AMERICAN FILMS OF THE 1970s: THROUGH FANTASY, STAR WARS (1977) RESOLVES AN ERA'S CONCERNS ABOUT THE THREAT OF MEDIA (NETWORK, 1976), THE SEXUAL REVOLUTION (ANNIE HALL, 1977), AND THE VIETNAM WAR (COMING HOME, 1978)

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PREFACE

This is not the dissertation I had meant to write when I first went to graduate school. I was a traditionalist and my interests were directed accordingly. However, as my perspectives broadened, I discovered films and the challenges of this fairly new discipline. My dissertation is an examination of the major films of the seventies. I approached my study with the primary assumption that feature films mirror, reflect, and sublimate the social and cultural problems of the period in which they are made. My work is an attempt to sustain this.

I express my sincere appreciation to my major advisor, Dr. Peter C. Rollins for his guidance, assistance, and encouragement throughout this study. The other committee members, Dr. Leonard Leff, Dr. Gordon Weaver, Dr. Jeffrey Walker and Dr. Theodore Agnew, also deserve my special thanks. Their assistance in the preparation of the final copy was invaluable.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge my debt to the members of my family. My wife Shahana deserves special mention for her patience, encouragement, and sacrifice throughout my study. I would also like to express my gratitude to my father, Loqman Husain and my mother, Hurunnessa Husain for their unflinching faith in me.

And most of all to my sons Shuvo and Shanto, whose smiling faces provided me with the inspiration I needed to undertake and complete this study.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Jack Shadoian noted recently that, "All films are ultimately about something that interests and/or bothers the culture they grow out of."[1] The validity of such a study depends to an extent on the essential direction of the work. Even though the relation between film and culture has been noted by historians and scholars alike, no significant work has been done in this area. In Film: The Democratic Art, the author stresses that the history of film and television is important to the understanding of changing social values in America.[2] Robert Sklar, in Movie Made America, notes how the growing art of film reflected the broader cultural and social values. And in his detailed study of the films of Chaplin, Ford, Capra, and Welles, Charles Maland approaches the films of these directors with the "primary assumption that there is a close connection between popular feature films and culture."[3] However, all three books only make general conclusions and do not link films to specific social and cultural events. The only study which is close to this approach is a collection of essays entitled American History/American Film. This book, however, deals with selected films made between 1920 and 1976

and the large time frame gives the individual writers little opportunity for extensive focus on particular periods or specific events. Its methodology was, however, appropriate and has been adopted for this study.

To determine the value of a film as an historical document, it must be analyzed with specific reference to the social and cultural context which shaped it. This finding must be supplemented by the deeper meanings within the film as manifested in the nuances of the plot, the dialogue, the symbols and the film techniques. This has been applied to all of the four films analyzed. This study was based on the assumption that films reflect ideological positions in two ways:

> First, they reflect, embody, reveal, mirror, symbolize existing ideologies by reproducing . . . the myths, ideas, concepts, beliefs, images, of an historical period in both film content and film form. Second, films produce their own ideology, their unique expression of reality.[4]

Good films, like good literature, embody the social ferment of the period in which they are made.

The films of the 1970s were shaped by the important social and political events of the decade. The first important development was the growth of visual media. The 1970s have been rightly labelled the "Media Decade." The Vietnam War, Watergate Scandal, the election of President Jimmy Carter, the growing power of the anti-nuclear movement and the crisis in Iran, are all "media events" in the sense that the public perception of these happenings has been shaped by the slant of television news. Higher ratings, not insight, is often a very

strong motivating factor behind television's delineation of these events.

The 1970s have also seen the emergence of the first generation of children who grew up on television. Research has revealed the far-reaching effects of this medium on behavioral patterns brought about by incessant viewing. When television began broadcasting, its credo was public service blended with entertainment. Today, commercial television is big business, and programming is usually profit-oriented. Violence and sex form the core of successful programs, and new social values have been nutured in children as a result of television's handling of these topics. The "TV" generation is generally more passive, more prone to accept violence casually, insensitive, amoral, and, in general, dehumanized in comparison to traditional standards.

The 1970s have also seen the potential power of the Women's Liberation Movement become a reality. The movement, which began in the late 1960s, has finally found broad based support from all sections of the society. During this decade it has not only become a political force, but has also managed to bring about a significant change in society's attitude toward women. Today, more women are in jobs which were previously held only by men, and those bastions of male dominance, West Point and Annapolis, have seen the graduation of the first batch of female officers in the United States Armed Forces. The changing of the essentially passive and dependent image of women by the movement has also brought major changes in male/female relations. The movement has brought about what

Christopher Lasch calls a "flight from feeling" in the female's attitude toward relationships with males. Relationships today have no guarantees of permanence and are based on logical needs instead of emotional needs. In the process, the female seeks "sexual separatism," and deviates toward drugs and promiscuity--or such is the fear of many observers.

The findings of Masters and Johnson which destroyed the "myth" of vaginal orgasm and proved that the female was multiorgasmic, were also cited by the Feminists both to negate their dependence on men and to assert their biological superiority. These facts have destroyed the concept of the traditional role of women and shifted the "pressure to perform" from the female to the male. Interpersonal relations have been threatened because of the inversion of roles; in the process of role reversal, the man has become the sex object.

Tom Wolfe's label for the 1970s, "The Me Decade," has obvious validity. The basic precepts of the "me decade" and of a narcissistic personality imply that a person is concerned only with development and progression of his own career. Other people and interpersonal relations are only the means to the furtherance of one's own goals. The "me" personality shirks from permanent relationship and simply ignores everybody else's needs in his quest for "self glorification." The relationship between men and women in this decade follows this pattern.

Perhaps the most significant phenomenon of the 1960s, which cul-

minated as the major issue of the 1970s, was the Vietnam War. This war was America's first major defeat and the veterans of this war were denied the treatment given to the veterans of other wars, because losing has not been a part of the American tradition. This greatly amplified the problems of re-adjustment for the returning soldier, already burdened by the guilt derived from his role in what he had been told was an immoral war.

Most of the Vietnam veterans exhibited symptoms of "The Post-Vietnam Syndrome," a state characterized by self-doubt, aggression, and genuine fear of intimate relationships. Thus, the process of re-adjustment into a hostile society involved not only overcoming the physical and emotional difficulties but also finding a cogent direction and purpose in life. There were many who could not bear the rigorous pressures of re-adjustment, and some became mentally imbalanced; others committed suicide. Among those who survived the "war at home," there were many who sought self-expression by becoming conscientious objectors to the concept of war. These "prophet-heroes," as Robert Lifton characterizes them, have contributed substantially to the re-evaluation of America's role in Vietnam and changed society's attitude toward any such future involvement.

In choosing films of the 1970s which most faithfully delineated these issues, the basic criteria was the relative importance and aesthetic achievement. Another important motivation was the sig-

nificance of the personalities behind each film in relation to the film's theme. Thus, Network (1976) was an obvious choice, not only because it is the most important film about the media, but also because Paddy Chayefsky, writer of the screenplay, had been an important television playwright in the early 1950s. Similarly, the selection of Annie Hall (1978) as an example of changing male/female relationships was suggested by the fact that the progenitor of the film, Woody Allen, had come to reflect the American subconscious and was a major influence in shaping a new direction in films. Jane Fonda's role in the anti-war movement of the late 1960s was an important consideration in choosing Coming Home (1978) in which she is the female protagonist.

In deciding the film to depict the sublimation of the problems the earlier films depicted, Star Wars (1977), which revived the Hollywood movie, was an obvious choice. Lucas had demonstrated his dexterity in handling an escapist theme in American Graffiti (1973) and thus was well qualified to project the "wish-fulfillment" nostalgic aura of Star Wars. Finally, according to critical consensus, these four films were among the most important ones made in the decade.

The 1960s saw television make inroads into the movie audience, and thus, as Robert Sklar points out, "the continuing decline in motion picture revenues left the studios weak and vulnerable to outside financial manipulation."[5] In its wake, the typical Hollywood film, based on traditional formulas and a neat ending, disappeared from

the screen. The hippies, the "flower children" and the anti-Vietnam movement, indicated the need for "problem-oriented" films to reflect and empathize with the problems of the younger generation. The "problem-oriented" films, in addressing themselves to issues, created a new image of the hero, the "anti-hero," who reflected the radical and loose moral stance of the period. Sex and love became synonymous, and "anti-establishment" became the credo of the "anti-hero." In the process, idealistic values disappeared from the character as did the distinction between good and evil. Thus, films like Bonnie and Clyde (1967), and The Graduate (1967), which were "attuned to the political and social values" of the 1960s, were popular and initiated a new trend in film making.[6]

This trend continued into the 1970s where films like The Last Picture Show, Godfather, Play It Again Sam, Klute, One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest, Network, Coming Home, Annie Hall, Interiors, and Manhattan dealt with the social and economic problems confronting everyman. Thus, when Star Wars was released in 1977, it was a break from an existing trend. Its phenomenal success has revived the dormant Hollywood film of the 1950s.

James Monaco has described Star Wars as "nothing short of stupendous--as a catalogue of Hollywood entertainment techniques."[7] Monaco's emphasis is the key to the success of Star Wars. In reviving the formula of knightly quest, romantic love and the victory of good over evil, the film recalled the "escapism" films of the 1930s

and 1950s and also the typical Hollywood fare from the hey-days of the industry. It is also perhaps an indicator of a new direction in movie-making. The success of "fantasy" films as Star Trek and Superman has underlined the change in public taste. Star Wars has also gone into a sequel, and there are plans for an entire series. And if the 1980s live up to the pessimistic projections of the analysts, it appears that the "Hollywood Film" has come to stay.

Man makes myths and destroys myths to suit his spiritual needs. In encapsulating the social concerns of the decade and implicitly suggesting ways to resolve them, the four films also focus on this interesting trait in man. As an Oriental, looking in on the "crumbling of idols," the involvement with this project has offered me new insights and a more objective assessment of the dilemma of Western man and of Eastern man as he joins Western culture.

ENDNOTES

[1]Jack Shadoian, "Guest in the House," Film and History, 4 (1974), No. 1, p. 15.

[2]Garth Jowett, Film: The Democratic Art (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1976).

[3]Charles Maland, "Preface," American Visions: The Films of Chaplin, Ford, Capra, and Welles, 1936-1941 (New York: Arno Press, 1977).

[4]Stuart Samuels, "The Age of Conspiracy and Conformity: Invasion of the Body Snatchers (1956)," American History/American Film, p. 204.

