



R.P.M. . . . "a lot of ketchup."

Films Exploiting Youth?

(Catholic Press Features)

New York — One of the nation's most respected film critics, Pauline Kael, charges that movies about campus unrest and violent revolution are gross frauds that were made only to exploit youthful audiences.

Miss Kael, in an extensive

piece in *The New Yorker*, singled out *The Strawberry Statement*, *Getting Straight*, *R.P.M.*, and *Joe* as typical products of "low cunning" and a rush by movie-makers to "serve up the terrorist, utopian thinking that they hope will appeal to young ticket-buyers."

Dismissing movie industry assurances that the current generation of young film-goers has been made cinematically alert through years of TV viewing, Miss Kael contends that on the contrary, TV deception has made young movie-goers particularly susceptible to movieplot simplifications offered in today's "youth-oriented" films.

"The 'best-educated' generation in history," she claims, "is nakedly vulnerable to whatever stirs it emotionally. This susceptibility, rather than 'visual literacy,' is the distinctive trait of the 'film generation.'"

"The young go back to re-experience the movies they iden-

tify with, entering into them with a psychodrama involvement. *Easy Rider* tapped a vein of glamorous suicidal masochism, and *Joe*, a real main-liner, rushes in all the way.

"This picture is so slanted to feed the paranoia of youth that at its climax (a reversal of the Sharon Tate case) when the young hippies are slaughtered by the 'straight' adults — the blue-collar bigot Joe and a liberal advertising man — members of the audience respond on cue with cries of 'Next time, we'll have guns!' and 'We'll get you first, Joe!'"

Miss Kael said that in *Joe*, "the manipulation of the audience is so shrewdly, single-mindedly commercial that it's rather terrifying to sit there and observe how susceptible the young audience is."

She attributes this susceptibility to years of TV viewing, teen magazine reading and the political assassinations, all of which has "finally resulted in many young people's not knowing how to sort things out."

This situation has been aggravated, she contends, by movie-makers with the low cunning to exploit the current mood of the young movie audience, as in *Joe*, or with the strong shallow egos to convince the shaken-up studio heads that they know what the youth market will buy."

One result has been an influx of campus violence pictures like *R.P.M.*, *The Strawberry Statement* and *Getting Straight*.

"No contemporary American

subject provided a better test of the new movie freedom than student unrest," Miss Kael admits. "It should have been a great subject: the students becoming idealists and trying to put their feelings about justice into practice; their impotence at delay; the relationship between boredom and activism..."

"Instead, we've been getting glib 'statements,' and cheap sex jokes, the zoomy shooting and shock cutting of TV commercials, plus a lot of screaming and ketchup on the lenses. These movies took the recently developed political consciousness of American students, which was still tentative and searching and, necessarily, confused, and reduced it to simplicities, overstatements and lies. In the standard Hollywood vulgarizing tradition, the theme of student revolution was turned into a riot-movie fad."

Citing *R.P.M.*, in which Anthony Quinn plays a "with-it" college president who nevertheless fails to win over a group of radical students who have taken over a campus building and threaten to destroy valuable equipment, Miss Kael commented:

"For all its jabber of hating violence, *R.P.M.* nevertheless heads straight toward it, just like *Getting Straight* and *The Strawberry Statement*. The directors present violence as the students' only courageous course of action, not because it arises out of the given issues but because of their crudeness as moviemakers — because they want the smash finale of a big production-number violent confrontation."

COURIER / Entertainment

As I See It

TV Smut? What to Do

By Pat Costa



American Can Co. employ Marguerite Riley of Geneva called the newspaper office the other day asking what she and co-workers could do to protest a sex-oriented skit on the Johnny Carson show a few Fridays back.

They had been advised by others in their plant to write to the NBC network and to the Federal Communications Commission.

Did we have any other suggestions? We did. It is a fact, unpleasant to those particularly in the communications media, but a fact nevertheless, that advertisers wield powerful influence as to the content of a show. Threaten a sponsor with boycott of a product and somebody starts making waves and quickly.

On the other hand, Carson's show is not just any television program. Sponsors are aware of the large audience looking in and may overlook some consumer complaints if they believe enough others are looking in and buying their product because of exposure on the show.

But letters to the sponsors (you can find the name of the president of the company and

its address at your local library) and to the president of the network, Julian Goodman in this case, are still your best bet.

One other smart move would be to turn off Carson. (Channel 13, we need Dick Cavett!)

Carson was bored with his own show five years ago and it shows, not only in his attitude but by the kind of material he relies on. For some reason he thinks sexual innuendo is always tantalizing.

A few weeks back, I took a look at a "Gunsmoke" entry in which Vera Miles, playing a doctor, and Milburn Stone, as Dodge's resident physician, played out a love story against a background of a mysterious epidemic.

In the last few minutes as Miss Miles died in Stone's arms, one could understand all over again the power of this long lasting series to involve its viewers.

Part of it is character development worked out over the years, part of it is strong script and part of it the creation of people from week to week the viewer can really care about. At any rate it is a winning combination.

Fall Foliage Report

ADIRONDACK - CHAMPLAIN
Prospect Mountain—past peak.
Saranac Lake—past peak.

