, the least likely being a John Milius script, *Apocalypse Now!*, which Coppola offered and which Makavejev turned down.

The following interview took place in Makavejev's Montparnasse apartment last July.

Do you know the latest definition of hard-core pornography, by Justice William Rehnquist? "Representations or descriptions of ultimate sexual acts, normal or perverted, actual or simulated, [or] masturbation, excretory functions and lewd exhibitions of the genitals."

What do they mean by "lewd"?

Well, they would be able to define it. But then, again, no two persons would agree as to whether a certain "exhibition" is or isn't.

Well, I'm afraid this is not a very good time for critical filmmaking. It goes very much in cycles, and in general - not just in a particular country, though of course in very different keys - the present mood is oppressive and repressive.

*Sweet Movie*, though, gets away with the first cock on a French screen, perhaps because it's a gallant quote from *Goldfinger* - the "goldcock."

Oh, I didn't think of it that way. Anyway I didn't worry about that; being satirical you're always allowed to go a little further. I worried more about Pierre Clémenti, a well-known actor, performing in the nude. The "goldcock" is just an insert, a kind of comics-like job. Clémenti instead is doing his own performance, his own contribution to the film, and we are recording, almost documentary-like, that performance. But what seems to have angered some people most are things that are not at all sexual. They have felt attacked for instance by the commune scenes. As soon as they see others playing with food, some people get petrified, much more than with sex, like Carole Laure putting Cachorro's cock against her face and playing tenderly with it. Actually this is covered by a black stripe in the print now showing in Paris. As you know, Carole Laure objected to two tiny bits of the film and we had to remove them temporarily. As to this particular shot: she had seen the rushes back in November '73, and only six months later she started legal action.



*Perhaps she needed some time to think it over.*

I suppose so. Actually this is not sex or depiction of sexual activity but a kind of very playful, childish, sensual contact, coming as it does after she has been nursed, breast-fed, all in the same vein. Only Cachorro's self-castration "number" strikes a different note, being a parody of "macho" attitudes. But as soon as the commune starts playing about with food, and they start vomiting, pissing and all, people feel attacked. This is a kind of documentary about a therapy session, and people just won't admit that into a fiction film. They feel attacked because we're shifting the ground and they are not able to keep the compartments closed, uncommunicated. Stick to fiction, they say.

*But you didn't fake the pissing or shitting.*

In action films where you have fight scenes, the actors or their stuntmen sometimes get carried away and really beat each other; sometimes it's very difficult to draw the line between faking and real beating. There, of course, is the excuse that it's the eternal moral struggle of good and evil. It is as if violence was OK as long as it's the eternal moral struggle of good and evil. It is as if violence was OK as long as it's not serving any kind of liberation. You're supposed to accept things. You're not supposed to throw out. You're supposed to swallow everything that's pushed down your throat. The real problem is what to do with your biology in this context, what to do with his kind of new knowledge about where our problems are really located.

*In Character Analysis, Wilhelm Reich states that our typical phases proceed according to a definite plan which is determined by the structure of each individual case. He lists: "Loosening of the armor, breaking down the character armor which is definitive destruction of neurotic equilibrium, breaking through of deeply repressed and strongly attached material with the reactivation of infantile hysteria" - this is where Otto Muehl and your film come in - "working through of the liberated materials without resistance, crystallization of the libido from pregenital fixations" - this is also in Sweet Movie - "reactivation of the infantile genital anxiety, appearance of orgasm anxiety and establishing of an orgasmic policy..."*

The interesting thing with Reich is that he never made any of his therapy public, never did any group therapy, always worked on a person-to-person basis, he hated homosexuality. So he had a number of his own hangups in spite of being such a great pioneer and breaking through much stronger than any other in his time or since. But this breakthrough led him directly to what people considered to be lunacy. He was so alone with his knowledge. His understanding of the connection between biological individual well-being and a political social behavior was so unacceptable that he was just left alone. He lived in a kind of ghetto, boycotted in a kind of invisible cage.

In his writings of the last period, before he was "railroaded" and put in jail, he discusses more and more this invisible enemy. He had this theory that "HIGS" were against his work, and "HIGS" were "Hoodlums in Government." And the truth was that *there were*, of course, but he was always trying to define, to create new concepts to explain his predicament. He speaks of Moscow agents being sent from Washington; they were actually sanitary agents from the Food and Drug Administration, former Navy men mainly chasing people who were selling rotten food and dangerous cosmetics - you know, pretty tough guys. And they were happy to find this spectacular case of a crazy scientist up north in the Maine hills, who according to rumors had patients masturbate in strange coffin-like telephone booths. They thought they were going to find something sensational, and there were federal agents all over the states renting orgone accumulators, trying to get people to testify about the atrocious goings on at Reich's.

*In the documentary part about Reich at the beginning of WR: Mysteries of the Organism, all the people interviewed in the town near where he lived, look rather funny: small-town American-Gothic types. They remind one of those science-fiction Hollywood movies of the early Fifties, where there always were small communities endangered by giant ants, things from outer space, monsters from the black lagoon, what you will. And in that footage you got in Maine, a community was seen acting in the same way - only The Thing had been Reich.*

What's extraordinary is that these people in American towns in the Midwest live in a very good relation to nature - fishing, hunting, swimming. But in a social sense they are completely isolated in a kind of dreamland of permanent security. These little towns are the proletarian dream: these people have been poor, or their parents were, and came to America and found little plots of land and built Paradise there. Living always in this kind of permanent security, their own economy supporting them nicely, getting a fairly good education, feeling

defended by government and army - anything from outside that doesn't conform to their way of life is bound to be monstrous. This strange German scientist doing his experiments up in the hills was perfect for the part of Monster. They even invented that Reich was keeping children in cages for scientific purposes!

*Like Jewish ritual murders, in the anti-semitic mythology. By the way, were any objections risen to the scene in Sweet Movie where Anne Prucnal seduces the children?*

The French censors were very nice about it, they said they couldn't deprive adult French moviegoers from seeing this kind of "research film." They just had us put a warning in all the publicity, that some scenes may be provoking or hurting to many people's feelings.

*An Argentinian film censor was asked once why he didn't allow on a cinema screen some footage that had been on TV screens. His answer was that even if more people, in figures, watched TV, they watched it in isolation, never more than four or five, while a cinema audience develops a group feeling, and if somebody booed or shouted at the screen others might follow and a riot could start. That's a man who knows his job!*

Somebody told me that the last military putsch in Brazil started as a right-wing reaction against some kind of left-wing unrest among navy cadets who had been watching *Potemkin*. It sounded so fantastic - Brazilian cadets only a few years ago watching *Potemkin*! We have here again the boomerang effect: positive action triggering negative reaction.

*Through WR is more developed and aggressive, of course, the basic approach of that film is much the same as in The Switchboard Operator, your second feature. Did it shock people in Yugoslavia back in '67?*

*Switchboard Operator* was widely accepted by critics and audiences. It became a box-office success and was part of a new trend in non-linear storytelling, mixing documentary and fiction all the way. Also in its fresh approach to subject matter: sex, everyday life, the relationship between work and love and History, and so on. The interesting thing in this experience is that if you have fiction alone, or documentary alone, the audience is geared to this particular genre or level of communication, but if inside a fictional story you insert documentary fragments they become more documentary than in a purely documentary film. Being geared to watch fiction you start discovering in documentary certain qualities that would have passed unnoticed otherwise, but you also start recognizing in fiction all this marginal documentary remains - the way people dress, move, eat, their homes. No matter how transposed on a fictional level, they keep a value as expression of a certain culture, of a given moment in history.

Anyway, I was happy to get many people to watch *Switchboard Operator* even without this intellectual frame of reference. I feel that all of us, those who started making films after 1960, were condemned to represent what's called "author's cinema" - a kind of intellectual filmmaking. It's difficult to liberate oneself from this, and try to be just entertaining. The great quality American movies had in their best days was to be made under market dictatorship. They were not afraid to please the market, and just had to be interesting all the time. If they felt like making some intellectual comment, they had to infiltrate it. Besides, ourselves being filmmakers from marginal countries as far as film industry go, we are supposed to express our national cultures. And being interesting becomes a kind of secondary duty.

Take westerns, for instance. Take horses, landscape, trains, guns. These are documentary items, and there is real action being done with them, in them, though the framework may be purely fictional. You get this strong impression of a life force at work, and bad guys against good guys become just a very simple excuse for a kind of biological display. Like the fantastic chases - real people, real horses, real rocks - this is behavior on an ecological level. It's something we've come to reevaluate after these years of intellectual perversion in movies. Going back to roots. And the roots, of course, are in American movies, the only film industry in the world that is supported only by the public.

*Already in Switchboard Operator you had short snippets of what could pass as belle époque pornography: that couple doing tableaux vivants on a revolving platform.*

This one-minute piece is perhaps one of the oldest "pornographic" films, and may have been made in Germany. It was kept in a special can in the Yugoslav Cinémathèque, unlisted in the catalogue, something not to be shown. I was delighted to have it because as you say it's so *belle époque*, so innocent now, but qualifying at the time it was made as pornography, even if now, inserted in this fiction film of 1967, it becomes something of a dream.



Curiously enough, this short scene was the last piece to be liberated by the censor in England, where the film was not shown for years, then passed with heavy cuts. After the big anticensorship action, some sequences from the film were shown on TV, which is not under censorship rule - first as they are on the original, then with black leader instead of the questioned parts. This made a very awkward impression and was a powerful argument against censorship. Finally, Mr. John Trevelyan, the censor, gave his imprimatur and the film was released except for this one minute with the old "pornographic" movie. Now it is back on all prints, in England. In France it was never allowed, so the distributor tried to get the censorship visa by putting a black stripe over the visible genitals, which was then considered too narrow, so he had to put a rather larger one running across the center of the image.

*Speaking of things that Reich would never have mentioned, there were transvestites in WR - Jackie Curtis, for instance.*

I myself was in a kind of permanent awe before Jackie, as religious people might feel in the face of Jesus. Because this awe, this diffused erotic feeling, leaves you defenseless, as if you were going to be swallowed, destroyed in your individuality. People feel aggressed by it and react by being aggressive saying "You're aggressive with your clothes and your behavior." When you analyze it you can't understand why somebody who is quite well-defended with his own armor - physical and psychical, clothes and social status, and can't ever get into any unpleasant situation - may still feel invaded by somebody who's free. There's obviously some little cracks happening in that armor. They don't know how to control their own system, and so they react with anger.

*How was the heroine supposed to react to all this in Sweet Movie?*

By being healed. In the script, after being catatonic after her varied sexual and social experiences - rape, transportation in a suitcase, the Eiffel Tower episode, all kind of manipulative things - she was supposed to arrive to the commune with no sense working, and there undergo a series of group experiences and actions, starting with the eyes. According to Reich the eyes are incredibly important, and never treated well in modern medicine or even psychoanalysis. I mean the relevance of eye contact. When Arthur Janov was in Cannes I told him I had wanted to call the commune Primal Scream, or Primal Cream, something around the concept. I also asked him how far he goes with his patients, down into infantile level: if people are screaming, are they also vomiting and shitting and pissing? Oh no, he said. He is too deep in primal scream, and goes very far in the primitive infantile level, in ideas and feelings, but not in terms of action, of actual behavior. And it is this last fortress or armor that Otto tries to break.

Otto does a very pragmatic kind of therapy. He is not much of a theory man. He has read Reich and likes him but he is another thing; his degree was in defectology and he worked on play-therapy for defective children, involving their parents and family. But his is a classical education. Also he is a painter, so he is used to dealing with materials and feels at ease with them - he has been through happenings and psychodramatic playing. He is not at all theoretical in his work. Rather than speak about it, he'd rather accept you in the commune so you can explore for yourself.

My way of working with the commune was to tell them what I wanted to do and then have them come up with their counterproposal. I had said to Otto - for instance, just "Let's have a Day of Sex and another Day of Blood" - and they came back with an elaborate scene that included all girls naked taking part in the killing of a lamb, spilling its blood on themselves while shouting "I killed my mother, I killed my mother!" Such a combination of gentleness and aggression, dealing with the incredibly ambiguous feelings girls have toward their mothers. Otto is the man who can produce this kind of complicated event and handle the most delicate feelings - killing something that is nice and warm and lovable.

*In the original plan how would Carole Laure have ended?*

Like the enlightened Marxist militant prostitute in Amsterdam running her boat like a kind of clinic or haven for sexual proletarians, immigrant workers and others, turning her whole life into a permanent feast for the deprived. Now, Anna survives being free to become crazy, she accepts departure from normality, being different. Carole instead is somebody who after having been manipulated all the time striving for success ends suffocated in chocolate. I think these opposed fates are quite defining. I myself am not clear about what the solution may be. Some problems can be solved, others can not. And lunacy is part of a problem that has to be turned into part of a solution. Once we get this, we have not solved the problem but we are on a good road.

You can't discuss Richard Nixon, for instance, and not enter into what kind of pathological personality he is. You know, he's anal in a quite classical psychoanalytical sense: everything he does is connected with money, dirt, and shit. This obviously tells in his face - he has a visible gut problem. But if we understand that shit is a legitimate human problem we can understand him too, as the expression of a greedy society manipulating money, trying to get always more power. All power that is keeping power, fixing power, has to do with constipation in a way. Nixon's main problem was leaking! The function of "the plumbers" was simply to keep the toilets from spilling the shit; then Nixon had to face the problem of controlling bad smell. If we accept sickness and lunacy as a normal part of humanity as it is today, we'll be in much better shape. At least we'll have some hope of a way out.

*Is all of this going to be in your next movie? Do you think that the American movies you admire deal with these subjects?*

When we raise such matters it always looks as if we were confined to a kind of author's cinema. But it isn't so. American films deal with these matters in highly fictionalized terms, very narrative in approach. Last night I saw *Soylent Green*, which is quite simple as a film and delivers a very simple message, with the more or less traditional properties of science fiction, suspense, very easily moving from one style to another. This is something Richard Fleischer, the director, does very well. I liked his *Boston Strangler* because it holds two visions at the same time; introducing a kind of schizophrenic vision in very normal, commercial cinema, always keeping in focus the two sides of the strangler's personality. He was moving toward this kind of multiple-layer vision.

*Soylent Green* also raises the question of recycling corpses. I was thinking this in relation to the Katyn sequence in *Sweet Movie*. Everybody of course has skeletons in closets; we all live with corpses around. The Katyn killings are there on film, but there are so many more killings that were recorded nowhere, all the invisible murders of Stalinism and countless other regimes - all Spain is filled with corpses from the civil war. And all these are *unrecycled corpses*, which is something against nature. Corpses have to molder, to be eaten by worms, to turn into flowers and fruits or plain dust and we have to understand and share in this process.

On the other hand we have this fantastic corpse of Lenin, mummified and kept right in the center of a huge empire of more than two hundred million people. They don't allow him to die, he still seems to be ruling the country, which lives under his spell. Famous Russian joke, quoted in a newspaper: why are the beds so wide in the Soviet Union? "Because the great Lenin is always with us..." If they joke about it, it is because they feel this tension and want to be relieved of it. It's really the old Cult of the Dead. Also, the corpse can be seen rarely, only a few hours a day, and people are lining up outside as a kind of ritual. This is exactly what my Canadian distributor does sometimes; selling only a hundred tickets in the middle of winter, having the cinema almost empty and the people standing outside, almost freezing, until the interest for some film develops to a pitch of intolerable intensity. A question of demand and supply: shortening the supply in order to increase the demand.

And with Lenin of course there is also another side, a very nice visual thing connected with it. You have this ugly little constructivist building and the corpse inside, charged with enormous emotional power, right there in the center of a stage that's not just the city but if you like the whole world. And then there is this permanent little stream of people, always moving, that ant line that acquires different shapes and always changes, kept alive and moving as it were by the still center toward which they direct themselves. So I offer you now another interpretation, not a critical one but an archetypal one: life always goes on even if you're nailed down by one powerful corpse. That moving line is an image of life, it's beautiful, and I think it tells something about the relationship between life and death.

Reprinted from *Film Comment* 3 (1975)



*"I'm a very good audience for cerebral films like Makavejev's 'Sweet Movie.' (It opens in San Francisco next week.) That's the most beautiful film on sexual politics I've ever seen. The taboos that man breaks! It's disturbing, but it's meant to be."*


Jack Nicholson



## 6. Montenegro, 1981.


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### MONTENEGRO

By Ernest Callenbach

Makavejev's new feature has been receiving suspiciously enthusiastic reviews. Can the director who outraged practically everybody in 1974 with his *Sweet Movie* have managed to make an ingratiating and modestly popular film?

Gone are the elegant political-psychological ironies of *WR: Mysteries of the Organism* (which I take to be Makavejev's most important film) and so are the painful, mostly scatological excesses of *Sweet Movie*. And although the opening of *Montenegro* intercuts shots of apes lounging in a zoo with shots of its human characters, this does not lead to the kind of persistent collaging of several layers of reality which, in Makavejev's earlier films, made his outrageousness work so tellingly. Here, at least at first sight, we have a realist (though satiric) film with a twist ending. Yet even when he's trying to be "good" and win a Western audience, Makavejev can't help wonderful moments of craziness.

The film, a Swedish co-production, is set in Stockholm. Marilyn (Susan Anspach) is coupled with Martin (Erland Josephsson) in your ordinary tortured Swedish marriage. Josephsson is as hateful as ever: the quintessence of anti-Reichian man, wanly dead in his emotions, rigid in body and spirit, supercilious in his contacts with others, devoted only to ever-increasing international sales of flawless ball-bearings. Anspach, playing his American wife, is more appealing. (Makavejev's films, like Bergman's, have usually centered on women; his men tend to be illustrative "problems" though in the final analysis the real problem—the mystery—lies within the women.) Marilyn leads a repressed bourgeois life, but at least she's interested in sex, and a certain intriguing madness lurks around her edges from the beginning; we gather it has always been difficult for her to be good, and now it becomes impossible. She cracks, like the egg we see her cracking for a schnitzel. . .

The story mainly concerns what happens after Martin insincerely invites her along on a business trip; abandoning the children (who are creepy

little parodies of the parents) she heads for the airport to follow him. There fate, in the form of Swedish customs agents, tosses her into the company of a lanky, emotional Yugoslav immigrant non-worker named Alex and the bumpkin Yugoslav girl he has come to pick up. Marilyn's life is never again the same. (It is characteristic of Makavejev that the stolid customs agents can't resist burning up some liquor they confiscate.)

Makavejev has always been centrally interested—he is a Reichian—in the oppositions between psycho-physiological realities and social constraints, and particularly in the pathologies (a source of a rather savage kind of comedy) which are generated by such tensions. The flash of his style comes, I think, from his attempt to embody in film these tensions and their ways of breaking out. Anspach is a little too soft for Makavejev's basic strategy to work at its best here; she doesn't quite bring off the irrational impulsiveness that the story requires. When she sets fire to the marital bedquilt in revenge for Josephsson's spurning of her advances, we don't quite feel it fits. And when, at the end, she evidently murders the man named Montenegro with whom she has just made love, we react to it as a Makavejev conceit rather than a shocking yet somehow inevitable psychological reality.