[5]Robert Sklar, Movie Made America (New York: Vintage House, 1975), p. 289.

[6]Sklar, p. 301.

[7]James Monaco, American Film Now (New York: New American Library, 1979), p. 170.

CHAPTER II

THE IMPACT OF TELEVISION: NETWORK (1977)

> I don't have to tell you that things are bad. It's the depression. Everybody is out of work or scared of losing their job. The dollar buys a nickel's worth. Banks are going bust. Shopkeepers keep a gun under the counter. Punks are running wild in the street. It is like everything, everywhere is going crazy, so we don't go out anymore. We sit in the house and slowly the world we live in is getting smaller. And all we say is please let us alone in our living room. Let me have my toaster and my TV, my steel belted radials and I won't say anything. Just leave us alone. Well, I am not going to leave you alone. I want you to get up now. I want you to get out of your chairs. I want you to get up right now and go to the window, open it and stick your head out and yell: I am as mad as hell and I am not going to take it anymore.[1]

In the most dramatic scene in Network, Howard Beale, a newscaster, pontificates on the ills of the nation. The setting, an ultra-modern newsroom, gives the scene its contemporary time reference. Beale's speech is further dramatized by the opening high angle shot, followed sequentially by a split screen of Beale in both a close up and a medium shot profile. As the scene develops in intensity, the shot becomes low angle and helps add to Beale's image. And as he pronounces his directive, the scene shifts to an apartment-lined street where countless people follow his bidding. As the calm of night is shattered by the repetition of his message, the power of the media is underlined.

Network graphically delineates this aspect of television and stresses how this power, in the hands of the wrong kind of people, can lead to mass manipulation. The credo of public service which supposedly motivates television programming is only a myth. What the public will eventually see is governed by the dictates of a corporate structure, ratings and economic considerations. Network, by focusing on this working process, also isolates the Machiavellian nature of the television industry.

To understand the film's treatment of contemporary concerns, an historical frame is essential to validate Network's claim that it is a realistic portrayal of the present state of affairs. Though Network exaggerates, it does manage to indicate television's capability of mass exposure and direct access into the average home. Approximately 720 commercial stations in the United States broadcast 4.7 million hours of programming.[2] Since the inception of the television industry, its progression has been toward economic viability, and this fact has been borne out by its profit oriented direction.

The first real transmission of television occurred fifty-five years ago, in 1925, using a mechanical method devised by Charles Jenkins. In April, 1928, the Federal Radio Commission (later the Federal Communication Commission) granted an experimental license for visual broadcasting to RCA station W2NB5. In the same year, General Electric Corporation station WGK broadcast the first television drama from Schenectady, New York. By 1937, seventeen

experimental television stations were in operation. [3]

Coaxial cable was developed in 1935 and this permitted the stations to broadcast special events by hooking into a "network." Among the initial "special events" were baseball and football games, the opening of the 1939 New York World's Fair, the 1940 Presidential conventions, and a speech by President Franklin Roosevelt. In 1939, the Milwaukee Journal became the first applicant for a commercial broadcasting license. [4] However, the initial license was not granted until 1941. On July 1 of that year, the DuMont and CBS stations began broadcasting, and by the end of the year there were ten commercial stations in operation. These stations, which served between 5,000 to 10,000 television homes, also began running spot commercials immediately. [5] Thus, with the increase of the viewing public, the industry was moving toward profit orientation.

After the United States entered World War II, the Federal Communications Commission clamped down on the nascent industry by stopping the issue of new licenses, by banning the manufacture of receivers, and by permitting only a limited schedule for stations already on the air. Of the ten stations granted licenses in 1941, only six lasted through the war because the restrictions put economic strains on the industry. [6]

In 1945, the Federal Communications Commission made a major decision which had drastic repercussions on the television industry: it shifted frequency modulation (FM) to a higher part of the spectrum

and created space for thirteen commercial television channels. This decision put new life into a stagnant industry. Even though the FCC ordered a "freeze" on channel allocations in September 1948, thirty-six stations were then on the air and seventy-three more had FCC authorization.[7] By the time the "freeze" ended in 1952, the RCA color system had been adopted and ultra high frequency channels had been added to the VHF channels for telecasting purposes. These developments were significant because they allowed the industry greater access to the masses and consequently increased its profit earning potential.

National Television Networking became a viable reality in 1949, and it soon became clear that the survival of the networks depended on four essential factors. First, the network needed the backing of an economically "solid" corporation to sustain it through the initial years. Second, the network depended on its affiliates in large metropolitan areas for revenue and for airing its programs. Third, the network required a well developed and intricate radio-network for financial support and for providing outlets for its programming. Finally, it was essential for the network to establish credibility with the national advertisers by developing talent and by creating popular programs. ABC, NBC, and CBS had the depth in these four critical areas and survived the lean years of the industry. However, the DuMont Television Network, without the intricate system of support, collapsed in 1955. Consequently, the essentially commercial core

of the television industry had come into focus.

The format of television programming in the early years followed the pattern set by radio. Various genres such as westerns, quiz shows, suspense shows, and soap operas of radio were simply recast in a visual form. The networks also adopted typical live radio programs, such as sporting events and political conventions. The turnover of programs at this nascent stage of the industry was very high as nearly one-third of the programs were replaced each year. The attempts of the local stations to provide some of the programming also affected the overall quality of telecasts. As a direct consequence, the syndicator emerged as early as 1950 as a substantial source for television programs.

The period between 1952 and 1960 has been called "the golden age of television."[8] Erik Barnouw notes that "In the closing months of 1952 a number of new stations received a go ahead."[9] By 1954 there were 32 million sets throughout the country.[10] By 1960, the percentage of homes having television was 90 percent with 573 stations operating throughout the country. The profit margin had also soared from 300 million dollars in 1952 to a staggering 1. 3 billion dollars in 1960.[11]

Perhaps the most important technological development of this period was the growing emphasis on film and video tape programming. By 1960, all prime-time programming was on film and videotape. This obviously helped in improving the overall quality of the programs

and also facilitated their broadcasting. There was an economic perspective to this new development: duplicate versions of programs could now be sold to individual stations and, thus, the profit earning potential of a program was increased considerably.

The basic pattern of programming, however, underwent very little change. A new form of Western with a stress on the psychological element, evolved with the telecasting of Gunsmoke in 1955. The quality and quantity of "live" drama peaked during this period with programs such as Kraft Television Theater, Studio One, Playhouse 90, Matinee Theater, and Goodyear Television Playhouse. The quality of the plays produced was enhanced by the writing of playwrights like Paddy Chayefsky "whose work had wide influence on anthology drama--its successes and failures."[12] The subject matter of these "live" plays focused on the predicaments of the average man, and this helped the audience in relating to the characters. Chayefsky points out that the dramatist was also aware of the appeal and potential of the "marvellous world of the ordinary" and that "there is far more exciting drama in the reasons why a man gets married than why he murders someone."[13] This genre eventually disappeared from television because sponsors backed away and the programs became economic liabilities. The public was thus deprived of "quality" because of the profit orientation credo of the networks.

The quiz scandals of 1959-60 signalled the end of the "golden age" of television. By 1960, television had become a routine part of every-

day living. However, there was general concern about the direction of television programming. This feeling was echoed by FCC chairman Newton Minow who at the 1961 convention of the National Association of Broadcasters declared:

> . . . when television is bad, nothing is worse. I invite you to sit down in front of your television set when your station goes on the air and stay there without a book, magazine, newspaper, profit and loss sheet or rating book to distract you--and keep your eyes glued to that set until the station signs off. I can assure you that you will observe a vast wasteland.[14]

The negative assessment coalesced by the end of the decade to become a broad-based protest against network programming.

The growth of television since 1960 has been massive. Today, over ninety-seven percent of all households are equipped with television and, according to the A. C. Nielson Company, the average family watches over forty hours of television every week. For special events, the viewing audience is phenomenal--over 130 million people watched at least a part of Roots. The biggest innovations, however, were in the field of television technology.

The Communication Satellite Act was passed in 1962, and it paved the way for eventual worldwide hook-ups through the use of satellites. This bill also authorized the creation of the Communication Satellite Corporation (COMSAT) to monitor the functions and needs of this developing field. In 1965 Early Bird became the first satellite to be used for commercial purposes, and, by 1971, an international network of satellites existed. Cable television has also made great

strides in the last two decades. Today the 3,600 available systems offer their services to over 12 million subscribers, or approximately sixteen percent of the country's television households.

The role of the FCC during the last two decades has been directed mainly at altering the homogeneity of network programming and at drawing up safeguards to prevent the economic and political chaos which might result from monopoly. To implement these objectives, the FCC established a series of rules which required affiliate stations to telecast local programs instead of regular network programs.[15] The Commission also applied various restrictions on the combination of TV-Radio and broadcasting-print in one market. But television content basically has not changed. The ratio for 1955--one-tenth news, one-tenth drama and culture, and four-fifth advertisement and light entertainment--is still the pattern in 1980. What has changed however is television's definition of entertainment and public service. The Commission has not been able to alter the business-oriented mentality which governs almost all programming. In the process children have been manipulated and the television audience in general subjected to violence and sexual titilation in the guise of entertainment.

In contemporary "media society," television poses the greatest threat to children. In their trend-setting book on the effects of television on children, Wilbur Schramm, Jack Lyle, and Edwin B. Parker concluded that for "some children under some conditions,

some television is harmful." They went on to stress, however, that the same program may be beneficial to another group of children, and that, in general, television was neither harmful or beneficial.[16] Since the publication of this study in 1961, there has been a considerable change in the content of children's programming, and now there is definite evidence that the behavior patterns of children who begin systematic viewing at an early age are altered. Research has shown that the heavy viewing child is less active, less creative, and considerably more impatient than the average child. And as a result of the massive exposure to television violence, children are now more prone to accept it casually.[17]

The extent of violence which is shown in the guise of entertainment has been used as the basis for attacking television programming by the critics of the media. A study released by the United States Department of Public Health concluded that there is a link between violence on television and aggressive behavior.[18] In Television and Human Behavior, the authors express a similar view with the stipulation that the effect of violence is dependent on the specific way the violence is portrayed:

> When violence is portrayed as punished, aggressiveness is more likely to be inhibited. When portrayed as rewarded, when portrayed as leading to no consequences, when portrayed as justified, and when performed by an attractive character--all common characteristics of contemporary television programming--the probability of subsequent aggression increases.[19]

These concerns are obviously justified, since such popular programs

on television as Starsky and Hutch, Police Woman, Baretta, Vegas and Sloane are typical of the pattern outlined.

