

Gilles Carle, le maître du k taine

Malcolm Reid defines the Quebec slang word *k taine* as "everything that is old-fashioned, naive, conformist, rural — and commercially promoted as the opposite, as sharp and stylish." In his book, *This Is Where We Came In*, Martin Knelman cites Gilles Carle as the master of *k taine*.

"Although Carle is the key figure in the [film] culture of the new Quebec — he's still drawn to the remnants of the folksy world he grew up in, and puts them on the screen with a dynamic balance of love and critical awareness. It's the combination of these elements, so peculiarly and distinctively Qu b cois, and the clash between them, expressed in surprisingly comic and melodramatic terms, that have made Gilles Carle the most popular as well as the most prolific filmmaker in Canada. At his most brilliant, Carle achieves a form of comedy that is part Rabelaisian and part Keystone Kops, but just under the surface of slapstick raucousness there is a sense of desolation, of despair on the brink of violence and defeat."

Carle is the only Canadian director to have had two films selected for the Cannes Film Festival. The best of his first bunch were *Les m les*, a bawdy farce, and *La vraie nature de Bernadette*, in Carle's own phrase, "a religious western." It is about a well-off Montreal woman who seeks the pure and simple life in the country. It combines satire and philosophy, comedy and melodrama. The more recent *L'ange et la femme*, which like *Fantastica* had Carole Laure and Lewis Furey as young lovers, is his most sensational effort. Peter Harcourt, in *Canadian Forum*, singled it out for particular praise.

"It was received in Quebec as a hardcore porn film because the reviewers were all blinded by the gossip that accompanied its production, gossip involving the personal lives of Gilles Carle, Lewis Furey and Carole Laure. But the film is more than gossip. It is a film that combines the violence of

Bonnie & Clyde, the yearning romanticism of a silent Rudolph Valentino movie, the poetic sensitivity of a film by Jean Cocteau and the sexual explicitness of *Deep Throat*."

L'ange begins with the execution of Fabienne (Laure) for crimes against the ruling class (she has said, for example, that architects, lawyers and doctors are criminals) and continues with her return to life through the miraculous efforts of Gabriel (Furey) who wraps her in love, erotic and agapeic. The film, which grapples with the basic emotions and dilemmas of life, is an extraordinary achievement philosophically and cinematically, yet it cost less than \$60,000 to produce. Carle refers to it and his other inexpensive works as art and essay films, and his considerable reputation has been built on them. "If a film is good it travels. I'm amazed. Some go on the shelf, naturally, but some go a little more. I've been lucky."

L'humour noir d'Andr  Forcier

There is fantasy in many Quebec films and much fantasy in those of Andr  Forcier. *L'eau chaude l'eau frette*, for example, blends dead-rat realism with a surrealist examination of the seven deadly sins. First it bathes the audience in warm and amusing nuances of daily life among the working class, then it pulls the plug and turns on the ice-cold shower. It concerns the childish delights of a boy and girl, each about twelve, bright and bubbling, and their older companion, a youth, perhaps seventeen, not so bright and pliable in their grip. The little drama of destruction is played out against the background of the girl's first menstrual period and a birthday party for Polo, the middle-aged neighbourhood loan shark, a man of simple tastes and vague amiability. The two younger children are amusing, but monsters,

L'eau chaude l'eau frette is black humour, funny, mordant and unexpected. *Guy L' cuyer* is the chef; *Albert Payette*, the man beneath the hat.

