

# O Holy Ghost dip your finger in the blood of McLuhan and write a play for Studio Theatre

Studio Theatre's production of O Holy Ghost DIP YOUR FINGER IN THE BLOOD OF CANADA and write, I LOVE YOU opens December 4 and runs through December 11. Students can get free tickets by presenting their Student I.D. cards at the Department of Drama Office (329, Corbett Hall) between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. November 28 through December 8. Tickets are limited so you should pick yours up early if you want to be sure of a mattress.

In this production, Director Thomas Peacocke is experimenting with "total theatre," a total bombardment of all the senses. The seats of Studio Theatre are being replaced with mattresses and cushions. This is not a gimmick to aid the cause of mini-skirt watchers; it is an attempt to increase audience contact with the actors who must wend their way among the mattresses to reach the stage. The stage itself is a narrow strip extending across the back of the theatre with a ramp jutting out into the audience and spreading into the prongs of a Y. The audience surrounds it on three sides and is, in its turn, surrounded by projections on three walls.

The present irreverent title, O

Alberta's Leading Name in Formal Wear



## FORMAL WEAR

RENTALS For Weddings and Formal Occasions

- TUXEDOS • TAILS
- WHITE JACKETS
- FULL DRESS
- BUSINESS SUITS

*Walt's*

MEN'S SHOP LTD.  
Phone 422-2458  
10016 Jasper Ave.

Special Rates to Students  
In Group Lot

Holy Ghost DIP YOUR FINGER IN THE BLOOD OF CANADA and write, I LOVE YOU is only one of seventy the author, Wilfred Watson, considered. The work began when the Edmonton Centennial Committee awarded money to the Department of Drama to commission a special Canadian play in honour of the Centenary. Playwrights from across Canada submitted proposals of the play they planned to write and a committee from the Department of Drama Faculty decided on Wilfred Watson's submission. Dr. Watson, a Professor of English at the university, then began to write the play. When the first draft had been completed, consultations with Director Thomas Peacocke and Designer Len Feldman began and the "total theatre" project commenced its realization.

Dr. Watson states that his play is about "the insidious influence on us of secret elites." He sees two kinds of elites in contemporary life: the obvious one of "high society" and that of the protest groups, an underground elite. Through the family of his central character, Richard Sunflower I, he attempts to show the interaction between the two. In the words of the playwright, Richard Sunflower I is the "old archetypal inventor." The same actor plays his great-grandson, Richard Sunflower IV, a hippie. Thus the middle generations are cut out; Richard Sunflower III is superceded by his own son and we get the interaction and the conflict not only between elites, but between generations.

Elites are a reversion to tribalism, says Watson, and so, like the primitive society, his play is sound—rather than print—oriented. An attempt is made to bombard the senses by repetition. Thus Watson has written the dialogue with repetitions, Peacocke has introduced repetitions into the action, and an actor may repeat a line, with different meanings or implications of tone and gesture, as often as he likes. To give the visual effect of the "acoustic feeling," sixteen projectors flash images on three walls in a repetition of the action

going on in several parts of the stage. Since the audience members cannot possibly watch or listen to everything going on at a given moment, they must select what they will watch; they must participate in the production themselves.

Some of the repetition is gained by having the nine actors (Alex Diakun, Jay Smith, Paul LeTourneau, Elmer Hohol, Catherine Jackson, Nella Versloot, Linda Kupechek, Nancy Beatty and Carole Harmon) play up to a dozen roles apiece. Each plays a major character and all the more minor figures whom that character embodies. Thus Mr. Diakun plays Richard Sunflower I and all his embodiments: Richard Sunflower IV, a hangman, a priest, a mountie, a warmaker, the leader of a children's gang, a Chamber of Commerce member, and a lieutenant.

From the beginning, the playwright, the director and the designer have worked together to provide a "unified conclusion," a total concept of the play, thoroughly integrating all the aspects of the theatre. They characterize the production as possessing a "McLuhanesqueness" and a "psychedelic ethos." Asked about the props and costumes, Prof. Feldman stated that they would use brilliant color and "psychedelic artifacts" but would be "beyond hippie," would move into the truly psychedelic.

Electronic music and projections will be used to underline, perhaps to abstract, or even to counter the action on the stage. All this is to create a "contemporary environment." It is this environment to which Prof. Peacocke feels the young people in the audience will respond. He feels that the play is so much the environment of the young that they will, like the student performers, be able to intuit the essence of the action. In fact, his students have claimed only by the "youngness" by their playwright who seems to wear the disguise of middle-age. "He's as young as we are," they claim. At which Prof. Watson smiles and remarks, "I could say I'm younger."

—Shirley Swartz

## films

Just turn off your mind, relax, and float downstream. . . .

This is the way to take *The Trip*, and it comes off as a tolerable movie, and a sharp piece of cinema.

The voice of Zeus booms through the Capitol before the curtains are drawn reminding all that taking LSD is against the law, that it should be administered by a qualified physician only, and is something which "must be of great concern to everyone." The ominous warning sounds as if it was ingrafted to the beginning of the film when someone realized that the movie shows the LSD trip as being quite the opposite—a panacea, a method of self-discovery, and very beautiful.

Peter Fonda plays the lead role with his boyish smile and apologetic charm. He is apologetically divorcing his wife because they no longer get along. Neither of them wants the divorce but there seems to be something missing, and it is Fonda's search for that "something" which leads him to taking that wicked drug, and gives the movie an excuse for its existence.