Though sex on television remains almost exclusively verbal rather than visual, there has been a storm of protest regarding television's handling of sex-related themes.[20] The industry has tried to defend its position by citing the mass popularity of so-called "objectional" programs like Three's Company, Charlie's Angels, and Soap. And a spokesman for the industry, Frank Price of Universal Television, has publicly stated that "the sexual breakthrough in TV has probably taken us to where the movies were in 1935."[21] This controversy was especially highlighted during the 1978 "no Soap" campaign when ABC was deluged by 22,000 letters of protest even before the first episode was telecast. Yet, the series had very high ratings. However, the outcry frightened away so many sponsors that ABC was forced to offer commercial spots at greatly reduced rates and lost over a million dollars in revenues.[22] The subsequent episodes of Soap were also censored to remove the "objectionable" material.

Since discovering the "Achilles heel" of the industry, activists have directed their campaign against the sponsors of "titillating" shows. Donald Wildmon, founder of the National Federation of Decency, says: "Networks and sponsors have the right to put out any kind of program they want. But we have an equal right to say we're not going to buy your products."[23] It is too early yet to determine if such movements will alter the manipulative character of sex on tele-

vision.

Although children's programming, violence, and sex occupy many of television's critics, the medium's presentation of the news is perhaps a more controversial subject. Jerry Mander, in his highly publicized book, Four Arguments for the Elimination of Television, includes in his suggestions for a total reform of the television industry a proposal to terminate all news shows: "If we banned . . . news broadcasts from television, due to unavoidable and very dangerous distortions which are inherent in televising these subjects, then this would leave other better qualified media to report them to us."[24] As early as 1947, the Commission for a Free and Responsible press set forth the specific goals of the news media: 1. A truthful, comprehensive and intelligent account of the day's events in a context which gives them meaning; 2. A forum for the exchange of comment and criticism; 3. A means of projecting the opinions and attitudes of the groups in the society to one another; 4. A method of presenting and classifying the goals and values of society; 5. Full access of the day's intelligence.[25] Critics of the media and especially of television have objected to the way television has ignored these aims because of its bias toward certain problems. Vice-President Spiro Agnew, in a speech to the Midwest Regional Republican Conference in 1969, elaborated on what he thought was the basic pattern of television news:

> Bad news drives out good news. The irrational is more controversial than the rational. Concurrence can no longer compete with dissent . . . The labor crisis set-

> tled at the negotiating table is nothing compared to the confrontation that results in a strike--or, better yet violence along the picket line. Normality has become the nemesis of the evening news. The upshot of all this controversy is that a narrow and distorted picture of America often emerges from the televised news. A single dramatic piece of the mosaic becomes, in the minds of the millions, the whole picture.[26]

Even though Agnew's complaints were dictated by the policies of the Nixon administration, he underlined a significant point of news programming--the elimination of "happy news." Television's prejudice against good news is based on the assumption that the "sensational" attracts viewers and that plain good news does not have news appeal. Edith Efron, in concurring with Agnew's conclusions, singled out the inherent biases of television in the depiction of such subjects as "Race," "The Conservatives," "The Middle Class," "The Vietnam War," and "The Presidency."[27] In his original and interesting study about television news, Edward Epstein notes that, the content of network news is regulated by the budget, the need to preserve audience flow, the need of the affiliate stations for news of national focus, and the need to adhere to government regulations. He goes on to suggest that to increase audience appeal, the networks use continuous themes to link differing stories and include movement, pictures, and easily understood graphs and symbols. The overall stories are structured around simple issues "in terms of highly dramatic conflicts between clearly defined sides."[28]

Similarly, Thomas Patterson and Robert McClure, in their detailed study on the power of television news, point out that network

news coverage is designed mainly to keep viewers interested and entertained; content is determined by "film value," and often the more relevant issues are ignored.[29] Manders account of this selectivity sums up the inherent biases of network television:

> The people who control television become the choreographers of our internal awareness. We give way to their process of choosing information. We live within their conceptual frameworks. We travel to places on the planet which they choose and to situations which they devise we should see. What we can know is narrowed to what they know, and then narrowed further to what they select to send us through this instrument of theirs.[30]

Even though Mander's views are slanted by his aversion for the medium, his feelings are shared by Daniel Boorstin, who notes that networks make news happen by creating a "psuedo event," an unspontaneous occurrence which is characterized by its predictable and self-fulfilling prophetic nature.[31] Peter Rollins also expresses similar concerns: "without an awareness of the interpretive character of photojournalism, viewers will continue to be overly impressed by the putative 'reality' of pictorial stories. Unless sensitized to techniques . . . they will be misled about major events in our national life."[32] However, Rollins' concern for educating viewers is not shared by the television industry which is run mainly with the maximization of profits in mind.

Television is one of the most profitable businesses in the United States.[33] Les Brown's comments regarding the economic frame of television are more specific:

> Economics serves for aesthetics in commercial broadcasting. Every rating point gained or lost by a show represents 200,000 television households on a national scale. After costs are met, a single rating point in network's weekly average, over the course of a season, comes to represent $20 million or more in profits. Getting those rating points is the art of television, and if some strokes have to be erased, so be it.[34]

Brown's conclusions throw light on the basic corporate structure of the industry.

> In 1966 when ITT was attempting to merge with ABC, ITT was a
>
> sprawling conglomerage of 433 separate boards of directors that derives about 60 percent of its income from its significant holdings in at least forty foreign countries . . . it [was] also in the business of consumer finance, life insurance, investment funds, small loan companies, car rental and book publishing.[35]

FCC Commissioner Nicholas Johnson, who voted against the merger noted that "the integrity of ABC might be affected by the economic interests of ITT--that ITT might simply view ABC's programming as a part of ITT's public relations, advertising or political activities."[36] The dangerous ramifications of such a merger and the purely profit oriented mentality of the television industry have found visual expression in Paddy Chayefsky's Network.

In an interview with Saturday Review after the release of Network, Chayefsky confirmed the indictment that television is a medium motivated by ratings: "Television is an advertising medium. If you've got a good show, you raise the price of your advertising. The top shows we spend like $130,000 a minute."[37] In answer to objections from networks that the film distorts reality, Chayefsky says: "We

never lied. Everything in the movie is true--with some extensions. It's very hard to describe simply and realistically what is going on without being grotesque. The movie is right now."[38] Chayefsky's comments give Network a time frame--the 1970s.

The focal point of Network is Howard Beale, the news anchorman for United Broadcasting Systems, a network a way behind the others in ratings. Once the doyen of anchormen, Beale has been plagued by personal problems and bad ratings for several years. On September 22, 1975, he is given two weeks' advance notice and fired by Max Schumacher, President of the UBS news division. Next evening, Beale goes on the air and announces that he has been fired and that "I'm going to blow my brains out right on this program a week from today."(NW) He emphasizes that he has run out of the "bullshit" which had kept him going. The public reaction to Beale's outburst is immediate: "So far over nine hundred fucking phone calls complaining about the foul language." Consequently, Schumacher is left with no option but to bar Beale from the news immediately.

But the next day the incident is given front page coverage, and the program's rating goes up five points. Observing this, a young programming executive named Diana Christenson convinces Frank Hackett (hatchetman for the corporation that has acquired UBS) that a "nutty" anchorman has the potential to improve the Nielson ratings of the program. With Beale's transformation into the "mad prophet of the airwaves," he gains 60 percent of the audience and overnight "Howard

Beale is processed instant God" (NW). This becomes a major triumph for Christenson, who sees the occasion as a golden opportunity to further her career.

After Schumacher is fired and Diana given his job, she uses the "clout" of high ratings to transform the evening news into a "variety special," complete with a soothsayer and a gossip columnist. And for her brainchild, "The Mao Tse-Tune Hour," she hires terrorists from the Ecumenical Liberation Army to rob banks and commit other "sensational" acts on camera.

After Beale accidently reveals that UBS was being taken over by the Arabs, he is summoned by Arthur Jensen, chief executive of CCA, and told to change his stance. When Beale redirects the focus of his "sermons" from an attack on the social evils to a praise of corporate industry, his ratings start plummetting. Finally Diana, with Hackett's concurrence, finds a practical way out for him. She has her hired terrorists calmly assassinate him on camera.

Network is very explicit in its depiction of the evils of television. Perhaps of equal concern within this framework is the depersonalization of American society and the fate of resistant individuals enmeshed in the system. As John Clum says, "Chayefsky, in his work, manifested not only his love for the individual but also his anxiety about the society that engulfs the individual."[39] This fact is corroborated by the characters in the film who, in their attempt to adjust to the system, are de-humanized.

Network opens with a narrator announcing that "This story is about Howard Beale, the network news anchorman on UBS-TV," and from that moment on, a relation is established between Beale's fate and the future of UBS. The day after he learns that he has been fired, Beale goes on the air to announce that "I will be retiring from this program in two weeks time because of poor ratings" and that he would kill himself on the air in a week: "So tune in next Tuesday. That'll give the public relations people a week to promote the show and we ought to get a hell of a rating with that, a fifty share, easy" (NW). The scene is satiric, but Beale's motives are grounded in reality. He had been a TV newsman all his life, and a good rating is synonymous with his viability. To be able to go out with a "fifty share" would be a fitting epitaph for the former mandarin of network news. But his last hurrah is seemingly thwarted as he is dragged off the air. The uproar over the incident is tremendous, and, to thaw the situation, Max Schumacher permits Beale to go on the air again to make a dignified exit.

The sequence which follows is significant because of its contrast to the "staged" pattern of the later news shows. As the camera zooms in on the television screen in the control booth room, the distressed face of Howard Beale announces: "Good evening. Today is Wednesday, September the twenty-fifth, and this is my last broadcast. Yesterday I announced on this program that I would commit public suicide, admittedly an act of madness. Well, I'll tell you what happened--I just

ran out of bullshit" (NW). Beale's stance should not be interpreted as an act of revenge. The internal conflict in television news between public service and entertainment probably weighed heavily on his mind. This disgust over the content of what he had read on the news for years finally explodes into honest self-appraisal. Howard Beale was attempting to go out with a clear conscience.