But the characters are never the dominant motivating force in a Makavejev film, and the polarity between repressed, decorous Swedish life and the bumptious life of the Yugoslav immigrant community is the source of most of *Montenegro's* energy; there is a great deal of richness and surprise to it. Where the outlaw community in *Sweet Movie* rode a barge bearing the giant face of Karl Marx on its prow, here the immigrants have created their own little anarchist enclave amid the junkyards of Swedish society. Their bootlegger's Club Zanzibar, fabricated of scrap materials, is hospitable to rather irregular sexual relationships. Here the sight of a man with a large knife driven through his forehead (he cheated his brother at cards) is only mildly alarming. And here the gawky Yugoslav flowers into a bizarrely accomplished stripteaser, doing a number with a radio-controlled toy tank whose cannon has been transformed into a phallus—the blatancy of the device being charmingly offset by the lavishness of Makavejev's shooting and cutting of this set-piece scene.

Makavejev's is a world in which the irrational constantly and comically peeps through the stony facade of so-called civilization; he is the messenger of the ultimately unsuppressible id. Even the senile grandfather is not too senile to advertise for a wife (and get plenty of candidates), and he's sly enough to filch the family pistol, and batty enough to fire it at the ceiling when he thinks the psychiatrist is there to examine him, not Marilyn. Practically all the characters, however, display substantial aberrations. The psychiatrist (powerfully played by Per Oscarsson) is a ghoulish figure who demands payment in advance since, as his receptionist puts it, "he's only interested in money." Martin chronically and dementedly keeps protesting that it's his wife who has the problems. It is only the Yugoslavs—whose lives allow the free expression of emotion—who don't have these bizarre tics.

After the shiny impersonal surfaces of bourgeois Sweden, the funky Club Zanzibar seems like home for the heart. The Yugoslavs inhabit the backside of industrial civilization, and in this enclave protected from "normalcy" ev-







# סרט נורמלי

עדנה פיינר

המאמר התפרסם  
ב"העולם הזה"

"סרט זה מוקדש לאומה האלמונית החדשה, הרביעית בגודלה באירופה, אומה של 11 מיליון מהגרים ועובדים זמניים, שעברו צפונה כדי לנצל את אוצרותיהן של המדינות המשגשגות והביאו לשם את מינהגיהם המצחינים, את נימוסיהם המוגעילים ואת ביחור השום."

סוזאן אנספאר ב"מונטנגרו"

everything from lamb-stealing to lesbian sex seems offhandedly natural. But Makavejev is no sentimentalist. After giving Marilyn a lethal-looking drink, Alex and a rough bunch of Yugoslavs bellow out a song of longing for the blonde goddess who has unaccountably appeared among them—whereupon two of them go outside and try to kill each other over her, in a battle with coal shovels. When Marilyn, draped in a dirty tablecloth in place of a bath towel, finds the handsome Montenegro showering and meaningful looks begin passing between them, Makavejev undercuts the scene with the cackling of chickens wandering around the distillery room rendezvous. Meanwhile, back in the antiseptic family mansion, Cookie the daughter has taken over for missing mommy, and is delivering breakfast to her "two men" with sinister precision. . .

Makavejev's films invite, indeed demand, a political-psychological reading: they demand it by "not making sense"—in any other way. Even though much of *Montenegro* is fairly straightforward by comparison with recent Makavejev works, we are compelled to ask what it *means* that Marilyn apparently kills her Yugoslav lover and then, returning smilingly to the family table (augmented now by the psychiatrist) poisons them all. We know from the clownish portrayal of the psychiatrist that Makavejev has little use for traditional psychological explanations; the shrink's only contribution to our understanding of Marilyn is to remark that she has nice legs.

There has been a consistent association of sex and murder in Makavejev's films. In *WR* the visiting Soviet skating champion slices off Milena's head with his skate blades after finally giving in to her sexual-political importunings. (Her head, of course, refuses to be silenced.) In *Sweet Movie*, Anna Planeta plunges her dagger into the sailor from the *Potemkin* after making love to him on a mound of capitalist sugar: a crime that doubtless falls into the diminished-capacity-defense category. And back in *Love Affair of a Switchboard Operator*, the unhappy rat catcher murders his blonde love in an access of sexual jealousy. Now, in *Montenegro*, it appears that when Marilyn becomes sexually liberated she also becomes homicidal. What is going on here? What would Reich say about it?

Makavejev would probably argue that the above way of putting things confuses causes and effects; in the psyche, causal relationships do not really exist. Moreover, from a Reichian point of view, no breakthrough in character-armor is simple or complete; it may also lead to distortions and perversions, given personal histories and social pressures. Sex is not the cause of the murders but only the occasion; that is, the process which breaks the heroine out of her previous stasis also enables her to act on *other* motives—in particular, political ones connected with the oppression of women. Marilyn, this line of thought would explain, poisons her family (and the psychiatrist) because her new freedom enables her to see that in some sense they deserve it; the bourgeois-trap family deserves to die.

This is a feeling which, needless to say, most audiences are hardly prepared to welcome if delivered straight. But we are dealing with a fairly expensive film, aimed at re-establishing its director's commercial viability. In

Shavian fashion, therefore, such notions must be couched as afterthoughts in a comedy. Moreover, Makavejev usually provides foils surrounding the sex-murder nexus which question or counter it. In *WR*, Milena's roommate joyfully scrambles around their apartment with her partner, plainly enjoying sex in a healthy and nonhomicidal way. In *Sweet Movie*, one gathers that the commune members' therapeutic regressions enable them to live sexually rich lives, despite the traumatic effects they have upon Miss Universe.

Makavejev was genial and articulate when interviewed for *Film Quarterly* some years ago (see *FQ*, Winter 1971-72). So, having heard he was in New York, I decided to phone and ask if he would throw some light on these questions. I was probably not the first to ask, and he was charmingly evasive. We talked about the earlier films, and he pointed out that even in *Love Affair* the status of the murder is undermined by an unexplainable last shot of the two principal characters, both still alive. In *Sweet Movie* the apparently slaughtered children wake up. And Milena keeps talking. Makavejev seems to regard puzzlement of the audience by such conflicting imagery as a productive artistic strategy. Besides, he is willing to defend playfully some things that he half considers "mistakes"—signs that the artist is, after all, "an irrational being" (just like the spectator, I would add). As for the ending of *Montenegro*, Makavejev says that the whole film, or at least most of it, may be the wife's fantasy—presumably "opened" by the initial scene on the little pier, to which the camera returns just before the last scene, as if to suggest she has been there all the time, and may remain there as the final events unreel in her mind. The Zanzibar has been left in disarray behind her; *Montenegro* is dead. What was needed, says Makavejev, was some kind of "catastrophe," which need not be specified in realist detail. (There is also a later flash-shot behind the bars. . .) To cap it all off, Makavejev adds that after all "in movies nobody ever really dies." And how do we know the fruit was really poisoned, or even that the film is "based on a real incident"? (Titles too can lie.)

This leaves us, obviously, pretty much on our own—which is where Makavejev wants his audience to be. (The spectator, he observes, "keeps the 'liveliest' moments in mind," and doubtless lets far weirder things slip by unchallenged.) Makavejev remains a disconcerting artist because his view of human nature is basically unsafe; he offers no consoling "understandings." In *Man Is Not a Bird* (the story of an over-achieving engineer who gets the prize but loses the blonde) he combined a dark humor and a droll realism. *Love Affair* was still an acceptably realist story but its touches of strangeness were more unsettling. In succeeding films Makavejev moved to and perhaps beyond the margins of audience tolerance for emotional irruptions through the surface of everyday life. Now he seems to be moving back, toward the style of the earlier films. But still, as the only surviving feature-director heir of the surrealists and Buñuel, he reminds us that the human passions which lie beneath the slick bureaucratized surface of contemporary life are as turbulent and unpredictable as they were in *L'Age d'or*.

Reprinted from *Film Quarterly* 3(1982).





## 7. The Coca-Cola Kid, 1985.



### "AT THE MOVIES" WITH SISKEL & EBERT

#### TRANSCRIPT OF THE "THE COCA-COLA KID"

Taped: 7/18/85

Airs: 8/3-9/85

Excerpt from "At The Movies" #346

ROGER: Our next movie is named *The Cola-Cola Kid*, and it's kind of timely right now, with all of the controversy over old Coke and new Coke, and classic Coke and cherry Coke. This is a comedy about the one place in the free world that doesn't like any kind of Coca-Cola. It's a district in the outback of Australia, where an old coot runs his own steam-powered bottling plant, and everybody there likes his soda pop the best. The Coca-Cola strategists in Atlanta send a marketing expert out to Australia to work on sales, and he is horrified to learn that there is an area where no Coke whatsoever is sold.

#### CLIP #1

ROGER: That's Eric Roberts. You might remember him as the killer from *Star 80*. He goes down to that area in Australia and finds the old trouble-maker.

#### CLIP #2

ROGER: That's Bill Kerr there as the old guy, the local bottler. And the plot gets complicated when it turns out that Kerr's daughter, played by Greta Scacchi, works for the local Coca-Cola bottler, and she has the hots for Eric Roberts. She'll do anything to lure him into bed, but he's more interested in Coca-Cola than he is in sex.

The Coca-Cola Kid was directed by Dusan Makavejev, one of the most consistently offbeat directors at work anywhere right now. You might remem-

ber his last movie, *Montenegro*, about the American wife of a Stockholm businessman who ends up in the middle of an orgy at the local Yugoslavian nightclub. He loves to get all those people in to the same frame together. He loves to combine things that don't seem to belong together, and that's what he does in this movie. For example, there's a great scene where he uses aborigine music for a Coke commercial —

GENE: And the aborigine has an agent!

ROGER: That's right! And I think maybe that Coke ought to air this commercial; it might help, you know. This is not only classic, it's prehistoric Coke!

I don't think, however, that Makavejev ever really pulls *The Coca-Cola Kid* together into one consistent movie, but it's fun watching the pieces fly around.

GENE: I thought he did pull it together in one consistent movie. This film delighted me. It made me laugh an awful lot, and it also touched me very deeply. And I think, obviously — and I know you know this much at least — that what's going on here is obviously an anti-capitalistic-domination-of-the-world essay.

ROGER: That's right.

GENE: At the same time, I think it does it with enough warmth, and rather than hitting people over the head — with enough warmth to suggest another way. And the other way is, frankly, 'Hey, let's all get in bed together and have good time,' because Greta Scacchi's character — and I think she's much more sexy than the woman in that *Weird Science* film — she wants to have sex with this guy, and chases him all over the world. And once they are in bed together, it's done in a sexy way, and a beautiful way; you say, wasn't that a



whole lot more interesting than the rest of his life, which is just to try to shove Coca-Cola down the throats of some people who are already happy with what they've got to drink.

ROGER: Well, she's very good in this movie.

GENE: Excellent!



ROGER: She was also good in *Heat and Dust*; you might remember, that was her first film. I liked the movie. I'm not really criticizing it, except to say it doesn't really pull together into one statement about whatever — I mean, you pulled it together better than the movie does. And I think the weak point is Eric Roberts' character, here.

GENE: Oh, I think he's a good actor.

ROGER: He is so strange in this movie. He seems to be so coiled up inside. I think, if it had been —

GENE: Oh, but that's part of it!



ROGER: He should have been somebody more like Dennis Lawson of *Local Hero*, the Scottish picture, where he's just sort of the winsome, peculiar kind of guy. Here he seems to be ready to continue on from *Star 80* and murder some people in Australia.

GENE: Yes, yes, because he's imbued with the philosophy: 'Dominate! Sell, sell, sell!' And actually, I think that one of the things that this film is, you want a repressed character in there, because once he's sexually liberated, of course, that's the solution: 'Let's go to bed.'

ROGER: Well, one of the things I love about Makavajev, who is a Yugoslavian — so, of course, that's a country that's kind of halfway between the East and West — and so is he. There's a sense in which he likes Coca-Cola; he thinks it's ridiculous. He thinks that its idea that everybody should drink Coke is just as funny as the fact that some people do like to drink Coke, and he gets all of that ambiguity in there. That part is fun.

GENE: It's a terrific film. This film is so far above most of the summer junk we're getting; I mean it's in another class. This is in the *Prizzi's Honor* class.

ROGER: And there's one more footnote. Don't you think the timing is perfect, with all of this front page stuff about Coca-Cola?

GENE: If it'll get people to see this movie, then go.

ROGER: I wouldn't have believed Coca-Cola was like this until I read the newspapers for the last month.

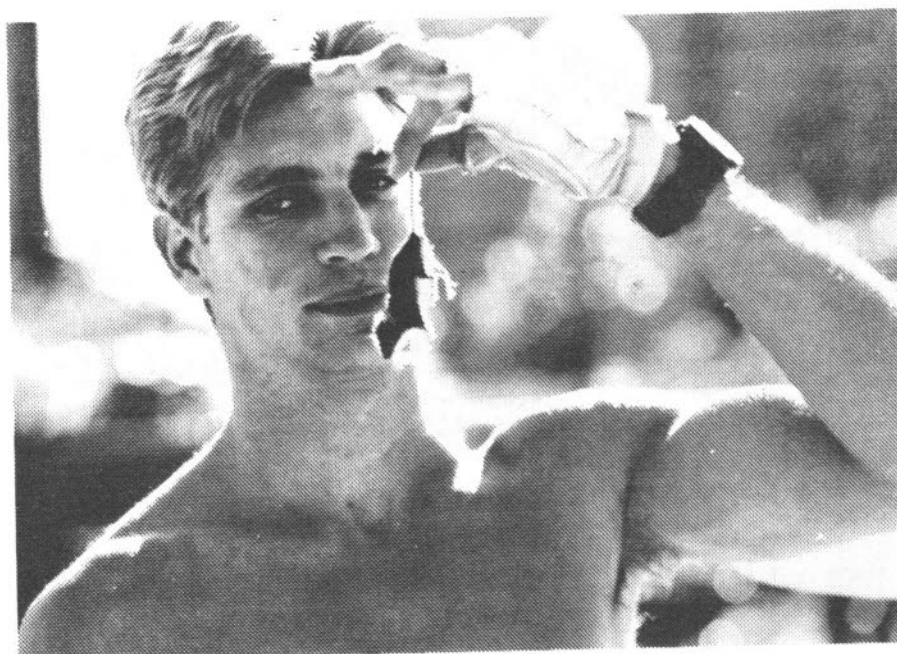
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(From the summary portion of the show:)

GENE: And finally, two enthusiastic responses to *The Coca-Cola Kid*, one of the few thoughtful adult films released this summer.

\* \* \* \* \*



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IN YOUR REPLY PLEASE QUOTE

October 11, 1984

Mr David Roe  
Producer  
"The Coca-Cola Kid"  
Grand Bay Films Pty Ltd  
33 Riley Street  
WOOLLOOMOOLOO NSW 2011

Dear David

I wish to confirm our telephone conversation this morning. As owner of copyright in the cinematographic films constituted by "Coca-Cola" commercials permission is required from the Coca-Cola Company in respect to any reproduction of the same.

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Please note that the foregoing does not in any way affect the requirement that the extended disclaimer notice previously negotiated be included in the credits of the films.

It would be appreciated if the commercials could be collected by myself at a convenient time and no later than 5.00 pm Friday October 12.

Yours sincerely

*Matthew*

MATTHEW PERCIVAL  
Assistant External Affairs Manager

Mr. Ralph Donelly

CINEMA 5 Theaters

Dear Mr. Donelly,

As an open-minded, educated New Yorker who considers herself to be well-travelled and highly sophisticated, permit me to tell you that you erred enormously in screening that horror - "The Coca-Cola Kid". Not only was it poorly made, terribly acted, and miserably written. (I am a big fan of Eric Roberts and I deplored his really unskilled performance.

Not one moment of this film was funny, but the largest mistake you made was not only in not realizing what an inferior product it was but in not realizing how dangerous this kind of anti-American propaganda - to your life and mine - is within our shores.

I mean, really, how dare you screen a film made by an Eastern Bloc director which is so apparently infused with hatred for the country we should all love so dearly and gratefully and defend with all our hearts?

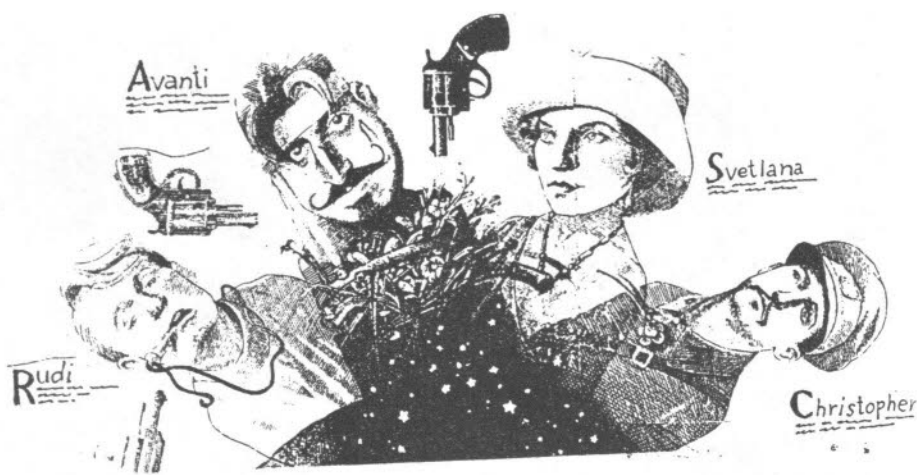
I presume you are an American but I find it very odd - that people like you usher in veritable little Trojan horses like this onto our land and expected people to be edified and applaud with appreciation. No way, José, I despised that film as did my companions and consider it traitorous for a fellow American like you to endanger my life, my wellbeing and my country by giving vent to such ill-conceived crap.

Thank you,

Mallory Danaher



## 8. Manifesto, 1988.



### On Callow on Makavejev . . . by Lorraine Mortimer

"In the end the whole experience has been, minute by minute, one of the most negative experiences of my life."

Simon Callow

"The director's indecisiveness is notorious. In some genres there are easy ways out. In action movies when they don't know what to do, they get actors to run through dark corridors and shoot each other. Fellini gets everybody dancing. Tarkovsky would stretch the shot and let it last until the least perceptive viewer starts feeling guilty and thinks of God. What am I going to do when we have to get the whole old train (rented and paid for dearly) to enter the station and disperse two dozen chickens among a few actors, if suddenly, one of these actors expresses an urgent need to discuss his character and ways of saying a few trivial lines, and it happens to be the very first day of his working with me? Obviously, whatever I did, out of my respect for him, was wrong. All my worries about other things he, inexperienced in films as he was, could not read but as related to him. When it gets later forgotten, as it mostly does, no harm. But if the actor is an ambitious writer as well and has a contract for a book about his experiences as a film start, how to get him to understand that there are scenes (or there were) in which the chickens were carrying more weight and meaning than the other actors in the shot?"

Dusan Makavejev

"One thing you should know. This film is the most organised film that Makavejev has ever made. Every other film has been an absolute living nightmare."

