

Mainline & 567 something at all

by Dennis Brennan

Usually when we're at the first or the last of the great . . . etc., we don't realize it. Somebody paid his fare and sat down for the last busride ever to be had on the old Trans-Urba GB-9117 Side-Puff bus, and never knew it. Yesterday one of us juxtaposed Brazilian three-masters and electric staplers for the first time, and never knew it. Yet in three years the whole continent could be doing it, probably be a big thing.

Well last Friday in Winters Common Room a first of the great . . . etc. happened when we sat down to watch *Mainline and 567 Productions*, a film (film, actually) associated with Shalom Lappin, the well-known second year epistemologist and mustard critic. I used to think the show was late getting started, but now I realize it started on time—at 8 p.m.—when somebody turned up at the purple noise with Dylan's old *Crawl Thru Yer Window*. A good way to start.

A screen went up for a while and a projector came down from the Humane Society and plugged in. A sound-box of rocks and hoods and V8s and turned-up collars and black-slacks and grease and teenage come-queens got turned on up at the far end and Shalom Lappin got up on a table and made a speech. He said to watch out for the grainy (some say seedy) quality of the footage. He said a sentence with the phrase, "the fifties", in it. He said the concept of "home movies" should be suspended—or at least negatively reinforced—for the duration of the show. And he buttered that slice with, "Part of the film was cut and chamfered in California . . ." (everybody knows that's not home). He clomped around on the table and gave us fair warning about everything—just trying to be understood.

No one hollered LIGHTS! and the lights went out. The projectionist found a relaxing corner of the screen and before our very eyes the lights came on again. It was really quite an effect. I liked it and a lot of people around me felt pretty good about it. In a while the lights went off again and it turned out the film had been running all along. Actually, considering that the sound had been blasting ever since the introductory oration, the film had not a small amount of catching up to do. That in itself proved to be an interesting contest.

Just after a moving sequence I shall call "Posh Milk", the film seemed to spurt ahead, overtaking the sound rather cleanly at the clubhouse turn. Posh Milk, in the film, is a statement for our times. It is a question for our times. It is a syntactically complex inner-subjunctive murmuring framed in a para-gerundular mess. Some of the audience didn't understand it, and a few business majors were openly guffawing. On the far side of Posh Milk there is a subtle dramatic build peaking in a full step, and the film acquires a more open close stance. This arrives as we are suddenly shown that the dance-partner has a bald spot!!! A nearby spectator gasped, "Too much! It's like getting accepted at Harvard!" and the piece slushes gently round the bend and into its second sequence which I shall call, "Soft-Dog Bugle-Tread".

Soft-Dog Bugle-Tread has its moments. We discussed this later at high tea, and a well-known personage of great stature had to admit, "Soft-Dog Bugle-Tread has its moments", scraping his head on a light-fixture. During Soft-Dog Bugle-Tread the projector was shut off, or fell off, or came off, or went off, depending on where you were sitting. This didn't stop the sound track, and, indeed, the projector offing was metaphysically intentional. I later tended to learn, in order that the sound at that juncture might be deeply heightened. For the sound had left the cheeseburger stand for an interlude with the Great Rodent, Mighty Mouse. I had never taken Mighty seriously before, but now, as he spoke with determination, humility, and the utmost waxed-paper sincerity, it suddenly struck me that up to now I had gotten Mighty all wrong. I know now that Mighty Mouse is a true knight, determined in his profound cause to sweep the kitchen-world clean of all them Evil Cats.

Meanwhile the visuals were getting ready to come back. Somebody (there was not really one projectionist, as such, but rather a group of projection-oriented individuals who inter-gesticulated with the equipment, actively participating in decisions which directly affected them) dropped the projector into second, aimed it rather screenwardly, and let go. The visuals made a comeback. Someone cheered and someone sat down and three cigarettes got lit. It was a happy little audience. Three way spaghetti dish was off and running.

Oscillate with three-way spaghetti.

"Three-way spaghetti dish", as the last-but-one sequence of the movie could be called, gets down to the bottom and crawls. The cameraman does the old hand-jive with the focus knob and the jungle of technologically possible worlds swims before the mind. Down to the beach with the kids, and the decadent, sensuous beachballs flaunt Universal Principles and their rusted-out rocker panels; the screen reeks of funereal airplane glue. Out on the back lawn with the Family Dog and through the trees in a '57 Buick comes the bad digestion of fifty-million roast-beef-mashed-potatoes-and-gravy family dinners. Back to the deck-chair and Saturday's sun while magazine-riders pray thanks for Ivy League, White Bucks, Tail Fins, Desert Boots, Olive-Green Cords, White Filter-Ends, Kyawlidjejkaiashn, Sports Cars, Kingston Trio, My-Parents-Let-Me-Drink-At-Home . . . (somewhere in here I went out for a sec for coffee from the purple noise) . . . beatniks, I-hate-rock-and-roll-and-love-jazz-and-folk-music, phonies who use your goddam Gladstone bags for props, Tommy Sands, Gene Vincent, Bernadine, Guy Mitchell, the Platters . . .