In elaborating that television news manipulates the audience, Beale paradoxically allows himself to be set up for manipulation by the network, to let them create a "pseudo-event." Because of the instant upsurge in ratings, Frank Hackett, on Diana Christenson's advice, decides to transform Beale into the veritable "prophet of the airways" and "The Howard Beale Show" into a variety special. Beale continues his crusade against television as a form of self expiation, but the basic character of the show, with segments with "Sibyl the Soothsayer" and "Miss Mata Hari" is directed to exploit Beale's sudden appeal. "The network," as Stanley Kauffman points out, "begins to play bluntly to the fact that, fundamentally, newscasting is not journalism but show business."[40] The atmosphere of spontaneity is missing. And even though Beale's visions and attacks on television appear as credible manifestations of his guilt complex, his "on air" collapse is timed for seven o'clock, and he is obviously being used for the specific purpose of boosting the ratings. It is a Machiavellic exploitation of both Beale and his audience.

The most ironic moment in Beale's career occurs when he reveals

the truth about the "Saudi connection" and becomes a liability for Frank Hackett and CCA, the corporation which owns UBS. His chilling message recalls the ITT and ABC case and Commissioner Johnson's fears about such a merger. The sequence juxtaposes the vibrant mood of the annual convention of the "UBS affiliates 1975" with the sombre mood of "The Howard Beale Show." The camera pans the "top brass" sitting on the dais and then centers on the spot light and a radiant Diana Christenson, then tracks her movement to the podium, and zooms in on her as she declares "Last year we were the number four network. Next year, we're number one!" (NW) The camera again shifts for a second to a long shot of the tumultuous audience and finally cuts back to Diana's animated, glowing face. The back lighting idealizes her features as she says: "It is exactly seven o'clock here in Los Angeles and right now over a million homes using television in this city are tuning their dials to Channel 3--and that's our channel." (NW) The subsequent match cut to the monitor in the Grand Ballroom shows Howard Beale telling the audience in his typical intense manner that CCA was being taken over: "Well, I'll tell you who they're buying CCA for. They're buying it for the Saudi Arabian Investment Corporation! They're buying it for the Arabs! . . . I want you to go to your phone or get in your car and drive into the Western Union Office in town. I want everybody listening to me to get up right now and send a telegram to the White House! I want the CCA deal stopped now." (NW) As the camera zooms out, Frank

Hackett is seen on the telephone being informed from New York about the damaging diatribe. Because of the time difference, the show had been telecast in New York three hours earlier. The montage of the three perspectives, in addition to being an example of the power of television over its audience, is a significant turning point for Howard Beale and symbolizes the working strategy of television. The show itself becomes the focal point, preceded by a moment of glory it generated, succeeded by a moment of impending doom it caused. He had not changed, but to the corporate structure that controlled the network, he was a liability. The ratings were still high, but CCA needed money. Howard Beale had committed the unpardonable sin of making the corporation lose more money than his show generated.

The state of the relationship between UBS and CCA depicted in the film represents another facet of the television industry which has been under great scrutiny. To CCA, UBS was a financial enterprise which must be economically viable. Also, whatever it propogates must always be in the best interests of CCA. So when Howard Beale is summoned to New York, it is with the specific purpose of being "told what to say." What follows is probably the most grotesque moment of the film. The immediate setting, the dimly lit board room, has a ghostly, surreal atmosphere with a huge conference table separating Arthur Jensen and Howard Beale. Jensen is seen only in a long shot, from Beale's point of view. The angular top lighting engulfs his face in a shadow and gives his figure a touch of the grotesque.

The scene has a theatrical quality as the "devilish" Jensen preaches:

> We no longer live in a world of nations and ideologies, Mr. Beale. The world is a collage of corporations, inexorably determined by the immutable bylaws of business ... our children will live to see the perfect world without war and famine, oppression and brutality--one vast and ecumenical holding company, for whom all men will serve a common profit, in which all men hold a share of stock, all necessities provided, all anxieties tranquilized, boredom amused. And I have chosen you to preach this evangel ... Because ... sixty million people watch you every night of the week, Monday through Friday. (NW)

The only shots of Beale are close ups, and they show him in a trance, hypnotized. The parting exchange is illuminating in the same context as Jensen's speech. "I have seen the face of God," Beale says. And Jensen answers, "You just might be right, Mr. Beale." Even though the scene is surrealistic in tone, its basic import becomes clear. Television can and does influence and modify our behavior and thought pattern in a more effective way than, literally, "God" does. It is a veritable tinderbox because it is not governed by the ethic of public service, but the laws of economics and, often the whims of self aggrandisement. In the process, the people who serve the industry are dehumanized.

The sequence of Howard Beale's assassination ends the film. Because of plummetting ratings, he had been classified as dispensable. His depersonalization, induced by Arthur Jensen, is the ultimate price he pays for his Machiavellian attitude toward his job. When Hackett and Diana decide to have him assassinated after weighing the economic ramifications of his death, Beale's degradation is complete.

Howard Beale is reduced to a mere notation, dollars and cents. As Diana coolly announces: "I don't see how we have any option. Let's kill the son of a bitch." (NW)

The death scene is short and ends abruptly. Howard Beale, in his usual stance, faces the audience, and the long shot frames him within the stained glass mural in the background, making the edges of the circular graphic appear like a halo around his head. Two men get up and shoot him. The camera zooms in and the high angle shot shows him prostrate, his arms stretched out to give his lifeless figure the semblance of a cross. The symbolic equation is obviously justified: Howard Beale had become another sacrifice at the altar of "rating."

In his review of Network, Charles Michener calls Frank Hackett the "corporate hatchet man,"[41] but it is only a partial description of the man. He has no conscience, and the import of the public service credo of television is meaningless to him. He is governed by two basic aims: First, to make UBS a financially solvent network whatever the price and second, to steer himself into a position of authority at CCI. He is totally ruthless, guided only by an instinct to reach his wordly goals. Chayefsky goes to great lengths to identify Hackett as the symbol of the "new generation" taking over the network from the old guard and modifying the entire structure of the industry. Through inference Chayefsky suggests that the problem lies with the men who run it.

It soon became apparent that Hackett was slowly easing himself into the position of supreme authority within UBS. He publicly humiliates Max Schumacher at the stockholders meeting by magnifying the losses of the news division and ignoring the fact that the news division generally lost money. And he soon has a powerful ally in Diana Christenson. She is almost a photo-copy of Hackett because their ultimate ends are the same. Early in the film after she realized Beale's potential marketability, she had gone in to see Hackett. He recoiled at her suggestion to put Beale back on the air, but when Diana translated Beale's potential into dollars and cents "And I'm talking about a hundred, a hundred and thirty thousand dollar minutes!"(NW), Hackett is immediately convinced. This aspect of his personality is further underlined in the meeting he has later on in the day with Nelson Cheney, the President of the network, Walter Amusden, the general counsel for the network, Arthur Zingwill, vice-president for standards and practices, and Joe Donnelly, vice-president in charge of sales, regarding Diana's proposal. The meeting in the executive dining room is a surreal "Last Supper" for Nelson Cheney, because he is made to realize that he has no executive powers and in the process is publicly humiliated. When Cheney expresses his indignation at Hackett's proposal to put Beale back, Hackett curtly reminds him that the ultimate economic solvency of UBS justifies any type of action. Cheney's emotional retort, "You can't seriously be proposing and the rest of us seriously considering putting on a pornographic network news show!"

is ignored by Hackett who suggests to him that "You can always re-sign tomorrow."

Later in the film, Frank Hackett's machiavellian personality is brought into closer focus. He slowly uproots Edward Ruddy from his position of authority and seems to be implicitly responsible for his untimely death. Like Melville's Babo, who cast his shadow on Benito Cereno, he conquers Ed Ruddy in spirit and in the flesh. His only moment of weakness in the film occurred after Beale had divulged the details about the "Saudi Connection." For once his emotional control had been on the verge of collapsing because he saw the dream of his projected rise to power crumbling. The impact of Beale's speech and its effect on the public, and even the ratings for a moment, lose their intrinsic value. But once the crisis is over, he reverts to his old ways and goals. And in his decision to have Beale assassinated, Hackett approximates the role television has over our lives--of God. Beale, to him, had just become another figure underlined in red, an economic liability. Frank Hackett, like Diana Christenson, was television incarnate, distant, unattached, machinelike, programmed to work for a certain goal.

The two focal characters in Network, Max Schumacher and Diana Christenson, are symbolic projections of the best and worst of television. Vincent Canby calls Schumacher "old fashioned," and by the same token labels Christenson as a "woman of psychopathic ambitions and lack of feeling."[42] These generalized specifications hold true for

both of them; Schumacher is indeed a traditionalist. Unlike Diana, who used "studs" to satisfy her sexual needs, he had been married to the same woman for twenty six years. His actions are governed by a sense of ethics, and he has a conscience which often tempers his decisions. Thus, his decision to fire Beale, and in the same breath to allow him to make a dignified exit, is coherent with his philosophy of life. On the other hand, Diana's interest in Beale is only triggered after the unexpected jump in the ratings of his news show. Her decision to hire him and eventually dispose of him is motivated only by his direct relation to profit and her own personal ambitions. In speaking to Susan Horowitz, Paddy Chayefsky points out that the conflict between the old and the new provides the framework for his film:

> Most people in charge of television today retain a sense of noblesse oblige with the profit motive. What happens with the next generation--no longer Brahmans of television, just profit makers? That's what Network is all about.[43]

Thus, the progression from Schumacher to Christenson involves a transition in time, a change which evidently has profound repercussions. What Network may lack in contemporary detail is compensated by its power to predict the future.

The essential difference in the concept of news between Max Schumacher and Diana Christenson reveals basic character traits. Schumacher lost his job because he felt that Beale was more suitable for the role of the ordinary newscaster than as the "mad prophet of the airways." Christenson, on the other hand, was promoted because she

convinced Hackett of the profit potential of a "wacky" news show. Within the framework, Beale would be free to project his negative view of the world. Vice-President Agnew's much criticized statement, "that good news drives out bad news" seems valid here. In addition, the other segments of "The Howard Beale Show" with "Sibyl the Soothsayer" and "Mata-Hari and her skeletons in the closet" are inserted with specific ends in mind. Sibyl's prophecies are meant to complement the pessimistic view of the world already projected by Beale, thereby exploiting the insecure audience. The segment on "Mata-Hari" on the other hand was intended to titillate the audience with gossip and sexual innuendoes. Similarly, "The Mao Tse-Tung Hour," one of Christenson's early triumphs, is not motivated by a desire to inform the public, but plays on the television audience's taste for violence. In a meeting with her staff, she outlines the basis for the show:

> We've got a bunch of hobgoblin radicals called the Ecumenical Liberation Army who go around taking home movies of themselves, hijacking 747's, bombing bridges, assassinating ambassadors. We'd open each week's segment with that authentic footage, hire a couple of writers to write some story behind that footage, and we've got outselves a series . . . The American people are turning sullen. They've been clobbered on all sides by Vietnam, Watergate, inflation, the depression. They're turned off, shot up, and they've fucked themselves limp. And nothing helps. Evil still triumphs over all, Christ is a dope dealing pimp, even sin turned out to be impotent. The whole world seems to be going nuts and flipping off into space like an abandoned balloon. So--this concept analysis report concludes--the American people want somebody to articulate their rage for them. I've been telling you people since I took this job six months ago that I want angry shows. I don't want conven-

> tional programming on this network. I want counter-culture. I want antiestablishment. (NW)

Her brand of philosophy not only reveals her basic character, but also highlights the philosophy which governs the television industry.