Bojana Marijan, as quoted by Simon Callow.<sup>1</sup>

"As I corrected the proofs of *Shooting the Actor*, I was directing my first movie, *the Ballad of the Sad Cafe*. The more I read, the angrier I became with the self-obsessed, self-indulgent person who had written the bulk of the text. Why couldn't he see what the problems were, and actively apply himself to solving them, instead of childish sulking? Why was he so willfully ignorant of the process of filmmaking? Was it a deep-seated contempt for the whole process, as compared with that of his beloved Theatah? What was it? Whatever it was, it was disgraceful. Didn't he care anything about the film? Or were his own tiny problems the only thing he could see? I had no sympathy with him. With me, that is to say. Because of course, in the throes myself of the very

problems that had preoccupied and distracted Dusan, I had been forcibly made aware of the other side of the coin; and till you've experienced it, you never really know it."

Simon Callow

At the Australian Film and Television School years ago, Burt Lancaster gave one of his best performances, evoking himself as a middle-aged man-actor desperately wanting Visconti to react to his portrayal of the Prince in *The Leopard*, crying over his uncertainty about how he was doing. In *Shooting the Actor*, Simon Callow, working with director Dusan Makavejev, explores some similar territory — with rather less grandeur. In 1987, Callow arranged with Nick Hern to keep a tape-diary while acting in the Cannon production of Makavejev's film *Manifesto*, set in the mythical, middle-European town of *Waldheim*. The film was inspired by a play by Slavko Grum, who himself derived his plot from an Emile Zola story, *For a Night of Love*. (Zola in turn, says Makavejev, found the plot in Casanova's memoirs.) As the book's lengthy subtitle suggest, Makavejev has been able to comment on Callow's text, but in the published version, the montage is all Callow's and Hern's.

The book will engage those interested in the work of Makavejev or Callow. I read it because Makavejev is my favorite director. But it is fascinating on a number of levels, from that of harmless gossip (who was flirting with whom?), to problems of an "international" shoot (how to find an accent?), to poetic travelogue, through to philosophies about acting, character and performance, and back to the poignant-banal, where Callow, as would-be Renaissance man (he acts, he directs plays and films, stages operas and writes books), openly, painfully, parades his fears about being thought less than a heavyweight and his desire for the approval of Makavejev and Marijan — to the point of embarrassment.

While readers might find his complaints about frustrations on the shoot annoying (so many are part for the course in putting a film together and Callow is relatively new to film acting), he can write. There is much flair, wit and xenophobia. And he is often a bitch.

At the "very sensitive gossip" level, there is the story of the aged Abel Gance seeing Kevin Brownlow's documentary tribute to him, *The Charm of Dynamite*, and taking it for a massacred version of his film, *Napoleon*, abusing the worshipful Brownlow on stage at the Telluride, Colorado, Film Festival — and worse, the next day, *understanding* what he had done. (Brownlow tells his own version of the story in his wonderfully obsessive book, *Napoleon*.) While Eric Stolz, who gave a gentle but magnetic performance as Christopher in *Manifesto* gets short shrift, "our Chris Haywood" is written of with great enthusiasm and generosity. For Callow, he is "all relish," professor of the "science of pleasure."

While the "Yugoslavian soul" may have eluded Callow and "Balkan fatalism" gone against the grain, there are passionate appreciations of places and people. Callow describes a "verbally slender but emotionally thrilling" conversation with Rade Serbedzija, who played the beautiful Emile in *Manifesto*. Serbedzija's most famous role, he says, is Titus Andronicus, where he made his first entrance on a motorbike, riding round a Wall of Death. Like Callow,





would have liked to have seen this! There is a visit with co-actors to the theatre in Ljubljana to see part two of an adaptation of Dostoevsky's *the Possessed*. Here Callow finds —

"East European theatre: the action framed with repeated rituals, sweeping, stitching, climbing, the scenes punctuated with bursts of very bright light and very loud music, the acting emotional and physical, not in the least cerebral."

There is such appreciation here that one is surprised at his adherence to a more "British" way of doing things, longing for an "ur-text" to which he can refer in creating, or feeling he cannot create, his character, Police Commissioner Otto Hunt. Callow is indeed talking about Character and, if we are to believe him, other actors of the "British professions," Fred Molina and Lindsay Duncan, who played Avanti and Lily Sacher, shared his reverence for the Text, or at least, his reaction to Chaos.

This brings me to what I find most interesting in the book, these questions of form, character and performance. But to discuss this, I need to try to weave in Callow's very personal feelings about Makavejev as his (non-directive) director. Early on, Makavejev has a "constantly surprising brain," he is "eternally enthusiastic," "interested in everything, and it's wonderful to work with him because for him everything is stimulating, especially paradoxical things." Above all, this kind of cute genius is playful. When Makavejev is talking about "real life," he is talking about something "fundamentally anarchic," something on film which is "truly alive, not just lively." Callow puts forward a principle of Makavejevianism:

"It's nothing whatever to do with creating a many-layered character. It's everything to do with constantly alerting the audience to the playful possibilities of any given situation."

There are such high hopes before the tense process of filmmaking begins. But the rot sets in.

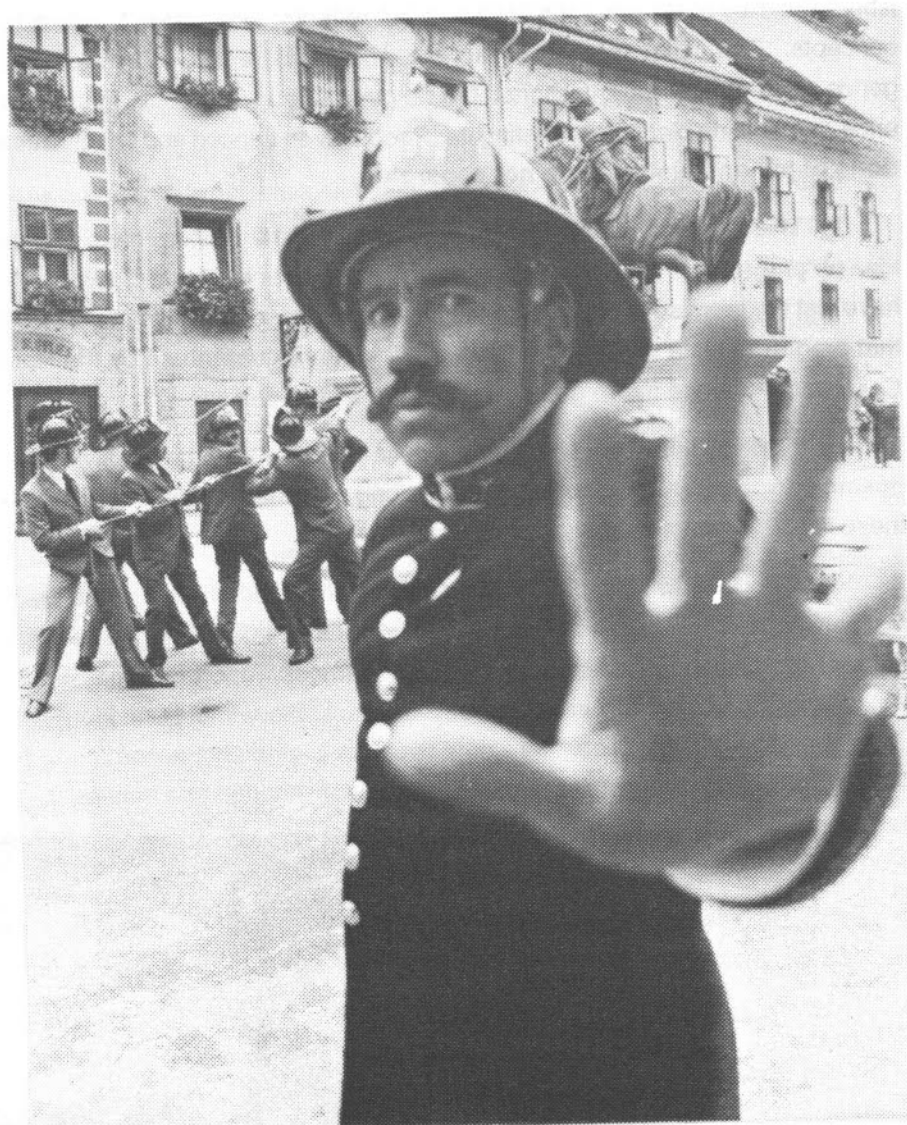
Makavejev writes: "During the actual work, not only was I not 'properly explaining' my intentions and desire, I was also absolutely unaware what my attitude against 'acting' could produce in someone who had written a book on *Being an Actor*."

Callow writes of Shakespeare's high claim for actors, of the long-term project of recording "the reality of human life in living flesh." But he wants to do this by having his character *established* (taking his cue for doing this, filmically, from Alec Guinness), *to know who he is*, and always, after any scene, to get the *approval* of the director. While Makavejev would probably have no quarrel with this idea of the actor's project, I suspect he would want to explode the almost static, very individualised notion of "Being an Actor." As Callow recognises, Makavejev does not see character as an "organic entity," being precisely concerned with process, contrast, contradiction and confusion. He wants wholehearted, full-bodied involvement of everyone on the set. Something must happen and between people and things. As many of the earliest practitioners and theorists of film stressed, on film, *everything acts*. Tallulah Bankhead was much more successful on stage than on film. Her "supercharged" vitality seemed "too much" for the screen. Makavejev writes a note on actors not "acting" in front of the camera: "The secret of Marlon Brando's 'acting only 40%' is based on the fact that almost anything in front of the camera is too much, especially if you have a charismatic actor."

Of course there are no infallible rules or formulae here. It's all delightfully complicated. When the "exaggeration" of Tennessee Williams meets the "exaggeration" of Anna Magnani in the too-rich film of *The Rose Tattoo*, something great happens, there's something of "real life" as I know it. (At the same time, in that film, for me, Burt Lancaster is awkwardly "playing" the suitor with the body of a prince and the head of a fool. How much better he is when he exudes dignity and stature in *The Leopard*, where Visconti's whole film hangs upon him. Perhaps I like Lancaster playing "types of princes.")

I can sympathise with Callow when he is asked to do less:

"The word 'less' has dogged me all my life, I am always being asked for less: less noise, less energy, less laughter, less talking, less feeling, less trouble. He wasn't to know but it upsets me terribly. It makes me feel awkward, foolish, clumsy, out of control. It must have something to do with my childhood."



But his reaction has something of the spoiled brat about it. By his own admission, Callow often acted (when not in "character") intolerably.

It's not so much that he does so much whining about a "minor part"; it's more that his complaints, in their egocentrism, seem to keep masking the fact that a whole group of people, in so many capacities, make a film. There is so much "Dusan and me" talk, coupling himself with Makavejev: "...only Dusan and I could have fallen out the way we did." "It's undignified for both of us, nagging and snapping away like an old married couple."

To be a little cruel, it's as though, in his eroticised bid for the father/director's approval, he did not see all those others on the set. However much else in the book might seem cooked-up, this slightly deluded vulnerability gives it a "rawness".

The book helped set me thinking about Makavejev's work. Callow writes of chaos as his medium, about him worrying over his cameraman friend, Tomislav Pinter's getting too classical, too clean a frame. Makavejev, says Callow, has something deep in him which is opposed to what is worked-on, polished, or rather, structured or shaped. The script for *Manifesto* is the most coherent he has written. He worries that the more coherent his films get (as in *Montenegro* and *The Coca Cola Kid*), the less creative he is. This was fascinating. The ideas, the spirit and the visceral quality are all still there in these later, "more finished", more narratively coherent films. (I don't think *Montenegro* suffers from this coherence, its near perfect use of music makes it constantly surprising). But in earlier films like *Man is not a Bird* ("Man is a Bird, I think it's called," says Callow), *Love Affair* or *The Tragedy of a Switchboard Operator* and *WR: Mysteries of the Organism*, it is probably the slender, fragmented narratives entwined with the "essayistic" and the "documentary", which gives them their special power and richness. Like *Sweet Movie*, they have more layers, they "taste" richer than *The Coca Cola Kid*.<sup>2</sup>

I saw these films at a time when, on the New Left, there just wasn't enough criticism of Eastern bloc socialism. (To criticise anything "Communist" was regarded as playing into the hands of the capitalist system, being complicit.) It was also a time when "progressive" films were supposed to analyse, to be *anti*-narrative, to call the status quo into question by denying pleasure - often boring us to death! Godard's playful but Calvinist cool was to be emulated. Cerebral detachment was the order of the day - the way, eventually, to "something better".



Then I saw these leftist films which didn't pretend Soviet repression was fine, which were resolutely anti-authoritarian, whose use of traces of stories didn't come from some dogmatic philosophy but from the fact that the writer/director was doing something else. "Characters" were not rounded off or finished, but they didn't have the life taken out of them, they weren't reduced to concepts. The films were full of humour, vitality and a non-reductive intelligence. Everything was questioned but no guru-auteur was lecturing the audience, withholding pleasure, cheating us. People **even** danced and sang! **Questions of joy and justice were not separated.**

There have recently been great changes in the Eastern bloc, and the idea of "progress" is even more under question. (Edgar Morin puts it well: "We have lost the promise of progress, but that is great progress, at last, to discover that progress was a myth ... We have lost the future guaranteed by the Rand Corporation and the future guaranteed by the Marx-Lenin label.")

It's partly this acknowledgement of harsh truths with the quality of non-guaranteed, messy, unfinished openness, along with shades of hope, that make these films so attractive to me.

I wonder now if the centred narratives in *The Coca Cola Kid* and *Manifesto* aren't too weak to carry all this complexity. Or if Makavejev isn't best with precisely that unusual concoction of narrative traces, reportage and exposition, where a kind of Gypsy vitalism meets intellectuality without one ingredient overpowering another. (These are only separate ingredients according to reductive, mutilating conventions we have inherited, as though "the senses" have

to die or be put on hold while we "think".) These are things to explore further elsewhere, but Callow's book allowed a start to be made. Having read *Shooting the Actor*, I went off to see *Amadeus* again. Callow plays the small part of Schikaneder. he does it well. (He had played the lead in the stageplay.) I'll also read his book on Charles Laughton (one of his heroes, along with Orson Welles and Oscar Wilde). Its subtitle is "A Difficult Actor", Callow reveals himself to be not only difficult, but defensive, often nasty. But there is more besides that. He's not "cerebral in the least interesting way", which he decides, at one point, is Makavejev's assessment of him!

As for the director himself, I was happy to find that much of the pleasure in the book came from his "interventions". How many of us would have seen beyond the "poisoned portfolio", as Callow called the early draft he gave him, to go on to participate in the book? There is all the sharpness and sympathy that one finds in the films. And what a treat to discover that he can write too, in a playful, wry and very intelligent way.

<sup>1</sup> Marijan was the Associate Producer of *Manifesto*. She is also wife and co-worker of Makavejev.

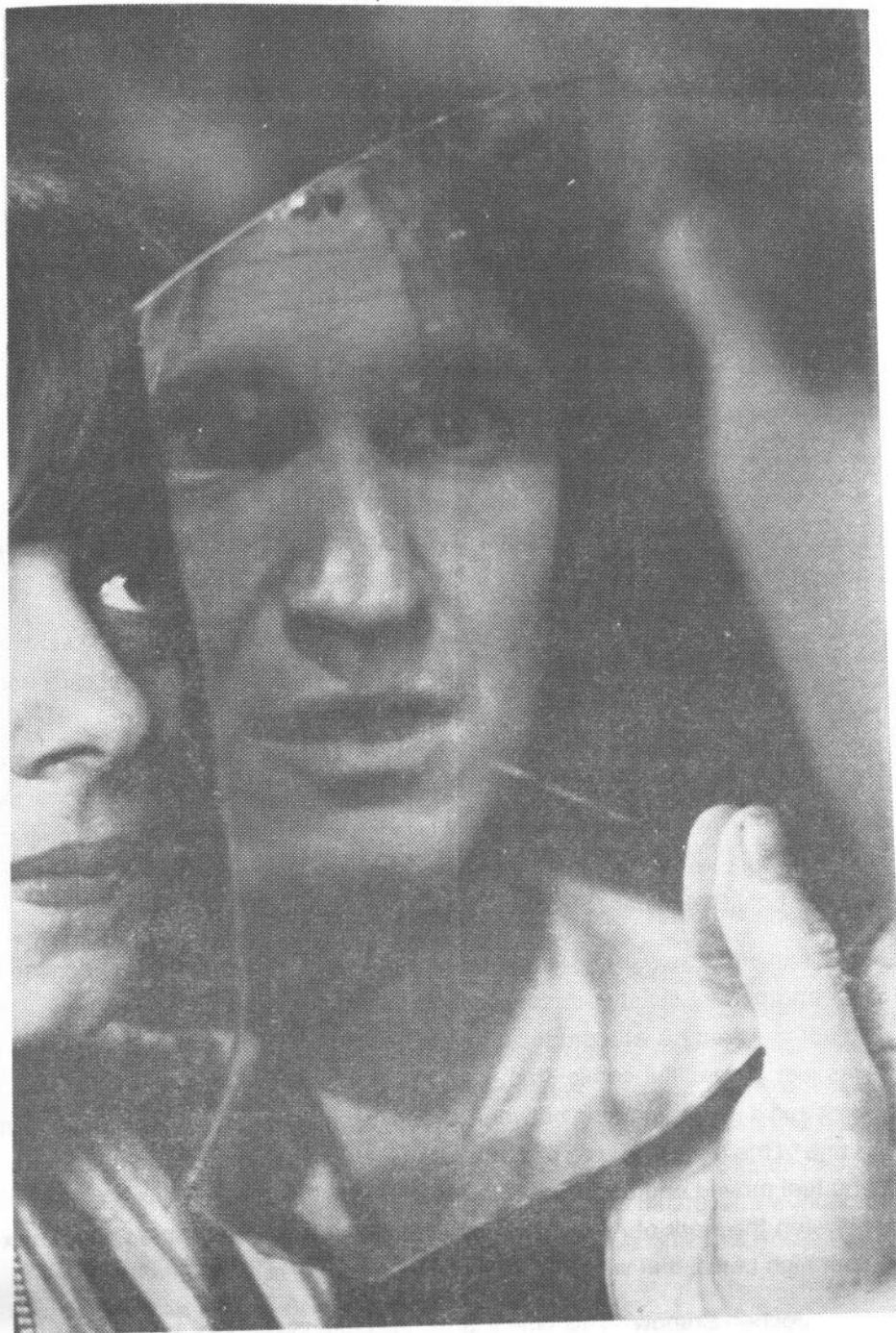
<sup>2</sup> In "On Makavejev on Bergman" (*Critical Inquiry*, V.6, n.2, 1979), Stanley Cavell writes on Makavejev and taste, smell, knowledge and revolution, with particular reference to *Sweet Movie*.

Reprinted from *Filmnews* (August, 1991).





## 9. Gorilla Bathes at Noon, 1993.



### I ADMIRE MONKEYS

A serious interview with Dusan Makavejev  
by Jochen Brunow

Jochen Brunow: You have made films all over the world in Australia, in Canada, in Sweden and France. What attracted you to the special situation in Germany?

Dusan Makavejev: Berlin is more than Germany. I still remember a lonely white rabbit, near Brandenburger Tor, under glorious light, at midnight. It was early November 1961, during my first visit to East Germany. Poor rabbit was hopping through no man's land, barbed wire and mines placed between Germans and Germans. If you read the image, behind this quiet, idyllic scene stood incredible violence. It was a violence of planetary proportions. I felt almost physical pain. Since then I could not stop thinking about it. Many years later the brutal concrete wall that was cutting the city carried in itself 600 German shepherd dogs and thousands of white rabbits, offspring of the one I saw decades ago. Honnecker's statement, "The wall will stand another fifty or hundred years," made me privately furious. I decided to do something and wrote the first draft for a film called *Forward The Time*. It was this contradiction between the brutal concrete and thousands of rabbits within it, which looked very German to me and inspired me.

