

Entertainment

Body Snatchers invade again

This film review was originally broadcast on CKDU Radio by their resident cinema critic, Tom Ozere. It is reproduced here in cooperation with CKDU's Early Morning radio program.

by Tom Ozere

Philip Kauffman, who made the *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, may be the most talented non-director in American films today. I say non-director because he doesn't direct, he plays. I've never seen an American film in which one is so aware of the business of filmmaking. In some ways he is like an American Truffaut, except that while Truffaut is clearly an idiot-savant of film in that the ebullience of his movies provides their inherent charm, Kauffman merely shows what he can do in a coldly professional way. In fact, Kauffman owes a lot to European films. He infuses his scenes with such detail, his editing and montage techniques are so sharp, that facile comparisons with Godard and Fassbinder spring to mind. However, the Europeans tend to have reasons for their imagery, as far as I could tell Kauffman's consisted of a series of in-jokes.

The *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* is a remake of the 1950's film of the same name. Whereas the original was set in a mid-western town, this version takes place in very-hip San Francisco. The transition is a welcome one. The contrast between this city of beauty and the decidedly

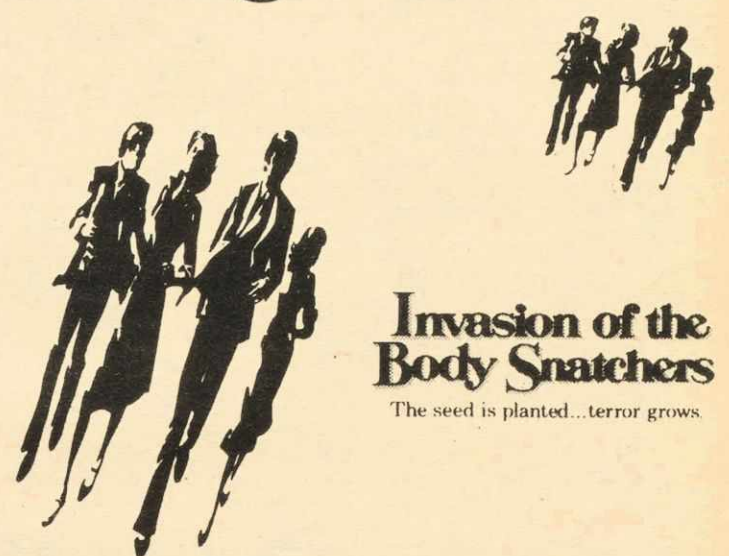
non-beautiful events that take place is very effective. The film concerns itself with the antics of little lumps of protoplasm which fall to the earth and transform themselves into little pods. These pods are vegetable dynamite. They are capable of invading the human body and transforming their hosts into aliens that look and act just like us except that they have—surprise!—no emotions. One wonders why science fiction writers seem to think emotions are a commodity valued only by the human race, aren't there any psychos, weirdos or nymphos out there?

The first pod is taken home by Elizabeth (played by Brooke Adams), a research lab technician, where it transforms her lover Geoffrey into a pod-zombie. It is interesting that Geoffrey is picked to be the first victim since he is effectively a pod already. Geoffrey spends most of his time (before podization) watching TV with the headphones on, and occasionally reaching for a little disinterested sex with Elizabeth. Well, somehow Elizabeth recognizes that her lover is not himself and goes into various stages of catonia. The first person she tells is Matthew (Donald Sutherland), an inspector for the city board of health. At first Matthew doesn't believe her and takes her to see a psychiatrist friend of his (Leonard Nimoy). At a party, we meet an egotistical writer named Jack who owns a health spa. When the psychiatrist refuses to believe the

stories everybody goes home to have a good night's sleep. However, it is sleep that allows the pods to perform their duplicating function. While Jack is asleep in one of the sauna booths, his wife (Veronica Cartwright) discovers a prototype Jack in an adjoining room. The body is unformed we're told, actually it looks like a wax figure with a bad case of root growth. At this juncture Matthew comes in, looks at the body, and announces that it is Jack in-utero. Justifiably worried about Elizabeth, Matthew phones her. When there's no answer he rushes over to her place only to find that her pod-lover has locked all the doors. He breaks in and discovers Elizabeth in the process of being podded. Luckily he manages to spirit her away in time.

