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## Tristana: a master's film

By BRIAN PEARL

Does reality make good, impressive films that are believable. The psychiatric casebook of Tristana becomes the film Tristana by Louis Bunuel and very real parts of Tristana's story; a psychotic, repetitive nightmare, a very personal but unrealistic belief in the power of choice and the murderous vengeance of a crippled woman all begin to seem laboured and forced drama written by a heavy-handed scriptwriter.

But we are all heavy-handed scriptwriters of our own highly eccentric personal film. A human being is an image-making beast, and a strange being devoted to a sort of vague existential comfort, or autistic security, as R.D. Laing puts it. This search for security involves most of the significant acts of normal people and all the important actions of evolving psychotics like Tristana. Bunuel separates the significance from the act itself to show us how Tristana lives, acting and dreaming out her own life.

The psychodramatic film, including masterpieces like Persona by Bergman, Weekend by Godard, Belle de Jour and Tristana by Bunuel seems to mean more to French, Scandinavian, Spanish and Italian film audiences than it does to Americans, Canadians and the British. North America is currently producing films that could be called sociodramas, and people are flocking to see them. Midnight Cowboy, Easy Rider, and to a lesser extent, Five Easy Pieces deal with either exceptionally strong or weak (heroic or anti-heroic) figures in an expressive social context like the city, the country or the class structure of America.

But to European filmmakers, the important context is the individual mind. Tracing the landscape of Tristana's twisted psyche is far more important to Bunuel and his film than the picturesque travelogue of America was in Easy Rider. But decoding the topography of Tristana's head is far more demanding, and much more involving an exercise in art than the oohing-and-ahhing of a pretty but useless picture.

I find, as a rule, that films from Europe are very much more sophisticated in the areas of character-illumination and psychological consistency than

American films. And while American films are better at drawing class lines and illuminating environments as a matter of practice, I can't escape the feeling that some European film directors could beat the Americans at their own game if they felt like changing leagues. A partial indication would be the film Red Desert by Antonioni which sketches the industrial environment with uncanny accuracy and skill.

But back down here, the fact is I've been to see a film at the International Cinema called Tristana. The two central players, Catherine Deneuve as Tristana (we never hear her last name) and Fernando Rey as Don Lope (pronounced Lope) create the unique pattern of two very real people in interaction on a weirdly self-propheying course. The plot line of seduction, intense need and intense hate, the escape of Tristana from Don Lope with a young artist (Franco Nero), and her filial return when death approaches is abruptly reversed when she survives, crippled. She seduces Don Lope, she marries him and finally comes to see him die. Rise and fall, the cycle of human existence, and tragedy, the essence of human drama are both

present in Don Lope's and Tristana's strange story.

The story is strange, but starkly and undeniably human. Bunuel draws Tristana's state of mind for us through a recurring psychotic dream of Don Lope's severed head swinging like a bell-clapper. He also illuminates her state of being gorgeously on the incredibly beautiful face of Catherine Deneuve. The psychic health of the diad of Don Lope and Tristana is followed by the slow decay of late summer-early autumn browns and dark greens of the seduction through the dark rich browns of middle autumn and the escape to the internal, dusky warmth and bare greys of the return and marriage, declining finally into the stark white and deep black of Don Lope's strange death. Never before have I seen color used so eloquently and effectively to dramatic effect in a film. It is the sort of device that leads one to conclude that even if Tristana is not a masterpiece, it certainly is the work of a master.

### Bloody Marys are sobering

BOSTON (CINS) — Drinks which contain fruit juices, such as bloody marys or screwdrivers, are less intoxicating than other drinks because of their fruit content, according to a study published in the journal of the American medical association.

The study showed that if fructose — a sugar found in most fruits — is injected into a person's veins, alcohol levels are reduced dramatically, sometimes as much as 43 percent.

The study complements a similar experiment in London where a study showed drinking fructose at the time of ingestion of alcohol reduced alcohol blood levels significantly.

The new study noted that it isn't known why fructose tends to reduce the alcohol blood level. Dr. Leah Lowenstein, of the Harvard medical school, believes it speeds up the breakdown of alcohol.

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