Jochen Brunow: So I understand that this project has a very long history, you had to change it, when the wall came down, but how did the rabbits become a gorilla? What is your special relationship to animals?

Dusan Makavejev: The "animal part" - which is probably the largest part of ourselves - is the least understood part of human existence. When we hear the expression "Blut und Boden" we dismiss it as a corny concept from boulevard culture, but it relates to life. When you hear people using this kind of expressions with conviction you can feel their longing to be like a gorilla or like a tiger. Of course it puzzles me that nature is always seen as connected with beasts or birds of prey and never understood as horses, rabbits or flowers. Not to speak about fish which are totally neglected.

Jochen Brunow: I am a pisces in my zodiac sign and a tiger in the Chinese horoscope. What are you and which animal you reincarnate?

Dusan Makavejev: Oh, it is the first time I met a piranha! You hide well behind your smile. Horoscopically I am the Balance. My animal? I would like to think its a squirrel, but maybe mentally I am closer to hippopotamus. I also admire monkeys for their humor and wisdom and of course all primates, our stronger brothers.

Jochen Brunow: In the film *The Gorilla Bathes At Noon* we see a Russian major abandoned by his army moving through Berlin like a lonely drifter. Is he the gorilla or is he a rabbit?



Dusan Makavejev: My answer is "Yes, you are right."

Jochen Brunow: Maybe we should get a little more serious now, because otherwise nobody will understand this interview like nobody might understand the film.

Dusan Makavejev: I do sometimes suffer from people who try to understand my films seriously. And don't take me wrong, I am a serious filmmaker. But I hate boring films and I really think if something is tormenting me, it does not give me the right to torture the public. We work in the entertainment. The main work of film art is to transform heavy and difficult and confusing and ugly questions of human existence into something close to a song or a flying carpet. Something that you can follow or participate in without thinking.

Jochen Brunow: You are very serious about not being serious.

Dusan Makavejev: Basic work of the film is seduction. That is why film is often dangerously close to kitsch. The difference is that kitsch is seduction into death. Film on the contrary addresses regular semi dead people and seduces them into life.

Jochen Brunow: *The Gorilla Bathes At Noon* obviously takes a new and fresh view onto the actual German situation. Only foreigners seem to be able to see the new possibilities of life in all the changes we are going through. The hero in the film reacts with complete innocence to the chaos which is surrounding him.

Dusan Makavejev: I can't call my Victor Borisovich a "noble savage" because he is an urban character, he did not climb down among us from a tree...

Jochen Brunow: ...but he really likes bananas and other fruits and steals food from the Siberian tigers in the zoo, which he calls his compatriots...

Dusan Makavejev: ...I prefer to call him a noble idiot inviting a comparison with Dostojevski's Count Mishkin. When we speak about "Fachidioten" we should try to understand how they feel, when their job, position or uniform gets taken away from them. Boris clings to his uniform almost believing that without it only void would appear in the place which he occupied. And that is not far from the truth.





Jochen Brunow: But sticking strictly to what he learned prevents Victor from becoming a murderer. He was only trained to kill on a massive scale and he rejects to be a hired assassin.

Dusan Makavejev: Yes! Each profession even if it keeps people in a limited frame, has its moral dimension and represents formalized human experience. Being a soldier, Victor knows the importance of shelter, environment, design etc. Army as a profession has a lot of ecologically sound perceptions, understanding of functionality etc. His problem is, that he is suddenly stripped of the system in which he functioned and he is almost forced to become independent over night. He is vulnerable and fragile as a new born. He is learning to walk, he is getting new skin.

Jochen Brunow: Maybe that is something we as Germans might learn from him. We also have to adapt to a new situation. I think, behind this figure you invented there stands a special attitude towards life, a certain philosophy. Chaos, turmoil and catastrophe are creating new forms of life.

Dusan Makavejev: I am grateful to Svetozar Cvetkovic who is a marvelous actor, and who cared enough about Victor to make him into a living being, a character amusing to follow. So yes, we can speak about philosophy, about how can you start life again from zero at the age of thirty five, or sixty, but in the film we follow an individual. I can't speak about the German situation. The example that was haunting me, was my captain from my Infantry officer school days, who was a terrific soldier and we admired him enormously. I was worrying what is happening with him now, when his army is destroying its own cities and shooting at its own people.

Jochen Brunow: Is there a relation between the way Victor moves through the city of Berlin and the way you realized the film? It looks like as if a lot of incidents just happened and you had to work with what you were able to catch. There is no conventional story guiding us through the material you compiled, but bits and pieces are set into a certain relationship, disparate impressions are tied up to a certain vision.

Dusan Makavejev: Your question tells me, that you think the film is half way between accomplishment and lucky - or not always lucky - accident... In plain wandering you get lots of waste. So, to get the impression of flow, it asks for some tender care and study at the editing table. However, we were open to events around us and especially the removal of Tomsy's Lenin presented itself as a great opportunity to us. Before the real work started there were lots of stop and go moments because of public demonstrations against the demolition

and even a fear of violence. The slogan HÄNDE WEG VON DER GESCHICHTE gave Victor the opportunity to stand as guard of honor. We have had, though, some problems of how our Victor is going to react when real demolition starts: with anger, tears or something else. So sometimes we followed life like wandering dogs and sometimes we acted as if.

Jochen Brunow: 'Victor becomes eye witness of a murder, he steals -or does he save it? - a baby. There are certain action elements or melodramatic moments in the film, which seem broken pieces to me, like the forgotten ruins of story elements which stick out of the rest of the film.

Dusan Makavejev: We started with a big history, great war and its consequences fifty years later, and then we were gradually "falling into life", getting new skin. The little human contacts that happen to Victor gradually shape his new family. He is not looking at all for a family, but somehow girlfriend, child, mother-in-law needing support crystallize around him. Staying in his uniform for a while, he was on his own no man's land, not yet accepting himself as a regular citizen. Then these loving creatures strip him of his unnecessary and dated armor. The film that was initially looking around for its meaning - with the help of Victor's contacts finally found its own story!

Jochen Brunow: You have always used different style, different kinds of material in your films. In *The Gorilla Bathes At Noon* you use a lot of clips from an old Russian epic film. These clips are the holes in the film, through which history enters the scene. *Fall Of Berlin* is a work of fiction, but it uses the real ruins of Berlin as a set for a very pathetic glorifying story. This way not only the Red Army of former times appears, but also former aesthetic models are present in your work. And it is obvious that the film you are quoting from is trying to imitate Leni Riefenstahl's work.

Dusan Makavejev: I liked *Fall Of Berlin* and its grand finale, because it has an operatic quality. It is naive and pathetic, grandiose and moving. Its author believed he was producing an important epochal historic fresco, but it was just a beautiful comic strip. He made references to Leni Riefenstahl's work and it was something between strong inspiration and plagiarism. His film is one of the rare examples of symbiosis between communist and nazi art. So you feel moved and uneasy at the same time. Tell me please the difference between the work of Arno Breker and Tomsy the author of the gigantic six-floor high Lenin, that was so arrogantly disposed of?

Jochen Brunow: This time it is my turn to answer: Yes, you are right!



## 10. Hole in the Soul, 1994.

Sabato 26 novembre 1994

# LA NAZIONE

FESTIVAL DEI POPOLI / INCONTRO CON DUSAN MAKAVEJEV

## Jugoslavia mon amour

Il regista, senza più patria, parla dei serbi e degli orrori della guerra

Servizio di  
Cristina Jandelli  
FIRENZE — Di recente Montenegro Tango è stato trasmesso anche in tv, mentre è ancora nuovo il ricordo di Gola Kola Kola nonostante il film sia stato realizzato ormai dieci anni fa. Incontriamo il regista Dusan Makavejev, con la certezza che possiamo aspettarci di tutto da un autore che fa del registro satirico e grottesco una pura questione di estro sanguigno. Invece ha la morte nel cuore. Di ritorno a Firenze per raggiungere a giorni Berlino, dove farà parte della giuria internazionale che assegna i premi Felix, Makavejev incontra i giornalisti in occasione della presentazione ufficiale al 35° Festival dei Popoli del suo documentario realizzato per la serie Ipc «The Director's Place».

esplicito — se il suo «vuoto nell'anima» è riferito alla situazione in Jugoslavia. «Certo — risponde il regista — il fatto è che non so più qual è la mia patria, perché non esiste più, il vuoto che provo si collega alla scomparsa della mia terra. Belgrado poi ha subito, in questi ultimi anni, una regressione di massa perché la gente ormai è costretta alla pura sopravvivenza animale. L'inverno scorso l'inflazione ha raggiunto un livello tale da decretare l'assoluta cancellazione degli stipendi. Una coppia di vecchi, che non avevano di che vivere, è saltata giù dal tetto. Ma sono le condizioni mentali, di istinto e di disperazione, che mi preoccupano di più. La gente crede a qualsiasi cosa gli propina la propaganda, non è più in grado di discernere. I serbi vengono convinti del fatto che c'è un complotto mondiale con-

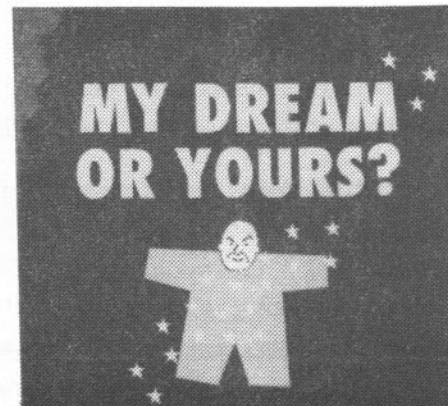
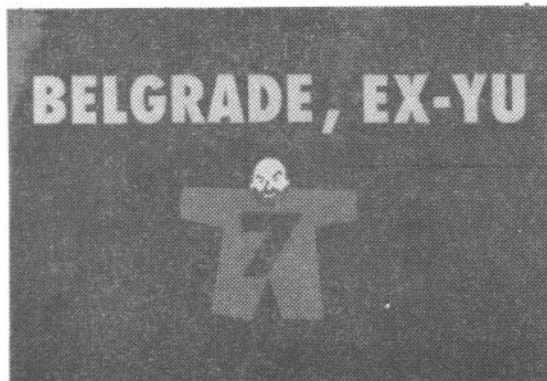
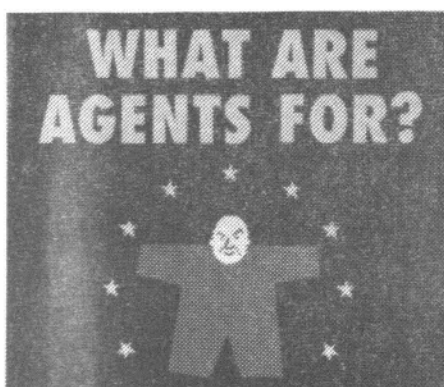


«Hole in the Soul»: a destra il regista Makavejev

## The Director's Place: Hole in the Soul

Dusan Makavejev, famous for films such as *"Sweet Movie"* and *"Montenegro"*, is undoubtedly one of the most amusing directors of European cinema. Capable of an endless grotesque-satirical vein he even succeeded in being ironic and frank about his experience as a political exile. Expelled from his country in 1973 for filming "experimental" comedies where he cleverly mixed fiction and documentary, sex and politics, stimulated by the proposal of the series "The Director's Place." Besides painting an original portrait of his native Belgrade, he doesn't miss the chance of exposing to ridicule eccentricities and ills of San Francisco and Los Angeles, which have been his cities of adoption for a large number of years. The Guiding thread of the whole film is the examination of a serious-comic hypothesis: is it possible that from the incision practiced by the doctor during a delicate surgical operation a little bit of his soul also escaped? And if so, where did it go?

Festival dei popoli, Florence, 1994.





# Nikola Tesla Radiated a Blue Light

Dusan Makavejev

Fragments from a paper originally read at the Smithsonian Institution's International Conference, "Two Hundred Years of America- What Difference Does it Make?" September 27 — October 1, 1976

## Ambivalent Memories

1 I was five years old. My uncle Steva took me to the movies. Mickey, Goofy, Horatio, and Clarabelle and Company formed an orchestra. They started playing and then a terrible wind, a storm, came. They flew in all directions, still playing. That was irresistible.

The audience giggled and I was choking with laughter. Then horror began. Something was leaking down my leg, wet and warm, a puddle was spreading. Luckily, it was noisy in the cinema and people around me didn't notice anything.

Out of enthusiasm I have wet myself. Oh, shame!

Uncle Steva took me out in a hurry.

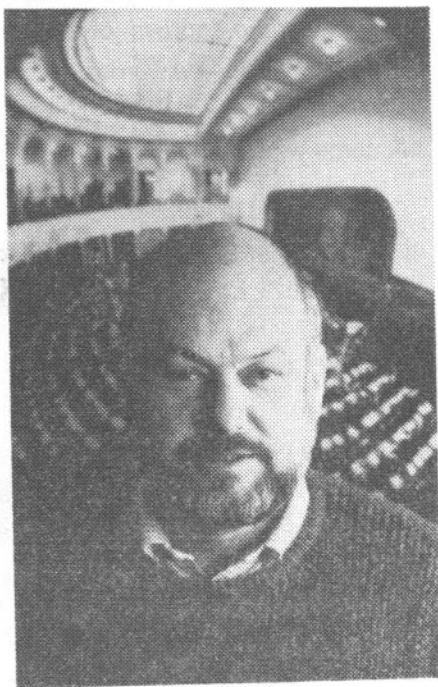
3 Then *Young Tom Edison* came, and I wanted to publish my own newspaper, i.e., I wanted to be like Mickey Rooney, i.e., like Tom Edison, i.e., like Andy Hardy.

4 A novel entitled *Chicago* was coming out in the form of Tuesday and Friday booklets. In it, a mad scientist had invented a matter called *crystalopyr*, which reflected sunrays in such a way that, on one side, everything turned into ice, while everything burned on the other. A crystalopyr plane was in production; the destruction of the world was in preparation.

5 A year later, at 6 a.m. on April 6, 1941, German incendiary bombs made the prophecy of *Chicago* come true and burned 30 percent of Belgrade. Twenty thousand inhabitants of Belgrade died on that day, before breakfast, as Fodor's guide puts it. The town was turned into congeries of dolls' houses — houses without fronts disclosed intact apartments, dining rooms with chandeliers, dentists' offices.

6 German occupation began. My school was taken to see *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*. Snow White and the dwarfs spoke German. According to German custom, the film was dubbed in their language. We were offended.

7 Easter of '44 was a beautiful, sunny day. Humming came from the sky, the squadrons of Liberators sparkled. People waved at them, happy with the near-end of the war. Bombs started to thunder and raise dust. A maternity clinic in our neighborhood was hit. Babies were found



in the tree-tops. There were thousands of dead civilians, but everybody was still glad to see the Allied planes.

8 The liberation came. Tito's partisans, and the Red Army. Roosevelt died. New peoples' power proclaimed three-day national mourning, cinemas were closed, there was no music in restaurants, for three days flags fluttered at half-mast. I wondered: have they buried him in his wheelchair?

## "Drang Nach Westen" and Dangers of Linear Thinking

3 "To catch up and overtake America" is a fatal slogan. We already know from the ancient Greeks that even a rabbit cannot overtake a turtle. I know that many of my American friends do not enjoy having to run so much. I guess they were told as children: "Run so that nobody can overtake us."

4 I like Instant Coffee and Instant Soup.

When Instant Death was introduced, in 1945, as applied in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, I caught myself, a thirteen-year-old boy, in a dilemma: I liked it very much, although I knew it wasn't nice that I liked it. Then everybody got Instant Excuse: Instant Death has brought Instant End of War.

## Instant Beginning and Instant End.

5 The production of Absolute Happiness comes next. It is curious that this concept (the guided creation of generations of completely happy human beings) did not appear in Pavlov-oriented Soviet psychology, but at Harvard, with B.F. Skinner.

## The Factory of Universal Dreams

2 Another contribution of our national genius to Hollywood: *Vampir*, the only Serbian word that has entered all the languages of the world.

Vampire (F, fr, G vampir, of Slav origin; akin to Serb *vampir* vampire, Russ *upyr*) 1: a bloodsucking ghost or reanimated body of a dead person believed to come from a grave and wander about by night sucking the blood of persons asleep and causing their death.

## Webster's Third New International Dictionary

6 A fascinating situation: a TV commentator blows out his brains camera. After this, I cannot watch TV news in America without hoping, in some dark corner of my soul, that maybe now this commentator I am seeing and hearing ...

## Energy

5 The childhood dream of Nikola Tesla, in a deep province of the Austro-Hungarian Empire (today: Lika, Croatia, Yugoslavia) was to go to America and install a gigantic wheel at Niagara Falls which would produce unheard quantities of energy.

In 1884, Nikola Tesla (twenty-eight) comes out from the Immigration Office in Castle Garden, Manhattan, with four cents in his pocket. He works as an electrician, digs holes for two dollars a day, founds Tesla Electric Company, and creates the polyphase system of alternating current.

At the same time Edison and John Pierpont Morgan work steadfastly on the development of the direct current system. Edison's direct current has a maximum reach of one mile from the power station.

According to some stories, Edison and Morgan go around New York killing chickens with the alternating current in order to prove how dangerous it is. In 1888, with a million dollar check, George Westinghouse buys forty patents from Tesla — the complete system. Using the alternating current system, Tesla illuminates, on Westinghouse's behalf, the whole 1893 World Columbian Exposition in Chicago. Westinghouse obtains the contract to build the Niagara power station. In 1896, Buffalo is illuminated by the alternating current coming from Niagara, 22 miles away.

Soon the whole of America is covered with pylons — the cheap energy can be obtained, like water, out of the wall, in every house.

Tesla's ultimate dreams were of the wireless transmission of electric energy, a system of interplanetary communication, and radio contact with the cosmos. In 1899, in Colorado Springs, he lighted two hundred bulbs, without use of wires, from a distance of 25 miles. He also produced manmade lightning flashes.

It was a poor eighty-year old man who, in the early forties, fed pigeons every day in front of New York's Plaza Hotel and led a lonely life with a female pigeon at the Waldorf Astoria.

Seventy years earlier, he was a young man who had visions and nightmares, who had attacks of nausea at the sight of a peach, went berserk at the sight of pearls, and became ecstatic when faced with even, smooth surfaces or sparkling crystals, who could not work with numbers not divisible by three.

He claimed that in the moments of heightened creativity he was radiating a blue light.

6 In 1968 *Life* magazine published a cover photo of an astronaut on the Moon. Gary Burnstein (Ph.D. in Psychology, a passionate researcher of Nikola Tesla and Wilhelm Reich) draws my attention to the blue halo around the astronaut in the atmosphereless moonscape.

The experts convinced themselves that this blue halo was caused by some fault in the negative.

7 As far back as 1934, Reich explained to Erik Erikson that all living creatures radiate a blue light. Erikson did not believe him. Reich invited Erikson — it was in Denmark, during the summer vacation — to observe with him couples making love on the beach, in darkness. He asserted that the blue radiation, which becomes more intense during the sexual act, can be observed by the naked eye. From then on, Erikson considered Reich mad.