CATSKILLS
Kingston—90% color, average brilliance, red and orange predominate.

FINGER LAKES
Canandaigua — 75% color, bright yellow and orange; Hornell — 70% color, bright yellow, splashes of red.

Ithaca—nearing peak, bright yellow with some brown and red; Ontario — 50% color, bright yellow and orange; Penn

Yan — 75% color, bright yellow and orange, some reds; Trumansburg (Finger Lakes State Parks) — peak color, brilliance bright, yellow predominating; Watkins Glen — 65% color, bright yellow and gold.

NIAGARA FRONTIER
Niagara Frontier—30% color, brilliant red, yellow and gold.

SOUTHWEST GATEWAY
Olean — peak color.

THOUSAND ISLANDS - ST. LAWRENCE

Alexandria Bay — past peak, leaves falling.

At Home with the Movies

HEAVEN WITH A GUN (1969)
Thursday, Oct. 29 (CBS)

This is another cattlemen vs. sheepmen Western, but with a twist: Glenn Ford plays an ex-gunslinger who has come to town as a preacher who hopes to bring peace. He finally does, despite having to resort to his earlier skills when the bad guys get mean.

The film does carry a moral message — about the power of peaceful demonstration, even back in 1870 — but the movie is not exactly for kids. One of the preacher's allies is a bordello queen (Carolyn Jones) whom Ford was very friendly with in the "old days." There also is a rape sequence.

Most critics thought the storyline was weak, but some praised the film for trying to bring three-dimensional characterizations to old-style black-and-white Western morality.

The Catholic film office rated it A-3, unobjectionable for adults, and the movie industry rated it M, "suggested for mature audiences."

WARNING SHOT (1967)
Friday, Oct. 30 (CBS)

David Janssen stars as a detective who kills, apparently in self-defense, a man who turns out to be a highly-respected doctor known for his philanthropy and aid to Mexicans in California's Baja country.

Janssen is suspended and spends the rest of the film trying to clear his name before being brought up on manslaughter charges.

Most critics found it a very well made detective thriller, helped by performances from Ed Begley, Keenan Wynn, Lillian Gish, Eleanor Parker, Walter Pidgeon and Steve Allen, and for its treatment of police brutality and sensationalism of press and TV in reporting scandal.

Wednesday, October 28, 1970

This is a summary and evaluation of prime-time films offered by the network to its affiliate stations. Check your local listings to ascertain if your channel is scheduling the network offering.

NCOMP gave it an A-2 rating, unobjectionable for adults and adolescents, commenting that much of the film "turns into a routine detective thriller with little suspense and a lot of violence."

THE WAR WAGON (1967)
Saturday, Oct. 31 (NBC)

The "wagon" of the title is an armor-plated, Gatling-gun-armed stagecoach carrying a half-million dollars' worth of gold dust that John Wayne plans to hijack because the owner of the war wagon had cheated Wayne out of his gold-rich land.

Wayne hires a gunman (Kirk Douglas) and an Indian (Howard Keel) and a tribe of Kiowa Indians to help him pull off the hijack.

This film was greeted by critics as one of the best Westerns in some time: full of action, fine acting (particularly by Keel) and much humor, along with a surprise ending.

NCOMP rated this A-2, unobjectionable for adults and adolescents.

THE WORLD OF SUZIE WONG (1960)
Sunday, Nov. 1 (ABC)

This is another "good prostitute" movie, with Nancy Kwan as a Chinese girl forced by poverty to sell herself, until William Holden comes along and, at film's end, takes her away from all that to become his wife.

The film was criticized for its glossed-over phoniness: presenting the prostitute as an

otherwise extremely virtuous girl, with her place of business looking like nothing more than a happy sorority house. Even the one "problem" she has — an illegitimate child — is conveniently taken care of when the child is killed in a flood.

NCOMP rated it B, objectionable in part for all, because "the atmosphere of a brothel . . . is morally unacceptable for a mass medium of entertainment."

SECRET CEREMONY (1968)
Monday, Nov. 2 (NBC)

Mia Farrow and Elizabeth Taylor are the stars of this psychological horror story about a demented orphan who persuades an aging prostitute to take her into her house and treat her as her own child. Later, the girl's stepfather (Robert Mitchum) appears to claim the child's allegiance. The film ends with the child's suicide and the murdering of the stepfather by the prostitute.

It is a macabre film — most of it set in an eerie mansion — filled with allusions to rape, incest, madness and incurable diseases. The critics were intrigued by the performances of Miss Taylor and Miss Farrow but the slow-paced dialogue requires a lot of patience and attention.

NCOMP rated this A-4, unobjectionable for adults, with reservations, and observed: "Although certain aspects of the plot are unsavory—madness, incest, suicide — and some of the dialogue vulgar and sexually explicit (much of which will be deleted for TV—Ed.), the film's treatment of these elements is restrained . . . More disturbing to some viewers will be the disquieting atmosphere of corrupted innocence which permeates the film but which expresses the mystery of evil implicit in the story's meaning."

(Catholic Press Features)

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