Diana's brainchild, "The Mao Tse-Tung Hour," is a symbolic manifestation of the major complaints against television. The show is an obvious "pseudo-event" with a stress on violence and, with the kidnapping of Mary Gifford, a blending of illicit sex as well. And as the members of the Ecumenical Liberation Army are black, Efron's argument that television presents stereotypes is reinforced. Similarly the show has a definite "film value," and sustains Mander's views about the "selectivity" and limited focus of television news shows.

The love affair between Christenson and Schumacher is subordinate to the main plot, but it is still extremely significant to the overall thematic development of the film. The magnetism between the two is like the attraction between unlike poles. For Schumacher, the affair is a middle age sexual infatuation brought about by a need to re-justify himself as a man. The scene in which he parts with his wife has been described by Michener as "hovering dangerously on the edge of soap opera."[44] It is a valid assessment, but the scene still has objectivity because it places Schumacher in his traditional perspective--his affluent home with his wife of twenty-six years. The camera deliberates, allowing the mood and impression of

domesticity prevalent in the mise-en-scene. to impress itself on the audience's mind. This highlights the contrast between Schumacher and Christenson even though he is for the moment "obsessed with her."

For Diana Christenson, he represents a blend of needs and objectives. She admits that she has had a "crush" on him since her days as an undergraduate at the University of Missouri, and for her to possess him is a dream manifest. He also provides her with companionship, stability, and some semblance of family life. Her sexual life, previous to her affair with Schumacher, had been "one night stands." He, in filling this vacuum, becomes a lover-father surrogate. Schumacher also had a stature in the industry which made him a good "stepping stone" for the ambitious Diana. And, finally, in conquering him, she represents the symbolic victory of the "nascent" over the "old guards," and thus the victory is a justification of her philosophy.

The affair is anything but tumultuous. There are soft moments, the romantic candlelight dinner with the dim lights symbolically diffusing the starkness of reality. But such occasions are only "visions." The lovemaking which follows this scene is dynamic. Diana is the aggressor, and the emotional impact of the scene is marred by her constant monosyllabic utterances about her job. The lingering impression is that Max has been reduced to a contraption with only one specific function--to satisfy her, and the sexual act itself transformed into

a cursory biological function. Max in describing Diana in an earlier scene, says, "I'm not sure she's capable of any real feelings. She's the television generation. She learned life from Bugs Bunny. The only reality she knows is what comes over her TV set." (NW) The sexual scene sustains this assessment; Diana Christenson is the ultimate product of television. She had become emotionally passive and "more prone at accepting violence." She is alienated and aggressive as is reflected in general behavior patterns and her attitude toward life. She is like Annie Hall--a product of the time.

The inevitable parting between the two further develops Chayefsky's complaints against the television industry. Schumacher is sure that his sanity would be destroyed if he stayed any longer with someone he considered a "humanoid," "television incarnate . . . indifferent to suffering, insensitive to joy." (NW) In the final assessment, she has become the victim of what she preached, her life reduced to a pseudo-event because of its mechanical predictability and self fulfilling prophecy.[45] Schumacher's final words to her underline the ultimate irony: "It's a happy ending Diana. Wayward husband comes to his senses, returns to his wife . . . heartless young woman is left alone in her arctic desolation. Music up with a swell. Final commercial. And here are a few scenes from next week's show." It is a case of life imitating television.

Schumacher does actually serve as Diana Christenson's last touch with human reality. Her final act in Network sustains this-the plan-

ning of the elimination of Howard Beale. His crime--his program had low ratings; her motive--maximization of profits for UBS.

Aesthetically, Network has its share of flaws. Stanley Kauffmann points out two scenes where the authenticity of the setting is in question because of the attempt to pass off a familiar landmark as something else. In one of these, Beale evidently goes to the CCA headquarters and is seen going up the marble stairs of the New York Public Library.[46] In structure, Network is episodic, centered around the key speeches. The big speeches are theatrical if nothing else. For Beale's finest hour, "I am not going to take it anymore," Diana's selling her plans for "The Howard Beale Show," Schumacher's parting lecture, and Jensen's "evangel" speech, Chayefsky seems to contrive situations. But if Network is judged in its overall context as a satire, these scenes are justified because they are intentional amplifications of the propagandistic nature of television.

In the final analysis Network appears more satiric than realistic in import. Though Chayefsky has asserted that the film is real and though some episodes are based on actual incidents, the film leaves the definite impression that it is only a projection of what may come to be.[47] Thus, events and characters are often exaggerated to drive home the satiric point.

Yet the message of Network is timely. In this decade of massive exposure to television, there is no doubt that the medium is not only changing the behavior patterns and thinking process but also the very

fabric of American society. Its manipulative use of sex and violence is creating cultural stereotypes which are being emulated by children. Its conception of news as entertainment is seriously limiting the political and moral awareness of the average man. Network deals with topics which are of primary concern to the American way of life in the 1970s, and the film is an actualization of the criticism directed against this medium.

ENDNOTES

[1]Sidney Lumet, dir., Network, with Peter Finch, William Holden, Faye Dunaway, United Artists, 1977. Subsequent references will be inserted in the text.

[2]This figure is based on the assumption that the average broadcast time for a commercial station is 18 hours. This figure would rise to 60 million if a 24 hour broadcast day is assumed. Addenda to Television Factbook, No. 47, April 3, 1978.

[3]Ray E. Hiebert, Donald F. Ungurait, Thomas W. Bohn, Mass Media II (New York: Longman, Inc., 1979), p. 294. Subsequent references will be cited as Hiebert.

[4]Peter M. Sandman, David M. Rubin, David B. Sachsman, Media: An Introductory Analysis of American Mass Communications (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1972), p. 65. Subsequent references will be cited as Sandman.

[5]Hiebert, p. 295.

[6]Sandman, p. 65.

[7]Hiebert, p. 296.

[8]Hiebert, p. 298.

[9]Erik Barnouw, The Image Empire: A History of Broadcasting in the United States (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), III, 5.

[10]David Halberstam, The Powers That Be (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979), p. 130.

[11]Hiebert, p. 298.

[12]Barnouw, p. 30.

[13]Paddy Chayefsky, Television Plays (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1955), p. 178.

[14]Barnouw, p. 197.

[15]However, the FCC's attempt to mandate local programming by giving the stations a half hour of prime time has been one of the commission's greatest failures as instead of local news and information we get Brady Bunch reruns.

[16]Wilbur Schramm, Jack Lyle, Edwin B. Parker, Television in the Lives of Our Children (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1961), pp. 135-168.

[17]The most complete study in this regard is George Comstock, Steven Chaffee, Nathan Katzman, Maxwell McCombs and Donald Roberts, Television and Human Behavior (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978). Subsequent references will be cited as Comstock.

[18]The Surgeon General's Scientific Advisory Committee on Television and Social Behavior, Television and Growing Up: The Impact of Televised Violence (Washington, D.C., U.S. Government Printing Office, 1972).

[19]Comstock, p. 249.

[20]In a survey conducted by Doyle Dale Bernhach advertising agency, 54% of the 400 adults polled expressed concern about the TV handling of sex and sex-related themes. The most sustained protest comes, however, from the Southern Baptist Convention, a Protestant denomination which has mailed "Help for Television Viewers" packets to more than 50,000 pastors and lay leaders. And recently the National Religious Broadcasters which is comprised of the 24 religious TV stations joined in the campaign against television's depiction of sex. Cited by Harry F. Waters, Martin Kasindorf, Betsy Carter, "Sex and TV" Newsweek, February 20, 1978, pp. 55-56. Subsequent references will be cited as Waters.

[21]Waters, p. 54.

[22]Waters, p. 54.

[23]Waters, p. 56.

[24]Jerry Mander, Four Arguments For The Elimination of Television (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1978), p. 356.

[25]Robert M. Hutchins, A Free and Responsible Press, Commission on Freedom of the Press (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1947), pp. 20-21.

[26]Spiro T. Agnew, "Text of Agnew Speech on TV Network News," Mass Media: Forces in Our Society, ed. Francis and Ludmila Voelker (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovomovsch, Inc., 1972), p. 268.

[27]Edith Efron, "There is Network News Bias," TV Guide, February 28, 1970. Efrom discusses these biases in greater detail in The News Twisters (1971), pp. 6-11.

[28]Edward J. Epstein, News From Nowhere: Television and the News (New York: Vintage, 1973), p. 263.

[29]Thomas Patterson and Robert McClure, The Unseeing Eye: The Myth of Television Power in National Politics (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1976), p. 40.

[30]Mander, p. 266.

[31]Daniel J. Boorstin, The Image-A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America (New York: Athenaum, 1972), p. 11.

[32]Peter Rollins, "Television's Vietnam: The Visual Language of Television News," Paper, Oklahoma State University, 1979, p. 30.

[33]In 1973 the three networks reported a combined profit of $185 million. "Television 1973 'Operation Moneybag,'" Variety, September 4, 1974, pp. 39, 53.

[34]Quoted by Judith Crist, "The Day TV Went Mad," Saturday Review, November 13, 1976, p. 45.

[35]Nicholas Johnson, How to Talk Back to Your Television Set (Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1969), pp. 49-50.

[36]Johnson, p. 51.

[37]Susan Horowitz, "Paddy Chayefsky Speaks Out," Saturday Review, November 13, 1976, p. 45.

[38]Paddy Chayefsky, "Network is There," Time, December 15, 1976, p. 79.

[39]John Clum, Paddy Chayefsky (Boston: Twayne, 1976), p. 127.

[40]Stanley Kauffmann, "Network," The New Republic, November 13, 1976, p. 22.

[41]Charles Michener, "Hollywood Takes on TV," Newsweek, November 22, 1976, p. 107.

[42]Vincent Canby, The New York Times Film Reviews (New York: New York Times and Arno Press, 1979), p. 170.

[43]Horowitz, p. 45.

[44]Michener, p. 107.