Many others considered Reich mad at the time of his death in Lewisburg prison, Pennsylvania, in 1956.

## Discovery of Man on the Moon

1 It was the night between August 20 and 21, 1969, on the open Atlantic.





Bojana and I were on our way back from America to Europe, on the Italian ocean liner *Rafaele*.

Two days earlier, apart from the sea, there was nothing around us. I was waiting for the Azores to appear, on account of Mayakovsky.

The Azores duly appeared and stately sailed past us, on their way to America.

"And life will pass by, like the Azores did."

It seemed as if we were sailing through the lines of the Great Vladimir. He did not sail out of this life like a tame, lazy island; he blew out his brain with a revolver bullet. But that's another story.

That evening in the ship's cinema we saw Toshiro Mifune and Lee Marvin in Boorman's *Hell in the Pacific*. It was strange, it was a good prelude to what was going to happen to us that night.

In the middle of the ocean — a ship, a cinema in the ship, in the cinema — an ocean, but not this ocean, the *other* ocean, at the Antipodes.

Nobody slept that night.

All the ship's drawing rooms were full of people, in semidarkness and silence. Everybody was watching Armstrong and Aldrin, the first steps of the men on the Moon.

It all came in poetically smudged video-images, like Norman MacLaren's *Pas de deux*. Our compatriots, the earthlings, did not walk, it was more like hopping and floating in the no-atmosphere of the Moon, it was more like that time when we were fish than when we ventured on our first steps, being one year old.

It was very solemn, that TV watching, and it went on for hours. This was not watching but being *present*, accompanied by the awareness that at the same moment hundreds of millions of other men, maybe even a billion of them, were doing the same thing.

In that act of mass baptism, we were becoming, all together, compatriots-earthlings, soaked in highly primitive emotion, the feeling that we, the men of Earth, have set out on a new journey. Sitting by a TV set on that night meant the approval of that risk, acceptance of all new worries and perils, readiness to be surprised: we are off, come what may.

State and national frontiers were ajar, slackened. All together, we were following the Earth Team, not the American Team. (The term "Race with Russians" retains a sense only in the dumb linear logic of people still believing that the earth is flat, still seeing the world from "here" to "there". What "race" is possible, once you start in *all directions*?)

Later, the coming out of the astronauts from the space craft and walking-floating in Space showed even more obviously — with that so prominent umbilical cord — that we were faced with a *dramatization of the act of*

*birth*, that the whole fantastic-science-fiction theater performance was, in fact, a *celebration of human birth*.

In that way the *discovery of man* was performed on the Moon.

2 The ship was sailing silently over the ocean, there were people in the drawing rooms in the ship, TV sets in the drawing rooms, and the Moon on TV screens. I was coming into these drawing rooms full of silent people, and I was going out to watch the Moon from the deck.

Jules Verne.

We have descended twenty thousand leagues under the sea and we have stepped on the moon. We went to the center of the Earth and we have entered the human brain.

3 Far, far away, Jules Verne floated in the dark sky, disguised as the Moon, and very lonely.

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## Film Forum: Thirty-five Top Filmmakers Discuss Their Craft: Dusan Makavejev

by Ellen Oumano

At Harvard, where he taught in 1977-78, they still speak of him in the reverent tones befitting Dusan Makavejev, martyred saint of cinema, fallen from industry grace with the release of his most controversial film, *Sweet Movie*. His films have violated some of society's most sacred taboos, and not with a certain defiance; but like his mentor, Wilhelm Reich, Makavejev is more sinned against than sinner. Describing their parallels between political and sexual freedom, between fascism of the individual body and that of the body politic, his films propose the releasing of our animal natures as a solution, an option guaranteed to make a few puritans squirm in their seats. Makavejev's extraordinary movies are collages; constructed from oppositions and ironic juxtapositions on levels ranging from different film stocks to contrasting image content to total disruption of ordinary narrative concepts, his films reach out to meet our dreams. His own personality is distinguished by a childlike curiosity about the ways of his fellow humans — a quality I observed over and over in the characters of the most interesting film makers. Makavejev and his films are of a piece, and in his case, there is a special integrity. He rejects the image of cult figure, however, as unreal and false, especially since the reality of his situation is that from the time *Sweet Movie* was released in 1974 until *Montenegro* in 1981, he was unable to finance a film project.

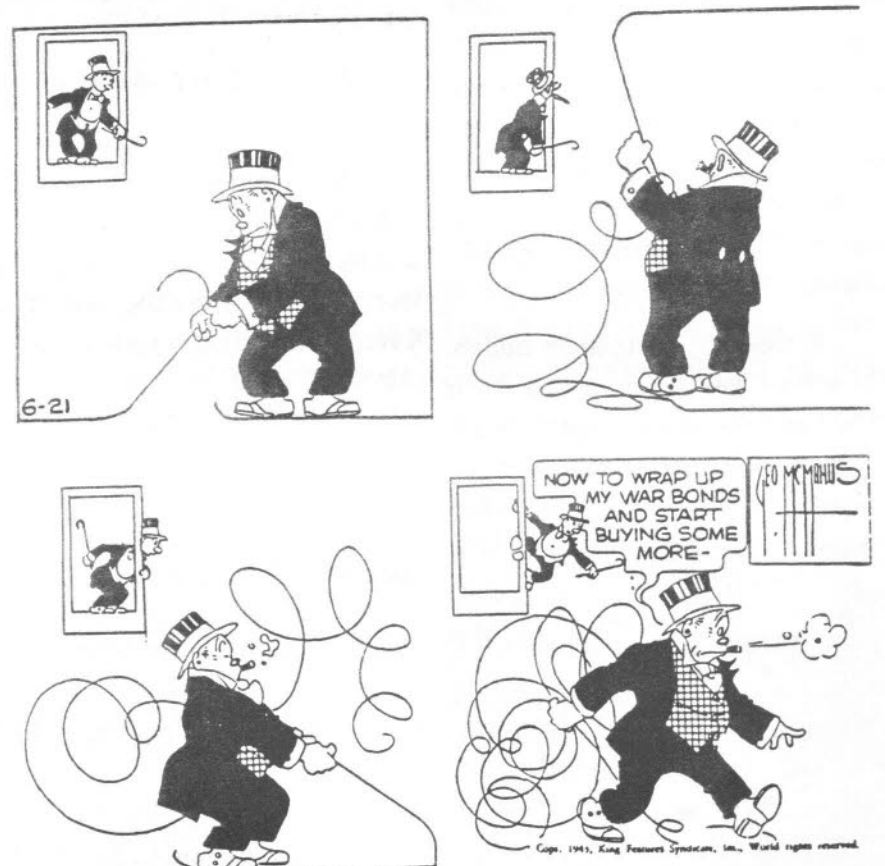
"After *Sweet Movie* it was as if I had burned all my bridges. I just lost the chance to talk to producers." Part of this was due to leaving his country, Yugoslavia, where he was firmly established and almost automatically financed. But another reason was that many producers and distributors didn't know how to handle his films, which they misunderstood as pornographic. But it is the political, social, and spiritual repression that Makavejev challenges that is the true pornography.

Makavejev made his first feature, *Man Is Not a Bird*, in 1965, after studying psychology and working in the student theater at Belgrade University. In 1971 his *W.R.: Mysteries of the Organism* won international acclaim and the Luis Bunuel Prize at the Cannes Film Festival, as well as an official indictment from the Belgrade prosecutor on a criminal charge of derision of "the state, its agencies, and representatives."

### DUSAN MAKAVEJEV ON CINEMATOGRAPHY

It's very important to realize that many people believe that the frame contains part of a larger reality. What is important to understand is that in

movies there is nothing else — whatever is in the frame is all there is. There is nothing else. Everything else is just fantasy, and what is outside the frame does not really depend on what was outside the frame during the shooting. What is outside the frame is something we create *by* the frame. And the image creates the fantasy about what is outside. But it's very important to realize that the only thing we really work with is what is within the frame. So, framing things in means drawing attention, to, embracing, taking care, and incorporating something, but whatever you frame out means you're depriving people of it. Now, when I speak of something being "framed out," I don't speak of "real" reality. I speak of what you *believe* is framed out. When you look at the frame, what is within is all you're getting as the spectator.





There's incredible erotic tension in the edges of the frame. There is an incredible tension because the frame — these four sides — is incredibly active. There's a real castrating action going on there. You just cut out everything else, so it means whatever goes on inside is this piece of living flesh inside this four-sided frame. Let's say we have reality — and I know from my documentary experience that documentary is a fiction. At some point, what you see



changes. Now, it changes by your look, it changes by your selection of the pace, then it changes by your selection of the frame. So, as soon as you frame some piece out of reality, and you get it on the stock, there's several processes already finished. One is your gesture of selection, which creates this magic moment of turning something real into an image of "reality." So, the selection is a carving out of one piece — it's highly creative because as soon as you carve, everything else doesn't exist and the liens that are the frame are creating this new reality. What is the eroticism of it? You know from Hitchcock movies if you have a person and he's not filling the frame, there's a space behind, you know a knife is coming. Now, this knife is not a real knife — it's just a danger that starts with framing, let's say, two actors, in a slightly eccentric way. An incredible tension builds. There's this kind of deprivation of "good" composition. You deliberately don't compose well. It always means something or you're embarrassed. Life is not symmetrical, so you pick it up, you forget the symmetry. It has incredible force.

Now there's another step — the first is the frame — this second step is the shot length. You keep a shot on a window a few seconds longer, suddenly all kinds of things are happening behind. Or, if you keep a host on a house, you expect it to explode. You need three seconds to perceive the house, but you place it for five seconds, so it means you wait for it to explode and then nothing happens. But, then, people carry that expectation of explosion in to the next shot. So, next time you have another shot, you make it a little short, so they're expecting something in there. It's like rugs being pulled out from under them. You see something and you don't see it well. So, then you get nervous. Then you gather another shot — you give it just the right length. People get happy watching it, not only for what is there, but they're relieved that there are no surprises. They get a kind of subliminal gratitude when you do something nice and calm, etcetera. And there is always a constant excitement or embarrassment when you do something shorter or longer or abnormal. So, you work with these compositional ingredients to create this space. And that space is psychological.

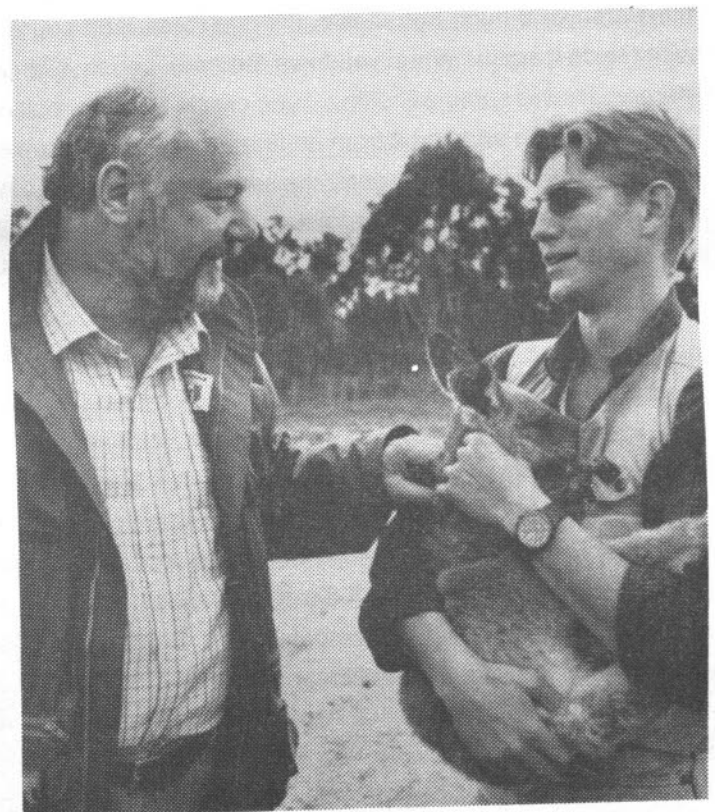
#### DUSAN MAKAVEJEV ON SOUND

First of all, sound doesn't automatically belong to the frame, and, so, direct sound can be an awful thing. Direct sound can be okay, but it's an additional illusion that "this is a piece of reality." So it's very important if you do direct sound to undermine it with all kinds of commentaries. All these realistic Hollywood movies always had one thousand violins playing and no one ever commented on its unreality. They're overpowering emotion with sound all the time, pretending that it's reality. But it's like painting everything pink, without using any other color. Sound is very important, but it's another construction with which you can do anything. I remember one beautiful piece with Oliver and Hardy talking as women. It was terrific. It is very rare that sound is used dialectically, that sound is used for its own value, not with the pretension that this is reality. so, very often sound is used in this servile role. Sound is just used as a salve, and *real* sound is a great thing.

Sound can be almost as important as the visuals in some place — not equally important though, because you don't need sound at all. But then you have silence that is sound. So sound *is* there all the time, if you use it or not. In silent movies, you hear the projector running; you always have sound. Sound is an independent ingredient. That's why I like to cut sound in, not to mix it in — to *show* cuts, for sound to appear, for music to appear suddenly. Mixing is also nice, but everything's legitimate. You play music, you cut, a second later, you continue. For years we allowed this to happen only in theaters. Theaters were always chopping film, but this kind of chopping effect of sound you never had in the original film. They would edit them additionally, like in Godard's *Breathless*; those kind of jump cuts came about after several thousand showings. So, normal city kids who don't have money for the premiere showing always see films this way; you know, there's a horse, and suddenly, there's a guy on the horse. It's normal. Why should we be nervous about it? It's an additional cinematic quality. I like scratches too. They look like rain. In childhood we believed that in American Westerns it always rained, because these were B movies shown in B theaters, and they were always scratched.

#### DUSAN MAKAVEJEV ON THE ACTOR

In the beginning I was afraid of actors. Now I'm much more confident in myself and in them. Professional actors can do a lot because they carry a lot. They carry their own charisma, they carry their own aura. And if they know what you're doing, they're terrific. I feel they're my assistants. Sometimes they should do exactly what is written, but the best thing is to get them to relate and to create. And professional actors have a great sense of space: they use their bodies. They know where the lights are; they know that they're used to produce images, so they shouldn't be treated as illiterates. They're highly professional — they know everything about movies. So, tell them what you want and they'll do it.



With Jimmy Dean, we understood for the first time what an actor is: a guy who put his back to the camera and mumbled. He knew that it's important to place obstacles between himself and the public. He did it the same way as Brando, who said you should act forty percent. You create this big aura, you create this incredible tension. This is what I was saying about creating that tension with the frame and the shot length: they do it with themselves. So, when they slow down and there's something not normal, suddenly you almost jump in to see what's happening. Or when they drop something. It's very important for them not to try to be perfect and not to imitate even themselves in reality. This is movies. Unfortunately, some actors are afraid to use their bodies. They're ready to give themselves completely in the medium shot, but they're embarrassed about close-ups or about everything that's not the face. So, they're ready to show a naked face but not a naked back or a leg.

I think our sight is highly censored. The face is seemingly highly legal, breasts are not, etcetera. The foot is not sexual, but you rarely see people's feet playing in movies. For example, there's a beautiful number in *Hair*, "Black Boys," using feet. It's a fantastic piece using legs and feet magnificently. People are infinitely rich in what they have, but they are used so rarely.



## DUSAN MAKAVEJEV ON STRUCTURE AND RHYTHM

I find it very strange that things we allow literature, painting, and drama to do, for some reason, we don't allow film to do. Film is supposed to be simple, but I don't see why.

My dream, for example, would be to use more architecture in cinema, architectural structure. Unfortunately, most people who work on the structure in films have nothing to say; those little flickering underground films, those guys who are just playing with pure form. I find it very exciting and stimulating to structure story, to structure meanings, to play, to create a counterpoint between different contradictory situations, contradictory ingredients, and just enjoy the visual contradictions in movies as we enjoy them in life.

In life, let's say you exchange a loving look with someone and then you eat something, and then you buy a ticket for a bus, and then, when you buy that ticket, you might not even look at that person. Sometimes, you don't know if it's a man or a woman. And you make all kinds of switches every day, all the time. But we never discontinue this discontinuity all our lives. We never really acknowledge that. You can read something theoretical and have a toothache and, at the same time, listen to music — the Beatles or something — and on all three levels be quite intense. But reading something theoretical can also include your thinking about your mate and doing one thing doesn't preclude thinking about another. And we do this all the time. But somehow these reduced films — like classical Hollywood films, those melodramas from the forties, the genres of the forties, fifties, and sixties, those clear genres where someone's killed and you look for the murderer, or someone's in love and you wait for the happy ending — these films are so reduced that they are like zero to one percent of what life is.

So when I speak of architecture, I mean the general structure of the whole film, not about specific breaks. I like buildings with a lot of staircases and separate exits and small balconies, and I like films made the same way. Some classical films are like a huge house with one staircase, and you climb once and don't want to do it again. When you have the "real" house, with every new visit it's different. It's the same with film. If you create films on multiple levels, then people come again and see it from another angle, so you can see it any number of times. It's like you never enter the same river twice. And with these kind of "real" house, this "real" film, you never enter the same film twice. The second time you already are carrying your experiences from the first time.

When I'm making a film, in the beginning there's maybe thirty percent I really know, so I tell a scene to people maybe ten times — it's always the same scene and it gets better and better with each recounting. Whenever you tell the scene you get a few more "eyes." It becomes funnier and funnier, so the scene goes on — it's great. And when you know there is a scene, it's short on paper and you know there's a greater one there, but you don't write any more because you'll get questions about it and people will spoil it. So I know there are places that are going to grow. Then, I wait for the right moment. And then when some things grow, they reorganize other stuff. Say you get a very good initial scene and then you go with the film and you get other scenes and suddenly you get one gratuitous scene that happens out of beauty. For example, there's a great sunset and you have "the two of them" and the cameraman brings it to you. You say, "Okay, put the camera there and we'll get the two of them watching the sunset." A great shot, okay, but you don't know what to do with it. But, later, it can become the last sequence, with the music going on and it's the last shot. But then you still have the shot you made for the last sequence. Now you have two last sequences, so one of them has to be placed in the very beginning. So now the first scene becomes the second scene. Now, it's not the same because film has a cumulative effect, so the scenes that are later carry all kinds of meanings. They have to be able to conduct all kinds of meanings that accumulated during the previous part. Sometimes you do things against any logic. And people watch, and they don't see anything illogical. That's the moment when you know the film is finished, when you have this unconscious emotional floor and you've made all sorts of tricks manipulating the plot to stay superficially logical. For example, in *Sweet Movie*, I was never asked about the woman on the boat, but there's another one, and you see her in a number of scenes: when they wash Clementi, and then when the children come, she was part of the bigger scene. But then, it wasn't important, so she was cut out. But I did not worry about her being there sometimes only, and it seems that nobody worries about it. The story goes, it moves, and nobody really questions it. I'm unifying it, and you're unifying it.

