



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 Frysberg 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 café 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

stretches like a rubber band as the dialogue unfolds. The camera work and music add to the atmosphere as the man (Michael Hogan) and the girl (Valerie Bhagiar) strike sparks. Well written, with first-rate actors and good production values in a superior little piece of drama.

SHORT

Joe 90

Directed and produced by Ross Dyck, co-produced by Ernest Hallonquist. 16mm/video, 12 mins.

Reviewed by Pat Thompson

The fat man tools along the hot and dusty prairie road—his car bears the logo “Big City Crop Insurance.” It’s Joe 90, a claims adjuster. He stops at a lonely (and weird) cantina where there’s a lookout man on the roof and a lot of Spanish spoken. A jittery lad, Dick Rotundo, approaches Joe 90 and incites him to defraud his company. Daffy Dick runs into a burning field and is enveloped; Joe 90 takes off—and then finds that Dick’s alive. The pair join to form an uneasy alliance in a bleak future. Billed as a “comedy,” this skewed and

spooky effort from the folks at the Winnipeg Film Group is worth a 12-minute watch. The muffled sound irritates—but perhaps that’s part of the effect?

BOOK

Republic of Images: A History of French Filmmaking

By Alan Williams, Harvard University Press, 458 pages, \$19.95

Reviewed by Paul Gottlieb

The title of this book holds a clue to its approach: **Republic of Images** develops the history of French filmmaking very much in the context of the history and politics of the times it covers, roughly from Méliès to Malle. Which is a lot of republics.

The author gives fair warning: “The reader interested in analysis and criticism of particular films or filmmakers’ *oeuvres* will have to look elsewhere for guidance.” Indeed. In the same paragraph, Mr. Williams also claims that, “The films are my ‘primary texts,’ and I have generally

sought to give my own reactions to them rather than paraphrase and dilute the insights of others.”

This claim is more difficult to accept, for if there is a keylight aimed at the subject, it is powered by strong research and reliance on contemporary sources and background information. Reactions to the “primary texts”—the films—have the low candlepower of a filler.

The result is a book that is encyclopedic in scope, informative, and often enjoyable to read. It seems to have been influenced by the “Tradition of Quality,” the school of French filmmaking dominant for the better part of three decades from the thirties onward. Mr. Williams understands this tradition and defines it with accuracy: “In this film (*Nana*) one can see the Tradition of Quality doing what it knew how to do best, unapologetically, with a knowing leer at the audience: making decorative, sexy, ironic, class-conscious, bourgeois entertainment.” His description, with the exception of “sexy,” fits his own work as well.

Cool, ironic and distant—the proper attitude for an overview—and an academic one at that—the book leaves this reader less than satisfied. One reason may be the scarcity of visuals. Considering that film is the book’s “primary text,” 33 photos on 458 pages seems less than generous. (This reader is, incidentally, a fortunate viewer who grew up with Gabin, Jouvet, Gérard Philippe, Michèle Morgan and Arletty Saturday afternoons at the Hungarian equivalent of the Roxy. Having watched these works of art simply as movies, I was hoping for some memory-joggers.)

The ultimate impression left by **Republic of Images** is one of watching a well-constructed, narrated and edited documentary composed entirely of long shots. Nothing and no one emerges in **première plan**. Consequently, everything’s there but the magic. One cannot fault professor Williams for that. He aimed at comprehensiveness and comprehension, a task he has clearly achieved. **Republic of Images** is a work of substance and quality on a subject worthy of genius.

Paul Gottlieb is a novelist, media critic, and a writing professor at Sheridan College, Oakville, Ontario.

IN SEARCH OF JOY