This underlying story is strung loosely through Fonda's trip as images of his wife, and her own search, appear among the series of recurring patterns which run through the film. It provides a weak link but gives the movie a basic unity.

Many of the hallucinations become strangely realistic under Fonda's enthusiasm. An orange becomes the sun emanating an orange cloud of energy over the city. A washing machine in a laundromat becomes enthralling, and what he sees in the dryer is out of this world.

He has other visions which are unrelated to his environment. He sees himself running across the desert sands, scrambling upon the rocks by the beach, and parading through the tall grass in the nude, like the pied piper—first alone, then with one girl, then another, then. . . . He also has images of himself hanging, and dying many interesting deaths. Two mysterious horsemen are alternately following and chasing him sometimes through the woods, sometimes along the beach.

The repetition of these images in different contexts gives the trip a general form. The story maintains good continuity between the hallucinations and the physical environment through which Fonda moves, and it is easy to float along with him through the whole movie.

But there is no strong link with the realistic story of his divorce, and while reference is made to it, there is no definite direction in the trip to bind the two. The main strength in the film is derived from the cinematographic effects.

It is filmed in Pathecolor (what ever that might be) and the colors are brilliant both in the purely natural scenes and in the psychedelic scenes where the screen is flooded with the most fantastic color as weird patterns of light move over the faces, or as naked bodies roll in more stationary patterns of color. Some scenes turn into beautiful color negative, in others the edges of the picture fade into a purple haze.

The movie often changes the relative passage of time. It uses slow motion on some occasions. It extends time by inserting hallucinations into the physical action.

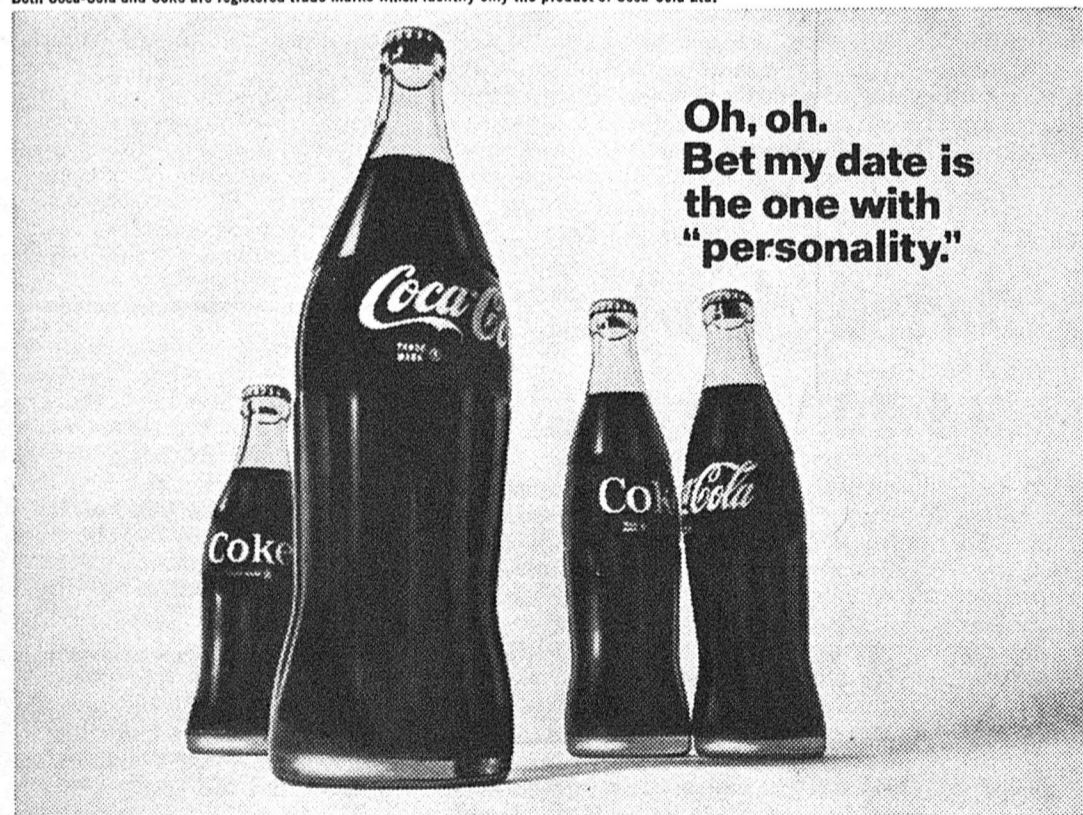
And yet it is often alive with movement derived more from the editing than the action of the characters. As Fonda walks through the streets, brief shots of the neon signs, the traffic and the people are machine-gunned onto the screen. The action in the discotheque is broken by flashes of a strobe light, and short segments of still pictures of successive poses are concatenated into rippling motion.

Close to the end, short images are spliced together in the form of a staccato replay of the whole trip. These images build in Fonda's imagination and the film reaches a technical rather than dramatic climax as the trip ends and Fonda comes back to earth.

The problem between him and his wife is presumably resolved, although the movie doesn't make too much of a point of explaining it. The story line falls dead in the end, but the whole movie is still terrific as a light show, if you dig light shows.

—Gordon Auck

Both Coca-Cola and Coke are registered trade marks which identify only the product of Coca-Cola Ltd.



Blind dates are a chance. But you can always depend on refreshing Coca-Cola for the taste you never get tired of. That's why things go better with Coke, after Coke, after Coke.