[45]The basic aspects of a pseudo-event are its predictability and its representation of a self fulfilling prophecy. Diana's life because of the impact of television had assumed a mechanical and predictable ascent to the top. A pseudo-event is also a self fulfilling prophecy. Diana had preached passivity and shunned reality. She had as Max tells her, lost all touch with reality: "I am your last contact with human reality! I love you, and that . . . is the only thing between you and the streaking nothingness you live all day." (NW) Also see Boorstin, pp. 11-12.

[46]Kauffmann, p. 23.

[47]An article in Time on December 13, 1976, entitled "The Movie TV Hates and Loves" draws parallels between characters and episodes from Network and people and events in real life. Chayefsky's claim of realism may have been brought about by his use of authentic setting. The film was shot mainly at CPTO-TV studios in Toronto, Canada, which is one of the most complete and modern broadcasting plants on the continent. Paddy Chayefsky, Network, novelisation by Sam Hedrin (New York: Pocket Books, 1976), pp. 160-73.

CHAPTER III

MALE/FEMALE RELATIONSHIPS: ANNIE HALL (1977)

The first meeting in Annie Hall between Alvy and Annie, at the Riverside tennis courts establishes a pattern for their relationship. When Alvy suggests that he and Rob team against the two girls, he is implying the traditional battle of the sexes. Though Rob and Annie team against Alvy and Rob's friend, the female is still perceived more as opponent than as partner. Thus, the initial meeting between the two protagonists is framed in an atmosphere of tension between the sexes.

Afterwards, in the bare and listless surroundings of the locker room, Annie assumes the typical male approach: "Would you like a lift?"[1] The composition and perfect balance of the shot gives the action a stamp of realism. But this in no way undermines the fact that Annie is the aggressive partner. This sequence climaxes in the balcony of Annie's apartment where, against the backdrop of the New York skyline, and with the use of an objective camera shot, Allen satirizes the pretenses that must be kept up to maintain the image of avant-garde New Yorkers. The setting, however, is more significant. The New York skyline in the background puts Annie and Alvy in a time perspective--the 1970s--and defines their rela-

tionship in contemporary terms. The pattern of the male/female relationship, which has been greatly influenced by the Women's Liberation Movement and the precepts of the "Me" decade, is marked by a reversal of traditional male/female roles and sustained by practical rather than emotional reasons with the emphasis on "me," the individual, than on mutual relations. This image of interpersonal relationships, as depicted in Annie Hall, is typical of the new pattern.

Bertrand Russell once predicted that the disintegration of the family would undermine sexual love and, in its wake, inflict "a certain triviality on all personal relations."[2] Russell's prophetic vision is a reality today and was in part initiated by the resurgence of the Women's Liberation Movement in the 1960s, which "is grounded in and moving in the same direction as underlying social trends."[3] In Born Female, Caroline Bird points out that among the specific objectives of the Movement was the radical transformation or abolition of marriage, and the stereotypes which govern man-woman relationships. The traditional notion which visualized women as passive and subservient was to be replaced by an image which depicted them as independent and equal to men in every respect.[4] The 1970s have seen the passage through the Congress of the Equal Rights Amendment which declared that "equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States by any account of sex."[5]

This decade has seen the movement grow in numbers and in strength. In fact, a prominent feminist has cited the Masters and

Johnson report which also proved the unlimited orgasmic potential[7] of women, was also used by feminist Kate Millett to argue that the female was biologically superior because of this "inexhaustible" trait.[8] Thus, in a decade where women have dropped much of their sexual reserve, they have become paradoxically more threatening partners because

> Sexual performance becomes another weapon in the war between men and women; social inhibitions no longer prevent women from exploiting the tactical advantage which the current obsession with sexual measurement has given them.[9]

Consequently, feminism has caused women to make new demands on man and make his sexual adequacy the focal point of a relationship. Therefore, the male is under constant pressure to perform and is haunted by fears of failure.

The basic precepts of the Feminist Movement have changed the pattern of interpersonal relationships. Veronica Geng notes that the movement, which began as a crusade to attain women's rights, ultimately became a means to provide its "dreamers with an illusory matriarchal utopia."[10] The vision, as Lasch points out, is alluring not only to the "radical lesbian," but also to the heterosexual female who becomes disappointed with men when they fail to live up to "liberated" expectations.[11] This disappointment can imbue human relations with a special trait which Lasch calls "The Flight from Feeling."[12]

Interpersonal relationships today no longer carry any promise of

permanence. People now long for "sexual separatism," a concept which dictates the amputation of love from sex.[13] Lasch notes that another alternative is "drugs, which dissolve anger and desire in a glow of good feeling and create the illusion of intense experience without emotion."[14] But probably the most common "flight from feeling" is the indulgence in sexual promiscuity which radically severs sex from emotional attachment. These far reaching effects have coalesced and define the course of most heterosexual liaisons.

Tom Wolfe, in a provocative essay about the 1970s, gave the decade a new label, "The Me Decade." The 1970s have seen a mushrooming of movements such as Sufi, Hare Krishna, and Maharaja Ji, which are all devoted to the discovery of the self--me. As Wolfe says,

> The old alchemical dream was changing base metals into gold. The new alchemical dream is: changing one's personality--remaking, remodeling, elevating, and polishing one's very self. . . and observing, studying, and doting on it. (Me!).[15]

This goal is more comprehensive than Erich Fromm's definition of the narcissistic personality because he ignores the concept of its cultural ramifications.[16] In actuality, narcissism is more than "the metaphor of the human condition."[17] It can be equated with the precepts of the "me" decade because it proposes a link between the "me," narcissistic personality, and various facets of contemporary culture such as insecurity, altered sense of time, and, especially, the worsening of the relationship between men and women.

The pattern of interpersonal relationship was drastically affected

by this focus on "me." As Lasch says:

> The narcissist feels consumed by his own appetites. The intensity of his oral hunger leads him to make inordinate demands on his friends and sexual partners; yet in the same breath he repudiates those demands and asks only a casual connection without promise of permanence on either side. He longs to free himself from his own hunger and rage, to achieve a calm detachment beyond emotion and to outgrow his dependence on others.[18]

Consequently, personal relationships have become affairs of convenience, with each partner using the other. People are imbued with the concept of "I have one life to live"; thus families have disintegrated, and relationships are essentially fragile. "Communicate" and "Relationship," as Wolfe notes, have become "signature" words of the "Me Decade" as men and women are consistently unable to reach each other because of the obsession with their individual selves.[19] "Let's talk about me" seems to have become the definitive norm in interpersonal relationships, and this pattern has subsequently been repeated in films in the later part of the 1970s.

The initial impact of the Women's Liberation Movement on interpersonal relationships in films was regressive. As Molly Haskell says:

> The growing strength and demands of women in real life, spearheaded by Women's Liberation, deviously provided a backlash in commercial films: a redoubling or Godfather-like Machoism to beef up man's eroding vitality or alternately an escape into the all male world of the buddy films from Easy Rider to Scarecrow.[20]

Her conclusion is sustained by the fact that the more successful films of 1969-70, Easy Rider, Midnight Cowboy, and M*A*S*H* were

all male oriented and the female roles and their relationships to men, purely inconsequential. And even in a list of "women" films like Bonnie and Clyde and The Last Picture Show the females' relationships with men are still traditional. They are not only inferior and dependent on men, they are also essentially sex objects. Haskell's observation sustains this:

> But even these, the great women's role of the decade, what are they for the most part? Whores, quasi-whores, Lolitas, kooks, sex starved spinsters, psychotics. That's what little girls of the sixties and seventies are made of.[21]

A query by a feminist film critic in 1973 concurs this: "Does this sound like a bleak future? Have women in-fighting for liberation . . . that is equality, choice, and opportunity brought about their own isolation?"[22] Since then, however, the image of women in films has changed considerably and there is a new trend in the delineation of interpersonal relations brought about the the cumulative effect of the Women's Liberation Movement and the precepts of the "Me Decade."

Jane Kramer, in discussing the "new women" in film, notes that in the focus on male-female relationship in "new movies . . . is their own longing to discover an archetype of modern women--one that will hold, one that will move in some pure female space."[23] Recent films like An Unmarried Woman, Looking for Mr. Goodbar, and Annie Hall are typical of the new direction in films. In An Unmarried Woman, Erica is a thirty-seven year old woman with a teenage daughter whose husband has deserted her. She meets Saul Kaplan, a famous painter, who falls in love with her and is looking for a

permanent relationship. But Erica's "flight from feeling," resulting from the disappointing experience in her marriage finally causes the relationship to crumble. In Looking for Mr. Goodbar, Theresa Dunn is a young school teacher who instructs deaf children during the day and at night "cruises" the singles bars to seek temporary liaisons aimed at justifying her narcissistic sexuality. The "flight from feeling" and the concept of "I have one life to live" is ironically vindicated when Theresa is sodomized and murdered by a male hustler. Though Annie Hall is molded in the same vein, it is a more realistic appraisal of the actual state of interpersonal relationships. The reason for this significant difference is Woody Allen, who wrote, directed, and starred in Annie Hall.

Woody Allen is perhaps the most influential person in American cinema today. As Maurice Yacowar notes, he has changed the American conception of the traditional hero:

> The typical film hero of the 1970s is a short, plucky, disenchanted, candid, neurotic he boy, with neither the prowess nor the confidence that characterized the stars of the past decades. Dreyfuss' debt to Allen is most explicit in a scene in Jaws (1975). When the Robert Shaw character demonstrates his manliness by crumpling a beer can, Dreyfuss cockily squashes his styrofoam coffee cup. The hero's combination of weakness, mock heroism, and self acceptance in a single gesture draws on the precedence of the Allen persona . . . Allen used to play a loser who feebly aspired to the style of a Bogart, a Peter O'Toole, or a James Bond; now a Burt Reynolds expresses the flawed humanity of the Woody Allen persona. Clearly Allen has articulated the spirit of our time.[24]

Thus, Allen's art evidently goes beyond the superficial comic exterior.

The "Jewish" persona has been an integral part of the movies of Woody Allen. In Play It Again Sam, he plays Felix, the "personification of a neurotic, failure haunted, urban Jewish-American manhood gone to seed."[25] In Annie Hall, he is Alvy Singer, a neurotic Jewish comedian. And in Manhattan he plays Isaac Davis, a comedy writer for television, "who suffers the stings and sorrows of outrageous romance."[26] In a larger sense, his Jewish persona becomes a symbol of the American-everyman in his quest to emulate the traditional hero, but falling far short because of his earthly limitations. "Both in his admissions of inadequacy and his transparent claims to being a stud, Allen expresses the sexual anxieties of modern man."[27] These anxieties, when transposed on interpersonal relationships, imbue everyman with a task of not only adjusting to the changing image of the liberated woman, but also of justifying himself as a man.