Yes, Three-way spaghetti dish was a transparent glaze with the natural image and the imagined form overlapping in a state of permanent oscillation. It was alright. By this time the sound's frequency had copped out on its amplitude's fixed regularity and aural explorations undertaken by a leg-flexing spider who lived as a bagpipe nursed the ear like a dirty-green ooze. The picture had largely left the screen altogether and played about the screen's tripod stand, a large ash tray, and an unknown dark abyss where I somehow could not follow it. The projector seemed to seek some abstruse optimal speed from a collection of 27 or 30 potential speeds—all of which were tried on for varying intervals. The sponsors of the film moved nervously to several getaway spots on the chance that all semblance of accepted movie experience should soon be eclipsed. The 25 admission charge was collected in theory, never to be brought up again. Various photography-hefner-hi-fi buffs tried last staps at empathizing with the equipment, only to be rebuffed. There was a final sequence which, for complete reportage, I should address some space to, although I confess a certain nebulous subjectivity may creep in, for the last of the clear objectivity had long since walked down to the road and caught the Keele-Hwy 7 bus home. I shall call the last climactic sequence "Pubic Hair".

Pubic Hair is probably the real gripping part of the movie where all your old values and consumer habits are swept away utterly by an apocalyptic fantasmagoria which renders gopher-holes merely problematic and our blind haste to develop a one-handed wheelbarrow before the Communist world an empty vision, I guess. I honestly couldn't say positively. The single parcel of precise information I can give you about the Pubic Hair sequence is that during the shooting of the sequence there was definitely a pubic hair on the camera lens, and it goes over rather big on the screen.

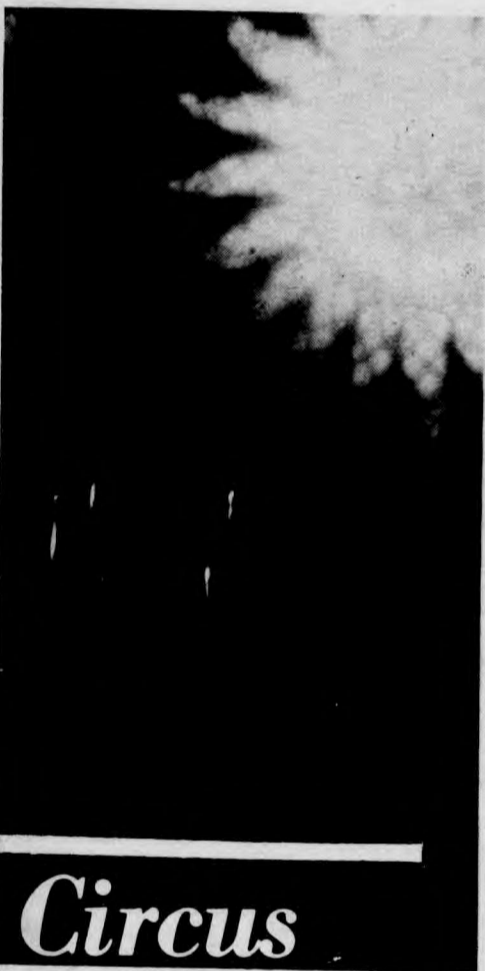
A janitor or somebody threw a light switch and caught the room with its pants down. Mainline and 567 Productions was over. A couple was snoozing on a couch. The card-players of course never knew anything hadn't happened - they played right through - except one dude had a Jack sticking out above his sock. There were a lot of those smiles that start off with good intentions but drop off into thinly-veiled frowns at the mouth ends. A lot of that going on. Shalom Lappin fixed us up again by leaping to a table top and delivering the real meaning of the film.

It seems the film is the first of the great . . . something or other . . . cinematic movement . . . economic breakthrough . . . life-style upheaval . . . moral re-examination . . . something along those lines. And I agree with him. I think there can be no doubt. But what bugs me is that the audience was so intimate (and it got considerably intimated) that I can't help thinking this film should be shown again, at Burton, to allow the whole population of this campus (lawyers and all) a running chance at this ultra cinematic experience.

Mr. Lappin went on to say that the film is better than any of Andy Warhol's stuff. But he is too modest. Actually, it is much much worse. And how much better than Andy Warhol can you get (baby)? An admirer told Mr. Lappin he was insane. The closing speech was perfunctorily shut down when - this actually happened - Shalom fell off the table, bringing the projector down on top of him.

You who were not there do not know what you missed. Neither do I.

The Electric Circus: A playpen where the only thing you play with, is yourself



Circus

photo by Jeff Plewman

the Electric Circus. The most obvious is the fact that they have invested twice as much money into the Toronto Circus as the New York one but the latter city has 10 times the population to draw from. There are only so many curious rich people in T.O. that can afford the Circus every week. Students that can afford the Circus will probably never go in the middle of the week and also older people out on a date some Wednesday night will prefer a club that is licensed to the Electric Circus, which is not.

There is also the problem of competition. The Circus and the Rock Pile are two different concepts in entertainment. The Circus is hoping to cut into the R.P.'s crowd by having a big name group every Sunday. The Circus, with half the dance area and twice the cost is through before it starts. By emphasizing environment and not the band itself, the Circus cuts its own head off. Can you imagine a group like The Who in a place that holds 2,500 people but only 1,000 of them can actually be in the same area as the band? In other words, if you're the 2000th person through the door, you might as well sit in the psychedelic washroom all night because you'll never get near the group.

One thing definite about the Electric Circus: it must be seen to be believed. And a last warning: don't go alone. The most involved thing you can do there is make love.

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