chattering class believe filmmakers should only depict well-adjusted citizens sipping apéritifs on bistro terraces.

Léolo is a departure from the chic angst flicks, inane comedies, and historical mini-series that have tended to dominate Quebec screens since the eighties. Lauzon may not be a hunter who always hits his target but at least he gets out into the woods.

Maurie Alioff writes film reviews, articles, screenplays, and is a contributing editor to Matrix.

FEATURE

Being at Home with Claude

Directed by Jean Beaudin, from the original play by René-Daniel Dubois, produced by Louise Gendron in association with the Nation Film Board of Canada, with Roy Dupuis and Jacques Godin. Distributed by Alliance Releasing.

Reviewed by Will Aitkin

When Quebec playwright René-Daniel Dubois' **Being at Home with Claude** opened at Montreal's Theatre de Quat'Sous in 1986, the buzz was immediate. Partly about the play itself—in French, but with an English title, about a street hustler who kills a trick—but mainly about the performance of Lothaire Bluteau in the role of Yves the hustler.

Nothing Bluteau's done on film, in **Jésus de Montréal** or **Black Robe**, comes close to suggesting his astonishing range. As a detective takes Yves over and over the events leading up to the murder—the cop knows Yves is the killer, he just doesn't understand why he killed—Bluteau was feral, cunning, opaque, a stringy nocturnal creature slinking about the stage (you could almost see a tail lashing out behind him), dangerous and seductive, teeth bared, tongue darting.

But then, as the cop doggedly stripped away layer after layer of lies and fantasy—Yves' whole protective carapace of toughness and self-sufficiency—Bluteau's skin appeared to turn transparent. Half-naked, skeletal, he seemed to glow from within, his final confession scene a jerking, spurting orgasm of pain that left the audience as spent and trembling as Yves.

For reasons that can only be guessed at—box office? fear of foreplay?—in his screen adaptation of **Being at Home with Claude** director Jean Beaudin has put the orgasm up front. We're barely settled into our seats before it's duck and cover time. In a snazzy, sixties-inspired black and white prologue, complete with jaggedy, rhythms-of-the-city editing and a retro-jazz track, we see Yves picking up Claude, a soft-spoken, ostensibly straight university student, in a park. Soon it's clear their relationship has progressed beyond the purely commercial. The camera hovers over their first romantic dinner for two: pasta, candlelight, wine glasses. The meal quickly forgotten, the pair are naked on the floor. Yves the hustler's on top, but Claude the client's fucking him, their climax a hot gush of sperm and blood.

That's the first ten minutes—stylish, sexy and sensational, Genet meets MuchMusic—leaving us only another 80 minutes of post-coital chatter to slog through when our natural inclination is to roll over and go to sleep.

Beaudin keeps the decibel level high enough to render slumber impossible, however longed for. Faced with a deliberately claustrophobic play, he could have tried to open it up—bring in other characters, new settings, maybe a subplot or two. Or—and this is the riskier choice—he could have gone with the claustrophobia, heightened it, made it inescapable.

Inexplicably, Beaudin—whose credits include **J.A. Martin: Photographe**, **Cordélia**, and the popular Quebec TV miniseries **Les Filles de Caleb** and **Scoop**—has tried to do both. After the pulsing prologue he confines Yves and the detective to an interrogation room, but it's a big ornate room, vast enough that the director can manipulate the camera like a third character, letting it crawl the room to no particular purpose, setting it at every odd angle but the right one.

And then there's the problem of two "opening up" scenes, which feel as though they were shot and inserted as afterthoughts. In one the detective goes out into a courtyard garden for a smoke, in the second he calls home to say he'll be late, and we get thirty seconds of a generic wife cooking generic dinner in a generic suburban kitchen.

None of these maladroit ploys can distract us from the fact that it's not the play that needs opening up, it's the central performance. Casting Roy Dupuis as the hustler Yves was a shrewd commercial decision for the Quebec market, but a lousy one otherwise. Dupuis is a big handsome bit of beefcake with a exceedingly modest dramatic range who's made a name for himself by shucking his shirt at frequent intervals in **Les Filles de Caleb** and **Scoop**.

As the tempestuous Yves he's a master class in ineptitude, pouting, posing and swaggering, all textbook attitude and pin-up boy narcissism with no emotional depth. In interviews Dupuis—who, like Beaudin, has made clear that he is straight—has retailed his meticulous research for the role, which included a daring foray into Montreal's gay village. Dupuis doesn't inhabit the role of Yves—he's a tourist taking snapshots.