In 1972, Woody Allen declared that "all I want people to do is laugh."[28] Since then, however, his comic art has matured. Allen himself has noted this transition toward profundity. In talking about Love and Death, he admitted that the film had "a slight satirical point about dying and war, and the transitory quality of love."[29] In his recent works, Allen has reached "into his own anxieties and the most frightened corners of the human psyche" and "found a distinctive language and style with which to confront the human condition."[30] In the "ME Decade" this "condition" is buffeted by the pressures of a narcissistic culture and the alterations of sex roles in the wake of the femi-

nist movement. Thus, Annie Hall, Allen's Oscar-winning venture, is not only an affirmation of Allen's distinct style, but also a visual document of the new trend in interpersonal relationships.

The plot of Annie Hall centers on the relationship between Alvy Singer, a New York Jewish comedian "with a tender reverence for all the guilts and neuroses he shares with the worldly intelligentia," and Annie Hall, a young aspiring singer.[31] Alvy, who grew up as a poor Jewish boy, has been twice married and twice divorced. He takes Annie under his wing and gives her the confidence and poise to help her blossom into a sophisticated performer. In the process, Annie attains maturity, independence, and worldly sense. Ultimately, she leaves Alvy and moves to California as the girl friend of Tony Lacy, an established singer, whose "clout" could considerably further her career. The film, which employs the narrative technique of flashback, reveals that Annie eventually comes back to New York and has a chance meeting with Alvy in front of Lincoln Center. They talk and part, and the world moves on.

When Annie Hall was released in April, 1977, the reaction from critics was generally very positive. Vincent Canby, writing in the New York Times, concluded with a definitive statement about Allen's achievement:

> There will be a discussion about what points in the film coincide with the lives of its two stars, but this, I think, is to detract from and trivalize the achievement of the film which at least puts Woody with the best directors we have.[32]

Penelope Gilliatt, reviewing Annie Hall in The New Yorker, was singularly impressed:

> In Annie Hall, Woody Allen technically pushes far ahead of anything he has done in the cinema before, playing with ideas in film which he has been experimenting in prose. His ear for metropolitan speech has never been finer, his approach to character never so direct, his feeling about hypocrisy never so ringing, his sobriety never so witty.[33]

And in a similar vein, Janet Maslin noted that "Whether Annie Hall is autobiographical or not, it has enabled Allen to progress from the realm of simple self-representation to that of the artfully shaped self portrait."[34] Among the major film critics, only Stanley Kauffmann had negative comments, especially regarding the casting and the special effects in the film. He saw the film as more of "a writer-performer's triumph over film than a triumph in it."[35]

The problem with these interpretations is that they are perceptive at only a very superficial level. The autobiographical elements which the critics cite do have a specific function.[36] As Allen's persona reflects "our common nature,"[37] his relationship with Annie in the film becomes the objective co-relative of the relationship between contemporary men and contemporary women, and Annie Hall, a manifestation of the social ferment of our times.

Structurally Annie Hall is "subjective and random" and is framed with a prologue and epilogue by the male protagonist, Alvy Singer.[38] Initially, Annie's image is molded by Alvy's characteristic attempt to recreate the "pygmalion motif" and transform her into "the perfect

pliant woman."[39] When Alvy meets Annie for the first time at the tennis club, she seems to represent the female stereotype with her "La de da" and her hesitant, unsure attempt to pick Alvy up. But in her endeavor to initiate the liaison, she reveals the "new woman," and the progression of the plot is coincidental with her transformation into the liberated woman of the seventies. At the end of the film Annie exhibits independence and an ability to detach sentiments and needs and to be practical and rational about it. Significantly, her relationships with Tony Lacy and especially with Alvy Singer, are distinguished by what Lasch defined as "the flight from feeling."

Alvy Singer is closely modelled on Woody Allen himself. Canby's assertion that Allen "is some kind of reflection of America's collective consciousness" is valid because his concerns and purpose in life are the concerns of contemporary Everyman.[40] In his obsession to prove himself sexually with women, Alvy is not only exhibiting his narcissistic personality, but also attempting to negate his fears of sexual failure. Annie's comment that he is like New York City, "this island unto yourself" reveals the ego-centric nature of his character. He never makes "any promise of permanence" to anyone, and is unable to accept anything but a reflection of his own image in his women. Ironically, in a sense, stereotypes had been reversed. In the shifting of "the pressure to perform" from the female to the male, Alvy is symptomatic of the present trend in male/female relationships.

The pattern of male/female relationships in Annie Hall is developed by the focus on Alvy's relationship with different women. When he meets Alison Porchnik, his first wife, the setting, the backstage of an auditorium where Alvy was to perform, is appropriate for the exchange. Against the backdrop of noise, chatter, and busy people, the camera isolates the two. Alvy's worries are related to his act, which was to follow. Alison, on the other hand, is more concerned with her attraction for Alvy: "I love being reduced to a cultural stereotype . . . I think you are cute." (AH) Alison's aggressive approach juxtaposed with Alvy's isolation and diminutive appearance, circumscribed by the spotlight on stage, defines Alvy's relative position in the battle of the sexes. It is easy to interpret the scene as the operation of what Bernard Shaw calls the "life force," but that would be an oversimplification of the actual significance of Alison's behavior. Alison, the "liberated" woman, asserts her independence and assumes the traditional male function of making "the first move." However, her role in the film is mainly designed to be a parallel to Annie's and help reaffirm the new trend in the relationship between the sexes. Consequently, her character is not fully rounded and only finds a limited expression in the bedroom sequence.

The thematic concerns in the film are elaborated through the carefully detailed and planned bedroom scenes. As in the case of Alvy's relationship with Alison, the bedroom is pivotal. The room stands out for its absence of vibrant colors. The only hues are white and shades

of cream and beige. The bedposts are imposing, and with the white shade table lamp tucked away neatly in one corner, there seems to be a geometric precision about the room. The pervading impression about the setting is in direct contrast to the image Alvy evokes: nervours and inept yet somehow wrapped in his own concerns. The initial shot of Alvy and Alison in bed is a long shot, and the "distance" negates any aura of intimacy. When he is unable to perform sexually, he tells Alison that his mind is engrossed with the possibility that President Kennedy was actually the victim of a conspiracy. Her complaint, "You are using the conspiracy theory as an excuse to avoid sex with me," (AH) is close to the truth. Alvy's sexual failure is brought about by the pressures on him to satisfy Alison's "multiorgasmic" potential, and is compounded by his inability to "communicate" with her. He is also obsessed with the "let's talk about me" concept and is unwilling to compromise because, unconsciously, he does not desire "permanence." These traits become the definitive pattern in the subsequent bedroom scenes.

The role of Alvy's second wife in the narrative is limited to a sequence at their home during a party at which he is reluctant to socialize. When his wife comes into the bedroom to get him to come out and meet the guests, he attempts to make love to her instead. The fixtures and the color composition emanate a blandness against which Alvy's animated antics are in sharp contrast. She is simply not interested because her personal needs and the social demands of

the moment are far more important to her. When she reprimands him, "Alvy, don't. You are using sex to express your hostility," (AH) she is actually pinpointing the crux of his problems. But the hostility is not directed at his guests. It is a narcissistic drive through which he seeks to reassert his validity as a "man." By rejecting his advances and thwarting his manliness, she opts for "sexual separatism" and asserts herself as an independent human being something more than a sex object. For Alvy, the experience is traumatic and a step toward the total rejection of his traditional sexual role in his affair with Pam, the reporter from Rolling Stone Magazine.

Even though Alvy's "one night stand" with Pam is chronologically midway through his affair with Annie, it completes a coherent pattern in conjunction with his relationship with his two wives. Pam is a typical product of the "ME Decade" with her involvement with the "Maharaji Ji"; she is also an independent career woman with an independent, liberated mind. "Sexual separatism" is her credo, and men to her are like mechanical gadgets directed to satisfy her purely sexual needs. The backdrop for the love-making, the bedroom as in earlier sequences, gives the impression of sterility. There is no evidence of emotion, only a "spent" nuance in her voice when she compliments Alvy after he has orally brought her to orgasm: "Sex with you is really a Kafkaesque experience." (AH) The humor of the scene is tainted by the inherent irony--the total rejection of Alvy Singer's manhood. His first wife had wanted sex and he had not been

able to perform. When he had wanted sex, his second wife had turned him down. Finally, when he and Pam have a simultaneous desire, his role is negated to that of a mechanical contraption. The progression of the three relationships is towards an inversion in traditional male/female roles. In Alvy's experience with Pam he is reduced to a mere sex object, and the inversion is complete.

Annie Hall focuses on the relationship between Alvy and Annie. Both of them are typical specimens of the age of narcissism and Women's Liberation, which dictates a lack of commitment in any relationship and diverts attention to the attainment of individual goals. For some inexplicable reason, the Machiavellic streak in their characters has not been noted by film critics. Maslin's appraisal of their motives and individual characteristics is typical:

> She [Keaton] is a complete fibbertigibbet, a creature so endearingly scatterbrained that she makes Allen seem serene by comparison . . . Keaton draws out a warm protective side of Allen, allowing him to become . . . Tarzan to her Jane.[41]

Though Jane Kramer has some interesting insights on Annie Hall, she similarly misses the significance of Annie's role and her ultimate direction in the film:

> The problem for Annie is that people in the real world whatever their intentions, do occasionally grumble about the meaning of it all, and every once in a while they make a virtue out of their anxiety. She is luscious fantasy--Peter Pan as sex object--but when she leaves Alvy in the end, she is not going off in search of herself as a grown up woman but as the child woman she was and wants to find again. She is determined to be Eve before the fall.[42]

Annie quite certainly makes no such presumptions. By reducing her to a psychological stereotype, Kramer limits and misses the contemporaneity of the character. Like Alvy, Annie is a product of the times, and their relationship mirrors the social ferment of the period.

The initial progression of their relationship is characterized by Alvy's vain attempt to mold Annie according to his own needs. He suggests that she take courses at the university and buys her books like Ernest Becker's The Denial of Death. Alvy's choice of Becker's book is significant because he fits Becker's definition of the potential "cosmic hero: who transmits his urge into another person in the form of a love object" and depends on her for "self glorification."[43] In the process he approximates Fromm's "narcissistic" personality.

