

Films

University, as you may have noticed, threatens to get underway again. Thousands of brilliant virginal minds, unsullied through twelve years of our glorious school systems, are here to be blown.

So what do said minds find greeting them in the cinemas of the Paris of the North Saskatchewan?

About what they'd have found a month ago.

The length of movie runs in Edmonton is getting ridiculous. The Garneau was showing *The Graduate* while we wrote exams last April. It's still showing it. *The Sound of Music* was playing at the Varscona when I wrote my first film column for The Gateway two years ago: now it's soggily back, this time at the Rialto.

The Varscona itself is, surprisingly, still packing 'em in with Clive Donner's pleasant but unremarkable comedy *Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush*. The attraction here is probably skin, but there's enough bright observation of the embarrassments of male puberty to justify watching it on other grounds.

At the Westmount, prayers are still being offered up for *Rosemary's Baby*, Roman Polanski's remarkable transformation of a junky best-seller into a brilliant film. It does deserve a long run. If it sticks around I hope to write about it at more length; meanwhile, by all means see it—and don't let your friends tell you how it comes out.

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As if all this weren't depressing enough (some say), not one but two of the new movies in town star Dean Martin.

I'm always surprised by the virulent hatred Dean Martin seems to rouse in a lot of otherwise pretty tepid hearts. He has always seemed to me a dependable pro of the second rank—an actor who can't transform lousy material into gold, but does as good a job as anyone else when his director and script writers give him a chance.

To get the worst over first: *Five Card Stud* (at the Capital) is a real botch. Quite a good idea is submerged under the worst script I've heard spoken for years.

Poker-lovers will find themselves gypped; we watch only about sixty seconds of card-playing in the whole film. And Martin is awful, though his obvious lack of concern about the fact occasionally gives the picture a charmingly perfunctory look; better to look offhandedly bad than to grunt and groan over it.

There's a similarly casual performance by Robert Mitchum as a Wild West joke about Cardinal Spellman, nice music by Maurice Jarre; a splendid job is done by Roddy McDowell as a neurotic son of the west, and the west, and the New Bloodiness in American films allows us to see a broad daylight shot of a man strangled with barbed wire.

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I've left myself no space to deal adequately with a much better film which I highly recommend, *Bandolero* (at the Paramount).

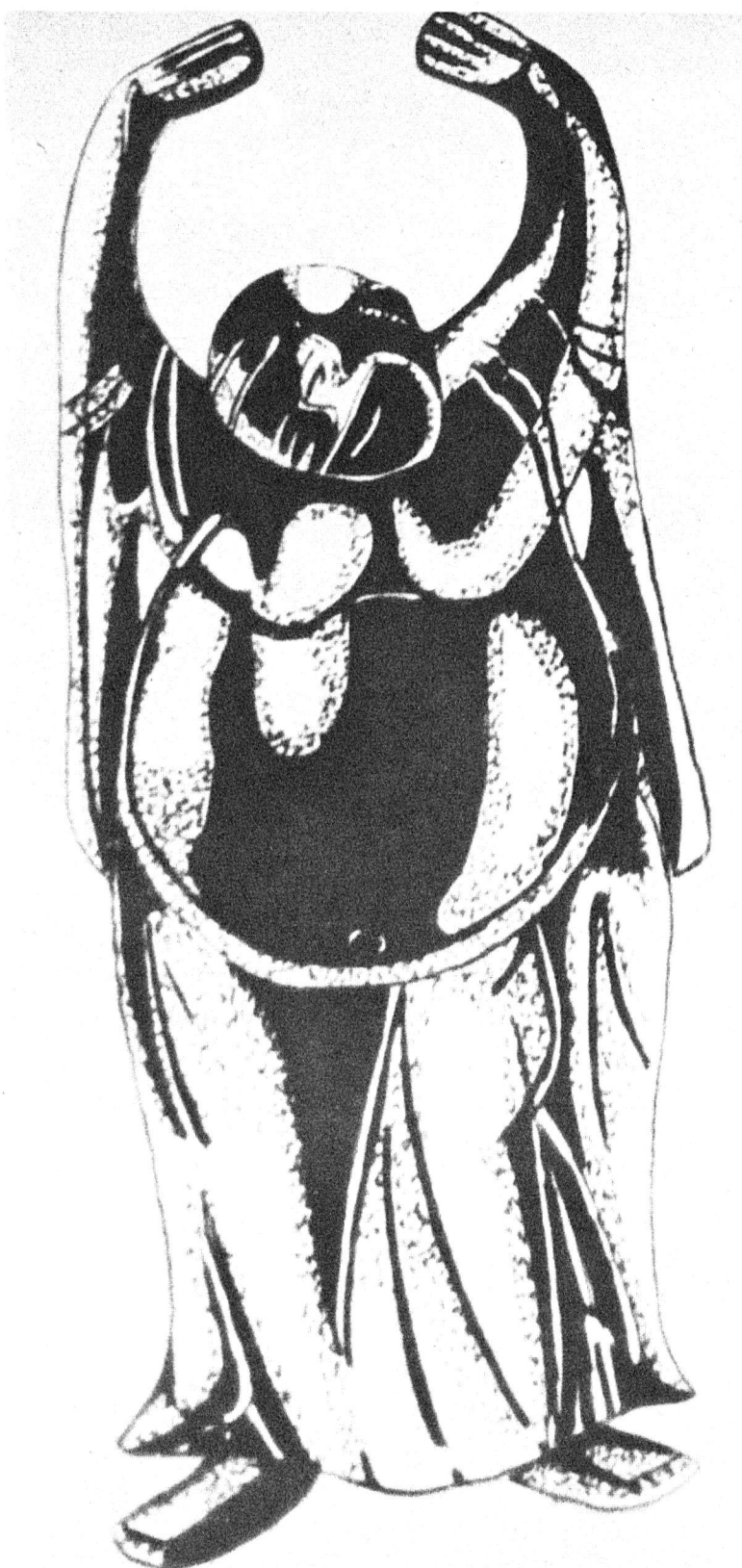
For one thing, *Bandolero* is less a Dean Martin film than a James Stewart film (though Martin does a fine job). James Stewart may be a fascist in private life, but it doesn't seem to get in the way of his playing a decidedly tricky character here with humour and a weird sympathy.

All the obvious things work here, from the most beautifully photographed Southwest I can remember in a western to Miss Raquel Welch, here so carefully and cannily handled that she almost seems an actress. (As objet d'art she is more stunning than ever.)

And yet, and yet. . . . The fascination of the film lies not in its obvious successes but in its ambiguities, its lapses of tone.

Why should such an amusing film get so many of its clowns killed? What happens to the western when *The Code of the West* meet *Relativity*? I hope to grope toward some answers next week.

—John Thompson



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