A better director might have gotten more from Dupuis, but Beaudin seems to have encouraged a crashing literalness. When Yves speaks of unbearable longing and loneliness, Dupuis hugs a convenient column. When Yves speaks of war as a metaphor for love, Beaudin puts the sound of distant drums and rifle fire on the soundtrack.

What's most remarkable about **Being at Home with Claude** is how René-Daniel Dubois' lines somehow survive this cinematic mangling. Despite the worst efforts of Beaudin and Dupuis, the central conception of Yves stalks the movie like the ghost of yearning. He's an implacable creation, this hustler who's let down his guard just once, letting another man into his life and then into his body. Yves' defenses have been penetrated, and all for a dream of love he knows has no chance of lasting—Claude's educated, the wrong class, he may not be gay. The only way Yves can keep that dream of love alive is by killing his lover—that way there's no denouement, no fading of pas-

THE VISIT: Valerie Buhagiar and Michael Hogan. Photo: Vera Frantisak

sion, no smiled excuses. Murder also lets Yves preserve that essential image of himself as inviolable.

Seeing all this on screen, it's hard not wonder: where's Fassbinder when we really need him?

Will Aitkin is a Montreal film critic, novelist and former contributor to the original Take One.

SHORT

The Heart of a Viking: The Story of Joe Boyle

Directed, written, produced and narrated by Pat Patterson. 16mm/ video, 23 mins.

Reviewed by Pat Thompson

Col. Joseph Whiteside Boyle: "King of the Klondike," "Saviour of Romania," was born in Toronto, 1867, and raised in Woodstock, Ontario. Boyle was a colourful entrepreneur who started gold prospecting in 1899, and later formed the Canadian Klondike Mining Company. Flora, one of Joe's two children interviewed in the 80s, recalls his return to Woodstock accompanied by an Indian guide and a four-dog team, and also a splendid vacation in Bear Creek, Yukon, when she was 11-years-old. A friend vividly recollects Joe as "an opportunist who never let a chance go by."

At the start of World War 1 Boyle was 47, but he raised and paid for a 50-man machine gun unit. By 1917, he ended up in Romania, close to starvation, yet he offered help to Queen Marie of Romania. Her daughter, the Crown Princess, interviewed in a convent, remembers that Boyle ran an intelligence network, and in spite of the German occupation, wore his uniform at all times. Boyle, whom the Crown Princess called "the greatest Romanian I have ever known," suffered a stroke at 51 and lived his final years in England, poor in health and in finances, dying April 14, 1923. Queen Marie sent a headstone from Romania for the grave. Boyle's body was returned to Woodstock where he was finally buried in the family grave, with full military honours, on June 29, 1983—60 years after his death.

A short but fascinating glimpse of an unknown Canadian character, neatly put together with archive material and personal reminiscences.

Pat Thompson is the editor of Film Canada Yearbook.

SHORT

In Search of Joy

Directed, written and produced by Isabel Fryszberg and Tracy Thomson. 16mm/video, 26 mins.

Reviewed by Pat Thompson

Two first-time filmmakers ponder on how people create joy in their lives. An exotic storyteller strolls city streets collecting many opinions, watching children and adults at play, and listening to varied music. Snippets of interviews with a baker, "I fell in love with the dough. I treat it kindly," a gifted wheelchair dancer, a serious Jungian therapist, are but a few of the people talking "joy." During filming, the fathers of both filmmakers died, and they managed to work out their grief and sense of loss before the camera. We see them realize that to experience true joy one must be open to suffering. The film is perhaps a little too "crammed with incident," but for a first effort, it's lively, full of movement music from klezmer to soca and Celtic, and makes you want to smile.

SHORT

The Visit

Directed and written by Markham Cook, with Michael Hogan, Valerie Buhagiar and Earl Pastko. 16mm/video, 26 mins.

Reviewed by Pat Thompson

A man visits a grave in a small town cemetery. Afterwards he goes to an ordinary cafe which is on the point of closing, but the young waitress lets him in. A spiky conversation ensues and unravels a skein of memory on each side. The man's friend was a talented but undiscovered artist whose grave he had just visited. The waitress knows who the man is—she was the artist's girlfriend. In this small setting, with the aid of flashbacks, the tension