## DUSAN MAKAVEJEV ON FILM AND REALITY

For years even the light in Hollywood movies was this kind of zero light. It's like no light. It's like what's on television. Everything's equal. So, it means

the furniture and people are of the same importance, and gravity is always respected, as well. Everything's placed on the ground and the horizon is always horizontal. Now, obviously, you have to do that if you're dealing with reality, but, you see, when you're dealing with *images*, you can do anything. But they didn't dare because they believed in reality. It must have some kind of relation to commodities, which is the principle American religion. And then, the clarity: you know the first problems Altman had in Hollywood were because he had people talking at the same time. They said, "That's not correct because you have to hear everything for your money. You buy every line, you have to hear every line." It's robots delivering lines, not as people really relate. So that was the explosive meaning of Cassavetes's *Shadows*. This was just raw New York. It was just what happens. Everyone was carrying existential insecurity, angst, of the city. The only things I recognized when I finally came to this city were what I had seen in *Shadows*.

## DUSAN MAKAVEJEV ON THE PROCESS — WRITING, SHOOTING, AND EDITING THE FILM

At the beginning of the process I have no idea of what I will do. I just have a kind of very strong feeling. Sometimes you *feel* there is a movie. So, then you move there and then the movie starts happening. Sometimes you have a very good day, a good scene to do, a good location, and you still don't know how to approach it. Then you move about. I like to move with the cameraman. So, we move around, and I also like him to propose things. It's difficult for me to say, "I want *this*." If I have two or three choices, then I can not only choose but I can find the right one and correct it. In correcting I can find the solution. But if the cameraman asks me, "Do you want movement or a static shot?" I'm just paralyzed.

I work with the same people most of the time, but not always. As far as editing is concerned, I'm there practically all the time. There's a constant feedback going back and forth and we change things from day to day many times. In *Sweet Movie* I had a crew of young French kids — very energetic; they loved to work. But they absolutely learned to work in the manner where you edit the film, and as soon as you have it, it's okay. And for me, the first edit, the first draft, is just the beginning; but they believed it was finished. So, we did something else and they were pleased, but then we did something else again. After the third screening, they said, "You know, this is fantastic, how it changed from the first version to this. It is incredible, we didn't believe we could reach this."



They were talking about his third version as if it were a finished film, and the movie still had far to go. "But," I said, "we have several things left to do." They said, "You can't do anything. It's finished." So, we did another re-edit, and for the next weeks they were constantly surprised because almost every day there was another film. During one period we had two screenings, one in the morning and another in the evening after we'd changed things, because it was like juggling scenes from the beginning to the end of the film and we were changing the story all the time. They were obviously never exposed to a situation in which a director was allowed or allowed himself to change the story. See, it was a great surprise for me because I always believed that's how everyone should work.

For example, in *Sweet Movie* it was difficult. In the scene where they make love in the sugar and she kills him in the sugar, chronologically you have the boat, you see the sailor, and then they slowly make love, he gets killed, and the children appear. When the children come in, he's already a corpse in the sugar. But when I got this in chronological order, it was so strong that everything else was anticlimactic. After this scene you couldn't watch for another ten or fifteen minutes. The scene was killing everything after it. And then we knew that this scene had to be somewhere towards the end. So, I moved it towards the end. And, at some point, you like to try different places: somewhere there's a point where it fits, there's a point where you can see it without being troubled.



Sometimes you can make three very good takes of the same shot, and if they're really good, they all stay in the film. They go different places. For example, you might have two very good long movements. So, you use, let's say, three quarters of one and this you interrupt with something else. And then, instead of continuing with the rest of the shot, you get the last three quarters of the second take, so instead of having one take, you actually have a take and a half. People don't see you did this overlapping. I was a little surprised to learn that Bergman did this in *Persona*. When Liv Ullman watches the guy burn himself — this shot is used twice. Her face is intercut, but the next shot does not continue the previous shot; it starts a little earlier, so you get the same guy running towards the camera. So, obviously, he used more than one take. He was stretching time, which we do all the time in movies, like stretching chewing gum. It's never realistic. It's a great pleasure to find the "real" time, the time people need. It's strange. Sometimes we have to cut out a lot of time; often you can stretch it easily.

Most important, you look to see how the film breathes, how it moves, because if you disturb people too early, then you lose them at some point. Sometimes you have a beautiful sequence that goes unnoticed because it's sandwiched between something. So, good sequences have to be sandwiched between boring stuff, and boring stuff has to be kept as a rest, as a platform for the audience. A good scene can be placed by anything boring because people don't need to have the film go on. You have the film going on, but they still are digesting, they chew. For example, in *Sweet Movie*, that's why from time to time you have a boat. The boat is just beauty, but it serves also to give you time to think about some things twice, to get ready for something else. And maybe to whisper something if you're with someone. It's important.

#### DUSAN MAKAVEJEV ON THE VIEWER



It is the nature of really good movies that they create this bridge between the spectator and the screen and you have this glue — that's really good linking. Good cinema is recognizable by this. Sometimes you have good camera work or good movement — you just know that it's good. But then there is this kind of glue between you and the film, and you don't know who is where, because you are "here" and this, the film, is "here." There is no difference between you and what is on the screen. This is very "hot." But movies are made to be kind of half-cold, so we are not accustomed to it. Movies are like a cold buffet; you're not supposed to get really excited. You're supposed to participate in movies with a superficial part of yourself. You're not supposed to be disturbed on a level that's going to question your own sense of your own life. You're allowed in classically commercial movies to be disturbed only to the point, "Is he going to be killed now?"

What real movies do directly, primarily, is unique; they relate to our dream world and our understanding of ourselves on a gut level. So movies relate to much deeper parts of ourselves than we're aware. That's why we're attracted to it, because there's this incredible quality of unknown ingredients. For some people movies can be a house of prostitution, for others a religious paradise, for others just their secret life, for some a flying machine. Films give private meanings to people. So, speaking psychologically, movies are good for voyeurs, but they're also good for people who have interesting taste because you can get oral gratification from watching movies. For a lot of people movies are very sexual; they're a place of erotic gratification. And for many people it's a sense of balance and a kinesthetic sense. So there are all kinds of sensual gratification in movies plus secret life transformations of all kinds.



Francis Ford Coppola, Dusan Makavejev, and Jean Pierre Gorin

Actually, movies are always subversive operations. What happens between people and film? What happens between film makers and the film? A lot of "illegal" things happen — illegal things, psychologically speaking, things people would never confess. But what I do illegally, what I smuggle into my films, does not necessarily have to be what you smuggle out of the film for yourself. There are all kinds of shifting; sometimes it's direct, a film reaches people on the same level. For example, all these catastrophe films with this post-1968 angst, before everything became ordered and reactionary. There was this great disturbance that happened and there were these earthquakes in the new position of the ethnic minorities. And people felt it — the new position of political forces — and there were all these films of burning houses, of earthquakes, sharks eating people. It was like a collective bad dream, nightmares people wanted to go through. Unfortunately, they wanted to go to a safe place where dreams are extinguished. But the whole period of these corny catastrophe films was very good, Jungian.

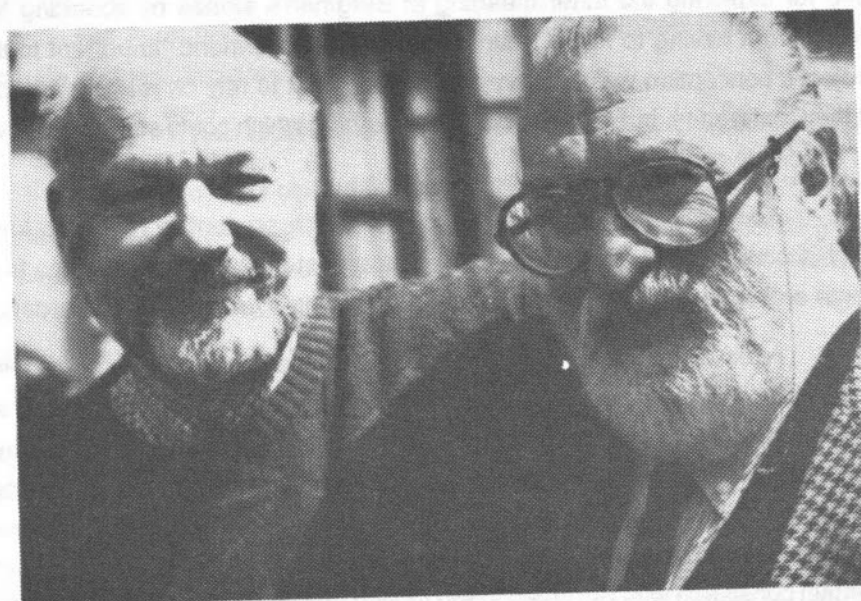
And coincidences between films and life happen all the time. Take, for example, the Jonestown Massacre. It's like the ending of Coppola's *Apocalypse Now*. He was always hesitating to finish the film for some reason, but he always had some sort of suicidal action planned for the end, of people being lost in the jungle. Now, suddenly, the Jonestown Massacre obviously makes his ending not unusual and strange. Suddenly, you have something you didn't produce in a movie. But that sort of thing is happening all the time.

For the audience, watching a movie is like before you go to sleep. There's still some light but already you're closing your eyes. So this theater is basically a twilight zone, twilight space, and recently they've learned that the fetus can see through the mother's belly before it's born; there's some sort of murky shadow perception. They know because the fetus responds with eye movement. So maybe movies are projected in the same kind of light situation we already lived through in, say, the first seven months of our aware life — growing up before being born. You have this total undefined light and in theaters there is not only undefined light but undefined peace because one of the conditions of watching movies is to forget where you are. So you forget you're in a theater, and then one of the conditions of watching films becomes *not* seeing what is there. You're not supposed to see the screen. You're not supposed to see reality. so, practically, you're supposed to be kind of blind. Not seeing well, blindness, is a condition of enjoying movies, of "seeing" the story.

But people like to know where they are. People are unhappy if they don't know which genre they're following. So they can allow great gestures to opera people; they can allow funny movement to Charlie Chaplin. Each genre has its own pace. I just find it a great pleasure to make it more visible, this specificity, this untruthfulness of the situation, because this stylistic unity of each of the different genres saves the illusion. There's great pleasure not only in breaking the illusion, but in breaking the illusion you don't send it away, you just amplify it. That's something that Godard always knew and people still don't understand about him. He was never concerned about truth. He was concerned about cinema.

So, since movies are based on seeing what isn't allowed, since they are working basically with a taboo field, since the structure of movies is always a system of alibies to get on the screen some things that are not allowed to be shown, since this dirty little game is part of watching movies, why not be aware of it?

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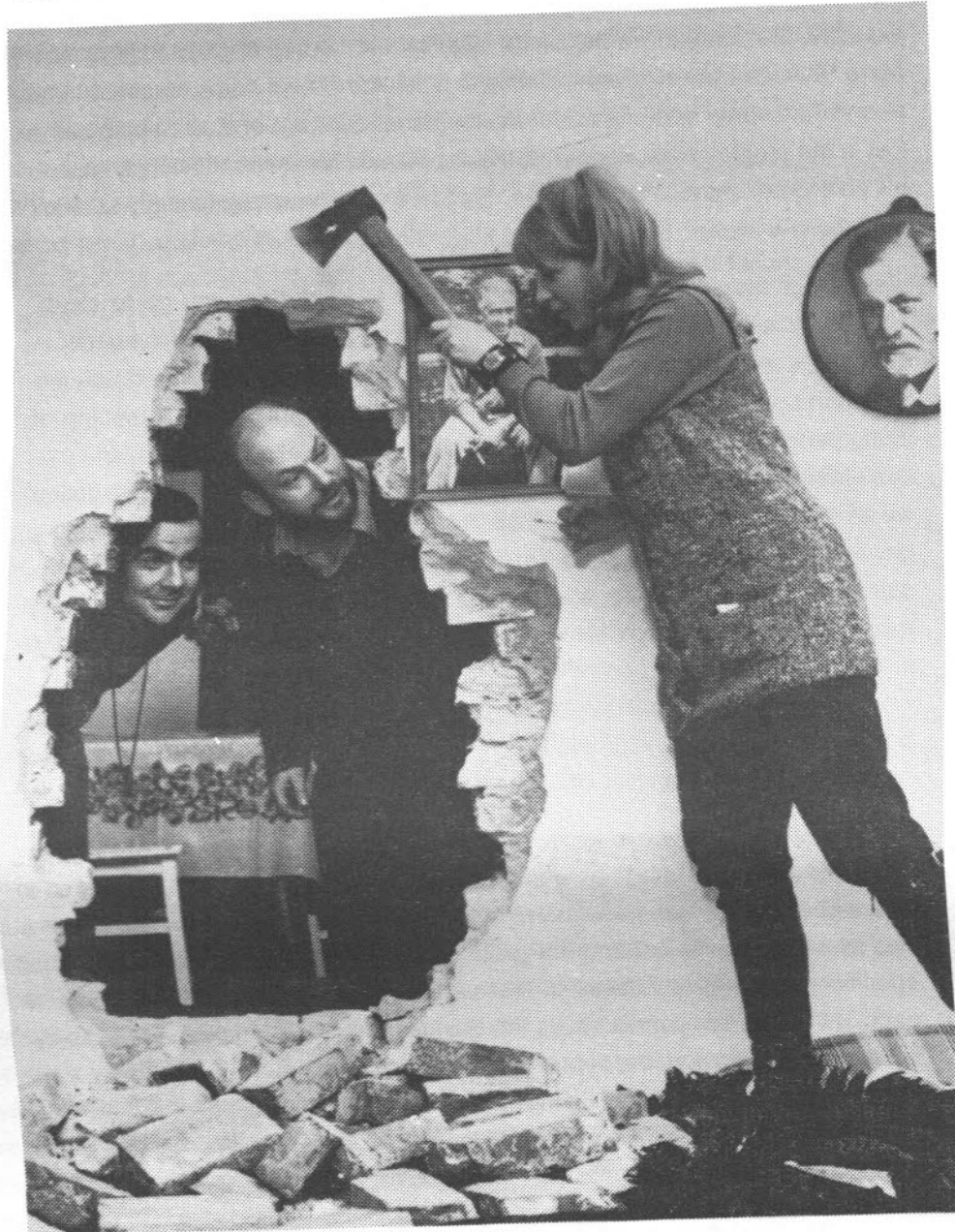
Dusan Makavejev and Sergio Leone



# BERGMAN'S NON-VERBAL SEQUENCES: SOURCE OF A DREAM FILM EXPERIMENT

by Dusan Makavejev, assisted by M. Duda

A film by Ingmar Bergman may often look more like a book than a movie — a number of "talking heads" move through sparsely furnished rooms. However, the *nonverbal* sequences in Bergman's films are filled with inner meaning and a cinematic, dreamlike atmosphere that is often "covered over" by the banality of the plot. This narrative veil causes an ambiguous understanding of the characters' psychic tension. Presented in a dreamlike way, this tension possesses that "tender insecurity" present when the unreal is offered as absolutely real. But why, then, does Bergman include so many nonverbal sequences in his films? Perhaps the reason is in his own fear of laying bare his insecurities in a direct verbal manner.



Makavejev's original intention was to use the Conference upon which this book is based as a forum in which a selection of these nonverbal sequences could be brought together to provide a unique experience for the participants. Simply put, the presentation addressed the question: Is it possible to construct (or reconstruct) a Bergman film that Bergman never made? One way to answer this question is to put together a film in which all the images are Bergman's own, but arranged differently. This new assembly, then, could provide an in-road for exploring the inner meaning of Bergman's stories by liberating the viewer from having to follow a strict narrative development. Important to the project's conception was Makavejev's decision not to rely on reading a paper at the Conference, but rather to create something which could stand on its own as a *work-in-progress*.

As originally conceived, the format of the presentation was to have been a screening of a single reel of the strongest nonverbal sequences from some of Bergman's most famous films arranged in some meaningful order.

After viewing about a dozen Bergman films and considering some thirty sequences in which there was, for the most part, *no* dialogue, Makavejev selected twenty-four of the most suitable sequences. After considering the time limitations of the presentation, he reduced this number to the nineteen sequences described below. The decision to use only black-and-white sequences was conditioned by the availability of the films as well as by Makavejev's wish to remain consistent with Bergman's own feeling that black-and-white film is most appropriate for depicting dreamlike psychic states. Somewhat surprising was

how easily these nonverbal sequences could be removed from the context of the specific films which contain them; although disjointed from their narrative continuity, these sequences — as separated units — still preserved their own narrative meaning and impact. Taken together in the new structure, these sequences produced another specific psychological effect, which revealed even more expressively Bergman's concept of the dream structure in a film.

In his search for certain images that had metaphorical qualities, Makavejev found in these sequences a number of recurring patterns (which he calls Bergman's "numerous souls"). That is, one can discover a repertoire of images that provides an archetypal cinematic vocabulary for Bergman's work: doors, clocks, corridors, rooms, beds, women, etc. The new montage structure was aimed at emphasizing the recurrence of these images, hoping that a visual accumulation of "things" would attain symbolic connotations. Put into this new context, these visual symbols became linked to the psychic states of Bergman's characters in the context of the *verbal* narrative.

The decision to include the color sequences in the presentation came after the montage of black-and-white sequences was completed. In fact, it sprang from a project that Makavejev conducted in his filmmaking class (which he taught during his year-long stay at Harvard) that he called "Compressed Cinema." (The project consisted of viewing a ninety-minute feature film in thirty minutes by projecting each of its three reels side-by-side simultaneously.) Inspired by this undertaking, Makavejev proposed to the Conference carrying the experiment further. He projected alongside the black-and-white sequences two *color* sequences from Bergman's most recent work, which produced a stunning visual collage. Again, because of the availability of the films, the choice of color films was limited to *Face to Face* and *Cries and Whispers*. Here is the schematization of how the presentation actually looked, breaking down the material into three parts:

- I. A single-screen projection of eleven black-and-white nonverbal sequences. (30 minutes)
- II. A three-screen, simultaneous projection of black-and-white sequences flanked by unbroken sequences from the color films *Face to Face* and *Cries and Whispers*. (25 minutes)
- III. A single-screen projection of the final sequence of *Persona*. (1 1/2 minutes)

This division is for convenience — the actual screening progressed without a break. The central column shows the order of films from which the corresponding black-and-white sequences were taken. The color sequences began at the end of sequence #11 and continued to the end of sequence #18.

The sequences were screened in the following order:

1. PERSONA
2. THE VIRGIN SPRING
3. PERSONA
4. DREAMS
5. PERSONA
6. THE NAKED NIGHT
7. THE VIRGIN SPRING
8. DREAMS
9. THE SILENCE

FACE TO FACE  
(reel #2)

11. THE SEVENTH SEAL, CRIES AND WHISPERS
12. THE MAGICIAN (reel #2 and beginning of reel #3)
13. WILD STRAWBERRIES
14. THROUGH A GLASS DARKLY
15. PERSONA
16. THE SILENCE
17. PERSONA
18. THE SILENCE
19. PERSONA





The duration of the color sequences was determined by the running time of the already assembled black-and-white sequences (nos. 12-18). The sequence from *Cries and Whispers* was selected so as to insure that the moment Ingrid Thulin places the piece of glass into her vagina would coincide with the moment in the black-and-white footage in which Liv Ullman steps on the piece of glass in *Persona* (sequence no. 17). After this horizontal juxtaposition was arranged, enough footage from the color film was rewound so that it could begin at the precise moment that Death appears in sequence no. 11 (from *The Seventh Seal*, some twenty minutes before the *arranged* moment was to occur). So, except for this intentional juxtaposition of the glass, all the other horizontal relationships between the black-and-white sequences and *Cries and Whispers* were arbitrary. The color sequence from *Face to Face* was "laid into" the experimental scheme in the reverse manner (i.e., the deliberate element in the horizontal juxtaposition was made to occur at the beginning of the color sequence, and not near the end). The rape sequence from *Face to Face* would occur at the appearance of Death in sequence no. 11; then, enough footage was wound forward so that the sequence would end at the desired moment (after sequence no. 18). So all the horizontal relationships between the black-and-white sequences and *Face to Face* that occurred *after* the rape sequence were also completely arbitrary.