Meanwhile, the whole city is going pod crazy. Pods are being podded all over the country by truck, train and ship. People are forming lines and work emotionlessly, ordered by equally emotionless bosses, making strange screams and carrying pods. The rest of the film consists of chases, Sutherland and company against the pod city, which results in them all being podded except one.

The performances in the film are adequate. Sutherland underplays his role nicely, his lanky frame and bone crusher hands are used to more effect than usual. In the role of the writer, Jeff Golblum veers well between hysteria and huckster charm. Veronica Cartwright



Invasion of the Body Snatchers

The seed is planted...terror grows.

and Brooke Adams are good, in fact, the only bad performance comes from Leonard Nimoy. Nimoy may not be Spock, but he's no actor either, he delivers his lines in a mannered monotone and his gestures seem confined.

However, Kauffman would like us to believe the real hero in the film is the cinematography. He indulges in weird camera angles, tilts and hand held shots. He usually ignores off-camera space, the camera either follows, pushes or pulls the actors in and out of shot. In one sequence Sutherland pokes his head through what we're sure is a trap door, however, Kauffman does a double take, tilts the picture, and confronts us with an ordinary door. When Robert Duvall makes a cameo performance as a swinging priest, the camera swings with him.

When we first see Sutherland it's through a peephole in a restaurant door. Kauffman obviously feels these protracted camera pyrotechnics lend the film a certain dynamism, but most of it we've seen done before and better, especially in Hitchcock.

Kauffman has real talent however; the way he chooses to linger on certain faces in the crowd (specially Chinese faces), and the way he manages to invest certain objects, like a child's pinwheel, with a charge of menace show real creative force crippled by inferior material and an adolescent desire to show off.



McCulloch Exhibition

The work of Nova Scotia artist J. Frederick McCulloch (1905-1932) will be exhibited at the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia until March 18. Over five dozen ink and pencil drawings and watercolours organized by the Simon Fraser Gallery, Simon Fraser University, B.C. and circulated under a grant from the Museums Assistance Programme of the National Museums of Canada, show the art of one of four outstanding observers of the human condition during the last five years of an intense life burdened with haemophilia.

McCulloch, a New Glasgow native, died at the age of twenty-seven in Paris, just eight years after he had entered the Nova Scotia College of Art where he gained a Diploma in Painting with Honours in Design. He continued studies in London where he extended his refinement influenced by Aubrey Beardsley and Arthur Rackham as well as M.C. Escher. His choice of models, which later included the French and German schools of Post-Impressionism and Expressionism, assured proper cultivation of his poetry, wit, perception and sense of ultimate meanings.

As James Warren Felter, Director of the Simon Fraser Gallery, points out "Compared with artists of his time, McCulloch had great depth and versatility". And cultural historian Maria Tippet writes in the catalogue: "What he left was a fascinating record of his inner psyche . . . and a sensitive response to the landscape, the cities, and particularly the people of Europe in the early 1930's."

After Fred McCulloch's death, his work was in storage for forty-three years, finally to be exhibited at the Dalhousie University Art Gallery in 1975 through the sensitive research of Dr. Donald C. MacKay, former principal of the Nova Scotia College of Art. The present exhibition represents a selection from the two hundred twenty-one available works on paper and brings to light eighteen more works beyond those previously shown in Halifax.

The McCulloch exhibition may be seen in the Permanent Collection Gallery on the second floor of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia on Coburg Road.

The CUTTING FACTORY Ltd.

SHOCK-HEADED PETER



Just look at him! There he stands,
With his curly hair and hands.
See! His hands are never cut!
They are green as a black as soot.
And the slower I electric,
Never since has anybody had hair.
Anything to me is sweeter
Than to see Shock-headed Peter.