What follows is a detailed description of the nineteen black-and-white sequences used in the collage. Also included are the precise moments of transition to the next sequence and the duration of each sequence.

1. PERSONA - The prologue comes on the screen: projector arc, abstract images, etc. Then the dead woman appears. The editing opens her eyes...CUT...(3 min. 27 sec.)

2. THE VIRGIN SPRING - The pregnant woman puts a frog into the loaf of bread and raises her arm to her mouth...CUT...(1 min. 27 sec.)

3. PERSONA - Liv walks around her room silently, then looks down at the TV...CUT...(37 sec.)

4. DREAMS - A flash of white, then the lowering of the rubber stamp that says "Susanne Frank." The photo session is next: fat man tapping his fingers, woman posing with flower in her mouth. Susanne goes into dark room and leans back after lighting her cigarette...CUT...(4 min. 41 sec.)

5. PERSONA - Night. Bibi alone in her bedroom. Liv goes in through door - fog horns. They stand in front of mirror as Liv pulls back Bibi's hair. Fade to daytime on the beach. Liv raises up into the frame and snaps a picture with her camera...CUT...(2 min. 17 sec.)

6. THE NAKED NIGHT - Dream sequence on beach. Woman swimming naked in water - man carries her over rocks. Flare out of the image to white...CUT...(3 min. 22 sec.)

7. THE VIRGIN SPRING - The rape sequence. Little boy alone with corpse. He throws dirt on it, then runs into the forest as it snows...CUT...(5 min. 42 sec.)

8. DREAMS - Woman in train: tracks, window opens, rain, the switching lights flash three times...CUT...(2 min. 23 sec.)

9. THE SILENCE - Bedroom light comes on - man and woman in room. Little boy listens at the door, then goes down hallways to other room with sick woman. He goes to the window and sees the tank on the street below...CUT...(3 min. 51 sec.)

10. PERSONA - TV footage of immolation of the monk intercut with Liv's horrified face. The monk falls on his side...CUT...(48 sec.)

11. THE SEVENTH SEAL - Choir and soaring hawk. Sequence of beach horses at water's edge, Max prays, chess board, etc. Death appears clothed in black...CUT...(2 min. 4 sec.)

At the appearance of Death, the other two screens are turned on.

(Screening time for the sequences 1 through 11:30 min., 39 sec.)

12. THE MAGICIAN - Doctor doing autopsy in the attic. Glasses blown off, eye in inkwell, etc. Hand through the grating, Max pursues him; doctor falls down stairs and screams while Max jumps down stairs...CUT...(6 min. 40 sec.)

13. WILD STRAWBERRIES - Opening dream sequence: handless clock, coffin, reaching corpse, etc. He wakes up and goes to the window and raises the blind; he looks out...CUT...(4 min. 48 sec.)

14. THROUGH A GLASS DARKLY - Window with view out into "white" night. Woman gets up from bed and goes up to the attic and begins to feel herself. She falls to her knees...CUT on the sound...(4 min. 25 sec.)

15. PERSONA - Second half of prologue - the boy wakes up and sits up in the bed, looking forward...CUT...(2 min. 18 sec.)

16. THE SILENCE - Ingrid Thulin masturbates in the bed...CUT...(2 min. 18 sec.)

17. PERSONA - Bibi standing alone near the pond. Liv and Bibi and the piece of glass - break in the narrative with Liv at the window, out of focus, etc. Live goes outside, sun flares behind her head...CUT...(5 min. 1 sec.)

18. THE SILENCE - Opening of the film (much editing). The boy rubs his eyes, goes to the window, reflected sunset. He goes to the window as the tanks go by; he puts his hand up against the window...CUT...(1 min. 22 sec.)

At this point, the other two screens are stopped. (Screening time for the sequences 12 through 18: 26 min., 54 sec.)

19. PERSONA - Bibi at the mirror; superimposition. Bibi leaves on the bus - back to the prologue as projector arc goes out...(1 min. 38 sec.)

(Total screening time was 59 min. 11 sec.)

Although these juxtapositions of the black-and-white sequences were seemingly (indeed, intentionally) random, Makavejev believed in an inner logic common to all of Bergman's nonverbal sequences which would provide hidden connections among the sequences no matter what order they were placed in.

Before the screening at the Conference, all the participants received the following statement by Makavejev which served as a kind of manifesto that would psychologically prepare the viewers for this type of "workshop." Written in inimitable Makavejevan style, the statement was an attempt to trigger the audience's thinking about the real meaning of Bergman's films, their dream structure, and the function of the "nonverbal" events in the cinema:

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Recently, after a screening of my film, *Sweet Movie*, someone asked me: "Where do you stand?"

I looked at my feet and answered, "Right here."

The audience was laughing while a feeling of shame overwhelmed me for a moment; did I have the right to escape a serious question by way of cheap intellectual clowning?

How easy it is to fall prey to accusations coming from moralists!

To say that I stand where I physically am is neither demagoguery nor Zen. My answer was the only possible one. The fact remains that there was no other space for me at the time when I was questioned.

Confronted by Bergman's films, I suffered for years from a feeling of inadequacy. Picking up - subliminally - a moralistic fever, I was trapped in an unhealthy consciousness with a feeling that there was no way out, as if the exit doors of the auditorium had disappeared.

Indeed, I was not able to understand the abstract and moral connotations of Bergman's films. His characters, ashamed of their own vitality, constantly apologize to an invisible authority. His concept of God, especially, the God who does not love people and who makes them unexplainably miserable, seems to me incomprehensible and gratuitous for a serious artist.

But then, how relieved I was when I finally realized that Bergman is actually a clown disguised as a priest!

Bergman has succeeded in creating a genuine Jungian soap opera!

If we try to compose an inventory of Bergman's dream imagery, we'll come up with a collection seemingly saturated with images resembling those of Buñuel or Godard. Yet, why should strong visual symbols be considered anyone's invention? Notions of propriety, priority, and property have no significance in art.

Bergman's work is actually inimitable; for, in spite of the fact that he repeatedly uses the same visual clichés, these Bergmanian clichés *cannot be found in other films!*





Why should Ken Russell be the only one authorized to climb the trees in his neighbors' orchards? And why should Fellini be the only *cinéaste* allowed to produce the same movie over and over again, and to distribute them under different titles?

"Each film is my last," is not only a statement about imminent death, but a testimony of an obsessive need to be re-born over and over again as well. Bergman expresses this need in a voice which comes from inside and cannot be heard, but is perfectly understood.

The theme of birth brings us closer to Bergman's real identity. The female characters in his films radiate a murky sensuality filled with desires which are about to burst out. Their mouths open - but there are no words...

Bergman's women possess carnality that temptingly tickles the palms of viewers' hands. In their appearances they bring a personal autonomy which unglues itself from the screen, embarrassingly invading the spectator's intimacy. Sharing silence with Bergman's women means being with them in sin. Fortunately, as Bergman has told us, there is not God any more, and consequently sin is transformed into pleasure without punishment. Thus silence serves as a protective shield, since moralists cannot function at all without words.

Ingmar Bergman is the first major contemporary filmmaker who publicly raised the essential question:

"Am I, perhaps, a woman?"

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On the evening of the presentation, Makavejev stepped up to the podium and stressed his desire to keep the verbal introduction to a minimum. After explaining his attire (Makavejev appeared in front of the audience wearing a black cape and bright red woman's hat) in terms of a "plea for the nonverbal," the lights were lowered and the projection began.

Since the experiment had not had a "rehearsal," we all were curious and excited about the events that would occur during the three-screen projection. During the first half hour of just the black-and-white sequences, the audience followed and accepted the new structure as a unique continuity, that is, as a single film which showed various aspects of psychic tension in both sleeping and waking states. This was aided by the careful selection of the points of transition from one sequence to the next which would not call attention to themselves as such, but rather were made as "invisible" as possible. This resulted in a fabric of sequences which "flowed" as if from the same film. The fact that the psychic tension was conveyed through different characters from different films did not prevent the audience from identifying with the psychology of a new "character" composed of many faces from the various sequences. In this sense, the first half hour of images created a kind of psychological "Frankenstein." The danger of creating an unbearable emotional level in the audience by overloading them with the nonverbal images was averted as a new tension arose in the ambiguous narrative line of the sequences taken together.

However, the moment the triple-screen projection began, this ambiguous narrative line began to disintegrate. The audience was forced to watch the film *horizontally* as well as vertically. During this second half hour, several horizontal dreamlike "flashes" occurred in the three-screen juxtaposition. At one point, all three screens were united by the spatio-temporal disintegration of the three narrative lines showing three women in bed - Liv Ullman (as Jenny in *Face to Face*) at the left; Håriet Andersson (as Agnes in *Cries and Whispers*) at the right; and Harriet Andersson again (as Karin in *Through a Glass Darkly*) in the center. Also, the clock from *The Magician* in the center was echoed in the close-ups of the ticking clocks from *Cries and Whispers* at the right. However, the pre-arranged juxtaposition of the "glass" sequences mentioned above proved to be the most impressive and powerful simultaneous juxtaposition, and an audible reaction was heard from the audience. Since this was a one-time screening, Makavejev felt free to experiment creatively during the projection by bringing up the sound from one screen and then from another by using a sound mixer that had been installed for the projection. Liv Ullman's screams were used to the best effect in the rape sequence from *Face to Face* (audible, but not *verbal*).

The color images were so overpowering that although the central black-and-white images retained their ambiguous narrative line (begun in the first half hour), the viewers could no longer follow it. When, after twenty-five minutes, the color sequences stopped, the final minute and a half of *Persona* (sequence no. 19) brought the projection to a close. Makavejev thought this appropriate since this sequence is conceived by Bergman as a comment on his

whole filmmaking enterprise which points to the building-up and subsequent tearing-down of the narrative structure in order to penetrate the characters' psychic states.

When the lights came back on, everybody expected a strong (and loud) response from the audience and not, as it turned out, a *nonverbal* stasis. A heavy absence of words continued for more than three minutes as Makavejev smiled silently at the gathering. It seemed as though the audience were still dreaming. Makavejev's introductory plea had taken effect to a surprising degree. The person who eventually broke the silence did not express his reactions to the projection itself, but rather to the problem of copyright - he felt the experiment to be a serious breach of responsibility to film teachers who must have *complete* prints to conduct a serious study! After Makavejev assured him that no prints were *mangled* for this experiment, nor any sequences "pirated" from existing prints, the rest of the public response was, without exception, directed toward the three-screen projection - that is, only the second part of the whole presentation. The miracles of the horizontal juxtapositions completely overshadowed the first half hour of black-and-white sequences, which were the most narrative. Hence, the dreamlike and surreal structure of the second part conquered the narrative (though new and ambiguous) continuity of the first part.

From the ensuing discussion with the participants, it became clear that this experiment proved that it is possible to reconstruct images which are exclusively Bergman's in order to show the oneiric aspect of his films. On the one hand, it is possible to remain 100% within Bergman's imagination (all that appears on the screen is *created* by him), while on the other hand one can change, even destroy, the most important features of Bergman's narrative films (the verbal plot structure) so that the audience is encouraged to perceive *other* components of his directorial style. These would include camera movement, shot composition, faces in close-up, use of objects as symbols, use of light, color interactions, etc.

Makavejev insisted on his assumption that this experiment was not a definitive product but stood as a piece of research which hoped to provide a new input in the field of cinema studies. Such a concentrated and slightly undisciplined sampling of a director's work could help one understand how a filmmaker creates his subjective gaze into the world, hidden behind the verbal communications of his characters. The three-screen juxtaposition of Bergman sequences revealed for us the inner patterns which characterize his cinematic world in general. Some sequences would literally "peep into" the sequence adjacent to them, which stimulated reflection on the subliminal relationship among the disparate characters. One example of this occurred when Ingrid Thulin (from *The Silence*) was seen suffering in a train compartment in the center black-and-white screen, while at the same time Ingrid Thulin (from *Cries and Whispers*) was seen in the right-hand color frame preparing to mutilate herself with the piece of broken glass. Makavejev asked if we could say that Ingrid Thulin had been waiting ten years in the train compartment of *The Silence* for the moment of her self-mutilation in *Cries and Whispers*?

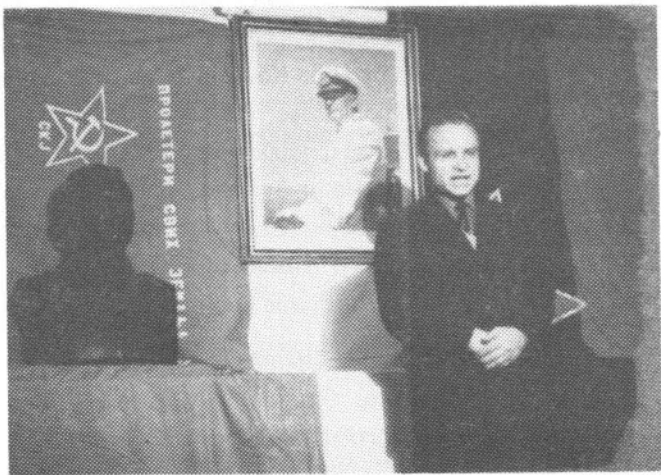
Such provocative questions spring from the realization that Bergman's films are a "gold mine" for this kind of experimentation: in his films, a whole layer of significance often remains unseen or unattended to when viewed superficially. This "peeling back" of the narrative to suppress the literary meaning of the dramatic conflict exposes the raw power of Bergman's nonverbal sequences. Similar experimentation can be carried out with other filmmakers, either concentrating on their own personal styles for (perhaps more interestingly) in conjunction with the style of other directors with similar attitudes. This is important, particularly if we are interested in dreams and the cinema. The dream within the film cannot be isolated or understood without first removing the strictly verbal narrative structure in which most films are wrapped.

Note: This article - except for Makavejev's own statement - was written by Matthew Duda who assisted Makavejev in completing his experiment composed of selected non-verbal sequences from Bergman's work.

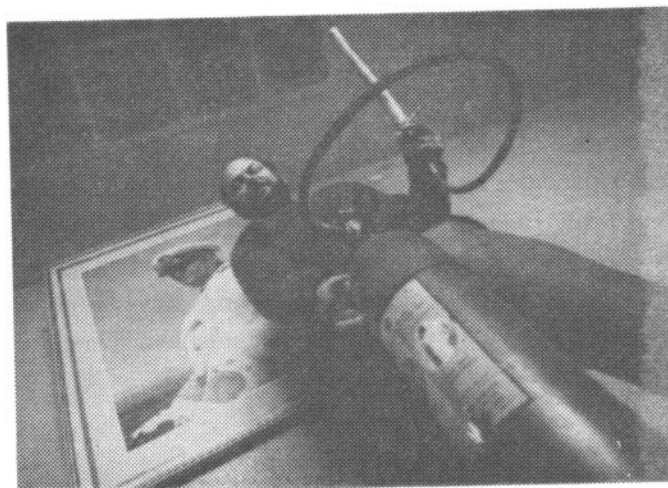
Reprinted from Vlada Petric, ed., *Film and Dreams: An Approach to Bergman* (South Salem, New York: Redgrave Publishing Company, 1981).







Self-made man Aleksic in front of another self-made man, Tito.



Dusan, 1968



Dr. Zivojin Aleksic, Criminologist



Dusan, 1967

## FILMOGRAPHY

### AMATEUR FILMS

*Jatagan Mala*, Kino Klub "Beograd," Belgrade, 1953; *Pecat (The Seal)*, Kino Klub "Beograd," Belgrade, 1956; *Antonijevo razbijeno ogledalo (Anthony's Broken Mirror)*, Kino Klub "Beograd," Belgrade, 1957; *Spomenicima ne treba verovati (Don't Believe in Monuments)*, Kino Klub "Beograd," Belgrade, 1958.

### DOCUMENTARIES

*Prokleti praznik (Damned Holiday)*, Zagreb film, Zagreb 1958; *Slikovnica pcelara (Beekeeper's Scrapbook)*, Zagreb film, Zagreb 1958; *Boje sanjaju (Colors Dreaming)*, Zagreb film, Zagreb 1958; *Sto je to radnicki savjet (What Is a Worker's Council?)*, Zagreb film, Zagreb 1959; *Eci pec pec (One Potato, Two Potato ...)*, Avala film, Belgrade, 1961; *Pedagoska bajka (Educational Fairy Tale)*, Avala film, Belgrade, 1961; *Osmjeh 61 (Smile 61)*, Sutjeska film, Sarajevo, 1961; *Film o knjizi A.B.C. (Film about a book)*, Sutjeska film, Sarajevo, 1962; *Parada (Parade)*, Dunav film, Belgrade, 1962; *Dole plotovi (Down with Fences)*, Zora film, Zagreb, 1962; *Ljepotica 62 (Miss Yugoslavia 62)*, Sutjeska film, Sarajevo, 1962; *Nova Igracka (New Toy)*, Zagreb film, Zagreb 1964; *Nova domacka (New Toy)*, Zagreb film, Zagreb 1964; *Nova domacazivotinja (New Domestic Animal)*, Dunav film, Belgrade, 1964.



### FEATURE FILMS

*Covek nije tica (Man Is Not a Bird)*. Production: Avala film, Belgrade, Yugoslavia; black and white; running time: 80 mins. Released: 1965. Screenplay by Dusan Makavejev; directed by Dusan Makavejev; photography by Aleksandar Petkovic and Branko Pevak; edited by Ljubica Nesic; art direction by Dragoljub Ivkov; music by Petar Bergamo. Cast: Milena Dravic (Hairdresser), Janez Vrhovec (Engineer Rudinski), Eva Ras (Barbulovic's wife), Stojan Arandelovic (Barbulovic), Boris Dvornik (Truck Driver), Roko cirkovic (Hypnotist), Zivojin Pavlovic (Neighbor).

*Ljubavni slucaj ili Tragedija sluzbenice PTT (Love Affair, or The Tragedy of a Switchboard Operator)*. Also released in English as *Love Affair* and *Love Affair: Or, The Case of the Missing Switchboard Operator*. Production: Avala film, Belgrade, Yugoslavia; black and white; running time: 70 mins. Released: 1967. Produced Aleksandar Krstic; screenplay by Dusan Makavejev; directed by Dusan Makavejev; photography by Aleksandar Petkovic; edited by Katarina Stojanovic; art direction by Vladislav Lasic; music by Dusan Aleksic

Cast: Eva Ras (Isabella), Ruzica Sokic (Isabella's friend), Slobodan Aligrudic (Ahmed), Miodrag Andric (postman), Dr. Aleksandar Kostic (Sexologist), Dr. Zivojin Aleksic (Criminologist).

*Nevinost bez zastite (Innocence Unprotected)*. Production: Avala Film, Belgrade, Yugoslavia; color and black and white; running time: 78 mins. Released: 1968. Screenplay by Dusan Makavejev; directed by Dusan Makavejev; photography by Branko Perak; photography for Aleksic's film by Stevan Mickovic; edited by Ivanka Vukasovic; music by Vojislav Kostic; lyrics by Aleksandar Popovic. Cast: Dragolub Aleksic (himself), Ana Milosavljevic (Nada), Vera Jovanovic (Wicked Stepmother), Batoljub Gligorijevic (Petrovic), Ivan Zivkovic (Aleksic's brother), Pera Miroslavljevic (Servant), Stevan Miskovic (himself).

*WR: Misterija organizma (WR: Mysteries of the Organism)*. Production: Neoplanta film, Novi Sad, Yugoslavia; color; running time: 86 mins. Released: 1971. Produced by Svetozev Ludovicki; screenplay by Dusan Makavejev; directed by Dusan Makavejev; photography by Aleksandar Petkovic and Pega Popovic; edited by Ivanka Vukasovic; art direction by Dragoljub Ivkov; music collage by Bojana Marijan, ballad to "Francois Villon" by Bulat Okudzava sung by himself. Cast: Milena Dravic (Milena), Jagoda Kiloper (Jagoda), Ivica Vidovic (Vladimir Ilyich), Zoran Radmilovic (Radmilovic), Miodrag Andric (soldier), Tuli Kupferberg, Jackie Curtis, Zivka Matic, Nikola Milic, Dragoljub Ivkov, Milan Jeli.

*Sweet Movie*. Production: V.M. Production (Paris), Mojack Films (Montreal), and Maran Films (Munich); color; running time: 99 mins. Released: 1974. Produced by Vincent Malle; screenplay by Dusan Makavejev; directed by Dusan Makavejev; photography by Pierre Lhomme; edited by Yann Dedet; art direction by Jocelyn Joly, Christian Lamarque; music by Manos Hadjidakis. Cast: Carole Laure (Miss World 1984), Pierre Clementi (*Potemkin* sailor), Anna Prucnal (Anna Planeta), Sami Frey (El Macho), Jane Mallet, Otto Muehl and AA commune (themselves), Marpessa Dawn (Mama Communa), John Vernon (Mr. Kapital), Roy Callendar (Jeremiah Muscle).

*Montenegro*. Production: Viking Film and Europa Film, Stockholm, Sweden; color; running time: 96 mins. Released: 1981. Produced by Bo Jonsson; screenplay by Dusan Makavejev with additional scenes and dialogue by Branko Vucicevic, Bojana Marijan, Arnie Gelbart, Bo Jonsson, Donald Arthur; directed by Dusan Makavejev; photography by Tomislav Pinter; edited by Sylvia Ingemarsson; art direction by Radu Boruzescu; music by Kornell Kovach. Cast:



Susan Anspach (Marilyn Jordan), Erland Josephson (Martin Jordan), Bora Todorovic (Alex Rossignol), Per Oscarsson (Dr. Aram Pazardjian), Patricia Gelin (Tirke), Lisbeth Zachrisson (Rita Rossignol), Svetozar Cvetkovic (Montenegro).

*The Coca-Cola Kid.* Production: Grand Bay Films and Cinema Enterprises, with support from the Australian Film Commission, Australia; color; running time: 94 mins. Released: 1985. Produced by David Roe; screenplay by Frank Moorhouse based on his short stories published in *The Americans*, *Baby* and *The Electrical Experience*; directed by Dusan Makavejev; photography by Dean Semler; edited by John Scott; art direction by Anni Browning; music by William Motzing and Tim Finn. Cast: Eric Roberts (Becker), Greta Scacchi (Terri), Bill Kerr (T. George McDowell), Chris Haywood (Kim), Kris Mcquade (Juliana), Max Gillies (Frank), Tony Barry (Bushman), Paul Chubb (Fred), David Slingsby (Waiter), Tim Finn (Philip), Colleen Clifford (Mrs. Haversham), Rebecca Smart (DMZ).

*Manifesto.* Production: Cannon Film (USA) and Jadran film (Zagreb, Yugoslavia); color; running time: 94 mins. Released: 1988. Produced by Ivan Passer, Tom Luddy, Menahem Golan and Yoram Globus; screenplay by Dusan Makavejev, inspired by *For a Night of Love* by Emile Zola; directed by Dusan Makavejev; photography by Tomislav Pinter; edited by Tony Lawson; art direction by Valjko Despotovic; costumes by Marit Allen; music by Nicola Piovani. Cast: Camilla Søeberg (Svetlana), Alfred Molina (Avanti), Simon Callow (Hunt), Eric Stoltz (Christopher), Lindsay Duncan (Lily Sacher), Rade Serbedzija (Emile), Svetozar Cvetkovic (Rudi), Chris Haywood (Wango), Patrick Godfrey (Dr. Lambrosco), Linda Marlowe (Stella), Gabrielle Anwar (Tina), Enver Petrovci (the king), Ronald Lacey (Conductor), Tanja Boskovic (Olympia), Zeljko Duvnjak (Martin), Danko Ljustina (Baker).

*Gorilla Bathes at Noon.* Production: Alert Film, Von Vietinghoff FilmProduktion and Ekstaza (Germany, Yugoslavia); color; running time: 80 mins. Released: 1993. Produced by Bojana Marijan and Alfred Hurmer,



Design by Kosolapov

Joachim von Vietinghoff; screenplay by Dusan Makavejev; directed by Dusan Makavejev; photography by Aleksandar Petkovic and Miodrag Milosevic; edited by Vuksan Lukovac; sound by Uros Kovacevic, Vladimir Stanojevic, and Peter Henricci; music by Brynmor Jones; costumes by Marina Vukasovic-Medenica. Cast: Svetozar Cvetkovic (Lasutkin), Anita Mancic (Miki Miki/Lenin), Alexandra Tohmig (German Girl), Petar Bozovic (Trandafil), Andreas Lucius (Policeman), Eva Ras (Miki Miki's mother), Davor Janjic (Bum 1), Zoran Ratkovic (Bum 2), Suleyman Boyraz (Turk), Natasa Babic-Zoric (Frau Schmidt), Aleksandar Davic (dealer), Alfred Holighaus (journalist).

*Hole in the Soul.* Production: Triangle Film Production for BBC, Scotland; color; running time: 50 mins. Released: 1994. Produced by Bojana Marijan. Executive producer: John Archer. Written by Dusan Makavejev. Directed by Dusan Makavejev. Camera: Les Blank, Peter Lang, Alexander Calzatti. Photography by Rade Vradic; edited by Mirjana Kicovic; original score by Zoran Simjanovic; sound by Djordje Djurovic. Cast: Rasa Popou (Poet), Paul Yamamoto (Agent), Monique Montgomery (Image Creator), Dennis Jakob (Connoisseur), Gary Burstein and Agnes Wang (Buddhist Priests). Vlada Mijanovic (Dusan's friend), Sava Dimitrijevic and Dragan Dimitrijevic (Gilders), Rambo Amadeus (Rock Star), Melodie Annis (Owner of the Star To Be), Scout (Pig). With Eva Ras, Milena Dravic, Anita Mancic, Desa Marijan, Milica Podunavac, and Bojana Marijan.

NOTE: Bojana Marijan-Makavejev, Dusan's guiding light and life companion, worked as Assistant Director, Casting Director and Sound Track Supervisor on most of his films. She was Associate Producer on *Manifesto*, and Producer on *Gorilla Bathes at Noon* and *Hole in the Soul*.



Monument by Tomsy

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DREKAVAC /Bawler/ BrailleUR

A monster born from the soul of a child who died unchristened. His body is striped, long and thin, spindle-shaped and he has a disproportionately large head. He appears in graveyards, streams or small villages where he makes a hubbub, crying out with the voices of many different animals.



ALA /GUZZLER/ GLOUTON

Very strong, voracious, greedy. Guzzler leads thunderclouds, hailstorms and hurricanes in order to destroy crops. Dragons, guardians of the harvest, fly to meet them and lead the battle against them.



BUKAVAC /ROARER/ HURLEUR

A monster with six legs and gnarly horns. Lives in lakes and large marshes. During the night he comes noisily out of the water, jumps on people and animals and strangles them.



KARAKONDŽULA /HAIRY RIDER/ DEMON-NOIR

A black spectre or phantom with red eyes and long arms. She carries a club in order to beat naughty children before she devours them. To defend yourself against the hairy rider, you may use a shaft, salt and bread.

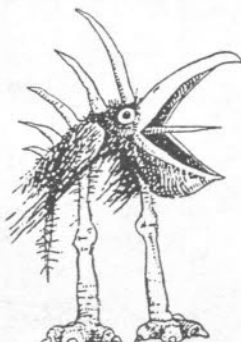
A brief overview of some strange creatures from the Balkans and an attempt at the reconstruction of their various appearances through the objective eye of Rastko Ćirić, based on the texts from the Serbian Mythological Dictionary.

These creatures will appear in Makavejev's next film.



VAMPIRIĆ /VAMPIRE MOTH/ VAMPIRET

Every vampire is inhabited by one or more vampire-moths who may leave their host by the way of the mouth. When killing a vampire you must be certain to kill the moth as well, for if he escapes he may continue to do evil to the living.



CIKAVAC /SCREECHER/ PIAILLEUR

A winged animal with a long beak and a baggy throat. It is hatched from an egg that is been kept under the armpit for forty days. It fulfills its master's every desire and gives him knowledge of the secret language of Nature.

NAV /AVISPOOK/ OISOME

A bird possessed by the soul of an unchristened child becomes an avispoock. When he appears, one must say: "I cross myself in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost" and the avispoock will disappear.



PSOGLAV / DOGHEAD/ TETE DE CHIEN

A demon with the body of a man and the head of a dog, with iron teeth. Dogheads live in caves and are cannibals. They attack people and also dig up corpses in order to devour them. Water frightens them.

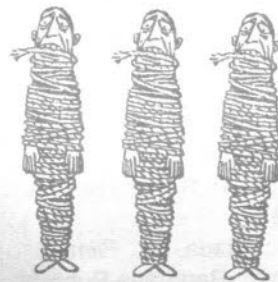
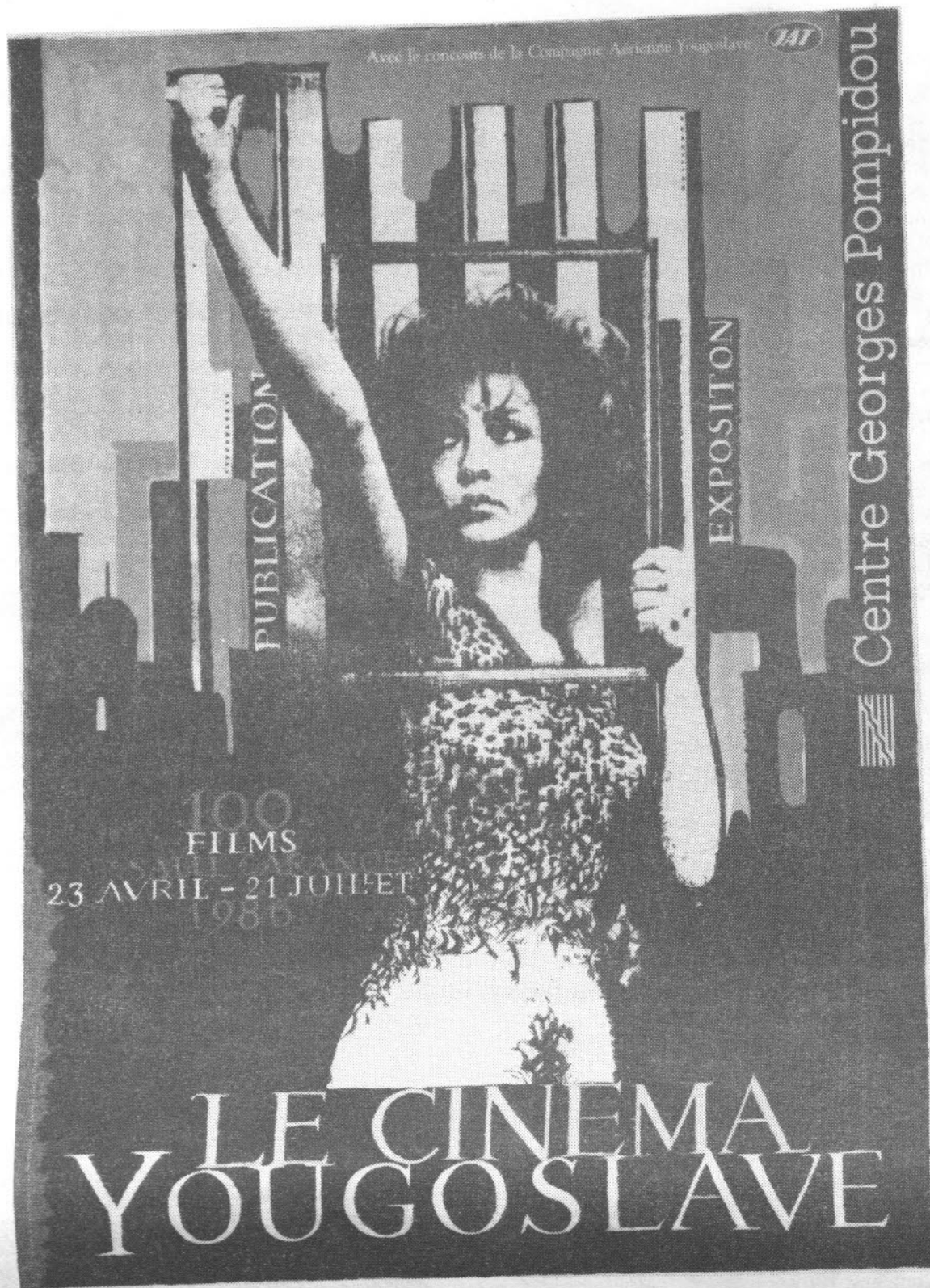


OLALIJA /SKULLSIPPER/ CRANE-DE-CHEVAL

A night creature who makes traveller drunk with wine, and takes him to places unknown, to graveyards or the sites of tall trees. When her companion sobers in the light of dawn, he sees that, instead of a glass of drink, he is holding the skull of a horse.







London TIMES 9 AUGUST 1993

## Call in professionals to end Yugoslav natural disaster

**A**s a film-maker I am a citizen of the world but, unfortunately, I am a citizen of the leftovers of Yugoslavia too. I share with my compatriots the strange feeling of living in Year Zero. Year Zero in the former Yugoslavia is into its third year and there is still no end in sight.

It seems the expanding spiral of violence and revenge will never end. An irrational storm is raging. One of the rare films in the history of the cinema that mentioned Serbs is a 1940s Hollywood horror classic called *Cat People*.

It explained Serbs as a people from an obscure region who were haunted by evil; when hurt they turned into ferocious cats, like panthers, and killed those whom they thought to be the source of hurt or rejection.

Creators of nationalist myths, both Serbs and Croats, came from the same mountainous region that was probably the source of this Hollywood story. Before the armed conflict, these people were whipping up nationalist fever and indoctrination until conflict became inevitable and both nations were trapped in a bloody embrace.

We are in the fourteenth month of the destruction of Bosnia, the killing of men, women, children, old people and animals. Whatever UN observers observed a year ago, they are still observing. For how long? How long will it

*The celebrated Belgrade-born film director Dusan Makavejev rejects as irrational the division of Bosnia on ethnic lines*

take to make an ethnically "clean" state for every single person who miraculously stays alive? A state for each family, a state for the father in case he is a Croat, a state for the mother in case she is a Muslim, a state for the daughter in case she is a Yugoslav, a

of drinking black coffee from *fildzan*, little cups without a handle. You put in a sugar cube and pour the boiling coffee from a *azezva* over it. You do not stir. Because it is very hot and bitter, you drink it first with a tiny slurp. As the sugar dissolves, the coffee becomes cooler and sweeter.

There is another custom, connected with drinking brandy at the end of the summer day. It is called *aksamluk*. You cool a bottle of *rakiya*, grape brandy, in the well. You start drinking at sunset. A cold brandy at the end of a hot day. As the night falls, the brandy warms up, and you finish the bottle under the bright stars with a fuzzy brain.

From hot and bitter to the warm and sweet, and from the heat and cool into outside coolness and inner warmth. Is it a street theatre, or music, or a prayer? It is, or it was, life as art, practised by seemingly primitive, uneducated people. This, for me, was the beautiful mystery of Bosnia, known to all of us also as *dark vilayet*, a sombre region.

Now we watch serious-looking foreign negotiators collecting meaningless autographs like teenage groupies on heat. Chamberlain with umbrella,



Tito: would have stopped the killing

waving the piece of paper, was for years the image of the idiotic politician of yesterday's Europe. The same image is repeated again and again, together with funny maps and signatures not honoured 15 times in a row.

An old partisan from Herzegovina, the late Vladimir Dedijer, who was not an innocent, told me how, when one has to sign an agreement that one is not intending to honour, the signatory, while signing with his right hand, has to keep his left hand in the pocket, holding his testicles. This gesture makes the signature invalid. This is what international negotiators, who are ignorant of the culture they

deal with, miss. The international negotiators are either incompetent in dealing with con-artists — or they have a hidden agenda.

In all the desperation and hell we are living through, some voices are heard saying that a revival of Tito's role could be useful. I do not think so. But at least he would first stop the killing as the precondition of humanitarian aid.

Tito's liberal reign was protected by a strata of privileged third-rate characters, apparatchiks, officers, policemen and police informers. After the collapse of the kindergarten called communism, most of these, dressed up as new nationalists, reorganised themselves and started an all-out war, everybody against everybody. A Western analyst once called Slobodan Milosevic [the Serbian president] "a master of deregulation". He is an expert in a favourite Serbian pastime, flirting with death.

We speak the same language, often have the same names and generally in our mentality are indistinguishable. If we have to separate from each other it can provoke irrational responses.

For many, destruction has become an addiction. Cities are neither taken nor left alone. They are destroyed, as if that were the only goal.

Life without neighbours exists only in the high mountains. And this is where most

of the "decision-makers" come from. A parochial and patriarchal rural culture, ethnically "pure", fearful of urban energy, took up arms against the cities as mythical places of affluence and sin.

With the promise of Greater Serbia, Serbs were cheated out of the only state in which all the Serbs ever lived together from 1918 — Yugoslavia. Prodded and cheated by their megalomaniac leaders, Serbs find themselves in a clinical state of lost identity, tarnished national image and badly shaken self-respect.

**I**n former Yugoslavia, madness is used as a political tool. The famous Croatian soldier nicknamed "Rambo" had a special knife, quite a large one, designed to cut Serbian throats. Young Serbian volunteers, as if answering the threat of a special knife prepared for them, drew on their necks a dotted line: *cut here*.

The irrational storm that is raging should be handled by professionals who deal with natural disasters. Catastrophe feeds on disorder, reinforced and perpetuated by the misguided and inappropriate actions of the international community. All of Croatia, Bosnia and Serbia should be declared an emergency zone.

*This is an edited extract from last night's Opinions programme, produced for Channel 4 by Open Media*