Annie's development in the film is initiated by her singing debut. The sensitive interior photography helps in infusing the scene with a tactile quality. The constantly shifting point of view highlights her frustration at the unsympathetic response from the indifferent audience, whose chatter swamps her intense efforts. From Annie's point of view this scene is significant because "it indicates the beginning of a career by which she will mature" and eventually assert her independence.[44] From Alvy's perspective, however, she represents the avenue to assert his male ego and, also, recreate the "Pygmalion motif."

This sequence culminates in the most vital love-making sequence in the film. The top lighting, the extreme close up, and the silhou-

ette effects create a freshness and intimacy which is absent in the other love-making scenes. At this point, Annie is still in an embryonic state, but there is a definite indication about the future direction of their relationship. While Alvy asserts his manhood, Annie keeps asking "Was I really that good?", mirroring her inward desire, "Let's talk about me."

The romantic aura about their relationship evaporates after Annie assumes the male prerogative by unilaterally deciding to move in with Alvy. Her reasons, quite strikingly, are economic and though Alvy objects because of his narcissistic aversion to a permanent relationship, she manages to convince him of the practical advantages of living together. The love-making sequence which follows is symptomatic of their transition to a relationship of "convenience." Annie has already reached the state of "flight from feeling." The use of double exposure, which demonstrates how Annie is removed, attests to her "sexual separatism."[45] And her dependence on drugs as a means of eliciting sexual response reveals the effects of liberation. For Alvy, the failure to satisfy Annie is a manifestation of his fears of sexual failure and helps in eroding the traditional concept of male sexual prowess. Annie, in the strictly sexual sense, is independent of him.

When Annie takes Alvy to meet her family, his paranoia is distinctly outlined. Through an intercutting of reaction shots of all her family members, Allen creates a montage of the protagonist's inse-

cure consciousness. Looking at Granny Hall, Alvy shudders because she looks like a "classic Jew hater." Through this comic rendering of the cultural differences between them, the paranoia becomes an extension of the doubts about his manhood.

This doubt is further intensified when Alvy finds out that Annie is having an affair with her professor. Superficially, the confrontation between Annie and Alvy seems nothing out of the ordinary--a typical lover's quarrel. But again, the setting, a New York sidewalk with the milling and bustle of unconcerned people, establishes the time perspective. The camera lingers and deliberates and thus gives the audience an objective point of view. And the line of argument, "You are the one who never wanted to make a commitment" (Annie), "I have very guilty feelings toward marriage and children" (Alvy), "You don't think I am smart enough" (Annie), helps in sustaining the thematic concerns of the film. Alvy and Annie are unable to "communicate" because of Annie's "flight from feeling," which leads her into a promiscuous relationship with her professor.

Annie's open defiance and the justification of her affair is reflective of a new facet of her character. She does not have a guilt complex, and morality is never in consideration. In contrast, Alvy is flabbergasted. "Is it something I did?" he questions a passing lady, unable to fathom Annie's action in his narcissistic mind. Symbolically Annie's rejection of Alvy, a unilateral decision, is an assertion of her independence of men.

The way Annie and Alvy get back together anticipates the eventual direction of their relationship. A telephone call comes from Annie right after his "experience" with Pam. "There is a spider in the bathroom," she implores and he is immediately caught in the web. His quixotic attempt to kill the spider is magnified by the use of a mobile camera and angular shots. The oblique movements away from the confines of the frame help in creating disequilibrium and an impression of confusion. From Alvy's perspective, it is an "ego trip," and, more importantly, a reaffirmation of his manhood after his "catastrophe" with Pam. But, as the plot progresses, it becomes evident that Annie had offered a sexual bribe, designed more as a pre-planned chess move than as a romantic gesture. Alvy was still important to her ultimate goals.

The film often presents problems in interpretation because the point of view is Alvy's, and his credibility is in constant doubt. Alvy Singer is consistent only in his unstable behavior. The reverse movements in time, the fantasy projections, the recreation of the past, are all surrealistic patterns which tend to negate reality in concrete earthly terms. "Annie is no longer mine" seems to be the only verifiable empirical truth in the film. Alvy's attempts even in the last sequence of the film to rectify this--in the rehearsal of a scene from his play becomes clear when he reverses the actual dialogue between him and Annie to show her going back to him. His efforts to alter the past are actually narcissistic attempts, to prove

his validity as a man.

The final breakaway of their relationship is brought about by Annie's growing success as a singer. The second night club scene assumes Annie's point of view, and the deep focus creates a vibrant atmosphere. But this time the top lighting gives a freshness and vitality which anticipates the audience's positive reaction. "You were sensational," Alvy tells her, and it soon becomes clear that Tony Lacy's compliments and "clout" are more important to her future. The interaction of the movement of the verbal exchange with Tony Lacy is superbly exploited with the use of light and dark contrasts. Within the same shot, an honest statement is uttered in light while a contrasting one is delivered from the shadows. The effect is similar to the use of voice over and titles in some of the earlier sequences and the split screen sequence with the analyst, and reveals Annie's Machiavellian stance. Alvy was only the means to an end and she had reached that end. He was thus dispensable.

The split screen, point counter-point sequence between Alvy and Annie and their analysts reveals the basic nature of their relationship. Both of them emerge as typical of the narcissistic culture and the "Me Decade" in their incessant obsession with their individual selves. Annie also mirrors the effects of "liberation" when she admits to a tendency of "sexual separatism": "If I do go to bed with him, I am going against my will." (AH) The significant fact about their relationship, however, is only implicitly suggested. In their inflexible

egocentric approach to each other, both Alvy and Annie show no inclination for a permanent relationship. Their trip to California takes them further towards the eventual breakup. For Alvy the trip is a fiasco. He is struck by a mysterious ailment, which seems to be a manifestation of his ego-deflating fear of losing Annie. Annie takes complete control over his affairs and is intrigued by Tony Lacy's offer to record an album. For Annie, Tony Lacy and Hollywood represent limitless possibilities.

The scene on the flight back to New York accounts for one of the most dramatic sequences in the film. The merger of voice over and actual dialogue creates an "honest" moment where Annie, for once, talks about the impasse in their relationship and her plans for the future. Alvy concurs with her conclusions, and they decide to end their relationship.

The breakup is a severe blow to Alvy's narcissistic persona because it is a symbolic rejection of his total personality. Annie, on the other hand, is more rational and, to her, the relationship is a past episode which has no bearing on her future. When Alvy desperately flies to California and pleads, "I think we should get married," she replies, "It is perfectly fine here. I meet people and go to parks. It is a big step for me." (AH) Her logical appraisal completes Alvy's total rejection and she emerges as the "new woman." The setting again defines the time perspective--a sidewalk health food cafe amidst the hustle and bustle of contemporary America.

The texture of Annie Hall is embodied in the backdrop of the action, New York. The city's looming and impersonal existence has a stifling effect on interpersonal relationships. The texture of the mind of the people who inhabit New York is reflective of this. Annie directly equates Alvy with this city and though the terms of her metaphor are not very explicit, the men in Annie Hall exhibit a consistent pattern. Alvy's friend Rob is supposedly a debonair playboy. He wears a sun visor to preserve his youth. The other male character of any thematic consequence is Annie's brother, Duane, who is molded in a similar pattern. He is obsessed by a vision of a head-on collision through which he symbolically wants to "free himself from his own hunger and rage," like the true narcissist. The diverse personalities of these three characters coalesce to mirror the effects of the "Me Decade" on Everyman.

The symbolism in Annie Hall is intricately deployed to express similar thematic concerns. The bedroom, which becomes the center of Alvy's life, serves the dual purpose of inverting the traditional role of man and woman, making him the sex object instead of the woman and providing a means for the man to indulge in "self glorification" by displaying his sexual prowess. Similarly, the lobster and the spider, which are traditionally mercenary and deceptive, are utilized in extended sequences to satirize Alvy's mock heroic stance and to emulate the nature of the new liberated woman. Consequently, the double meaning of each symbol encapsulates the present state

of interpersonal relationships.

Annie Hall is a valid historical document of the social concerns of the "Me Decade." It projects the changing relationship between men and women because of the impact of the Women's Liberation Movement and a narcissistic culture. Alvy Singer, the protagonist, seeks only to assert his individual self and thus shirks any semblance of seeking permanent relationship. Annie Hall, on the other hand, is concerned only with her own goals and because of her "flight from feeling" and "sexual separatism," is unable to inject any emotion into the liaison. The result is the contemporary American drama, Annie Hall.

ENDNOTES

[1]Woody Allen, dir., Annie Hall, with Woody Allen, Diane Keaton, United Artists, 1977.

[2]Bertrand Russell, Marriage and Morals (New York: Bantam, 1959), pp. 137, 177.

[3]William H. Chafe, Woman and Equality: Changing Patterns in American Culture (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 117.

[4]Caroline Bird, Born Female (New York: David McKay, 1970).

[5]The individual states were given initially seven years to ratify this amendment, and thirty-five of the necessary thirty-eight did so. It has, however, had limited success recently, and some states have revoked the amendment after ratifying it initially. The Illinois legislature turned down the amendment once more recently.

[6]Anne Koedt, "The Myth of the Vaginal Orgasm," Notes From the Second Year: Women's Liberation, 1970, pp. 37-41.

[7]William H. Masters and Virginia Johnson, Human Sexual Response (Boston: Little, Brown, 1966).

[8]Kate Millett, Sexual Politics (New York: Doubleday, 1970), pp. 117-18.

[9]Christopher Lasch, The Culture of Narcissism (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1978), p. 194.

[10]Veronica Geng, "Requiem for the Women's Movement," Harper's, November, 1976, p. 68.

[11]Lasch, p. 199.

[12]Lasch, p. 199.

[13]Lasch, p. 199.

[14]Lasch, p. 200.

[15]Tom Wolfe, Mauve Gloves & Madmen, Clutter & Vine (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1976), p. 143.

[16]Fromm defines narcissism as a personality indulging in vanity, self-glorification; in other words, a state of mind in which the universe appears as a reflection of the self. The Heart of Man: Its Genius for Good and Evil (New York: Harper and Row, 1964), Ch. 4.

[17]Shirley Sugerman, Sin and Madness: Studies in Narcissism (Philadelphia: Westminister Press, 1976), p. 12.

[18]Lasch, p. 202.

[19]Wolfe, p. 156.

[20]Molly Haskell, From Reverence to Rape (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1977), p. 363.

[21]Haskell, pp. 327-28.

[22]Marjorie Rosen, Popcorn Venus (New York: Coward, McCann, and Geoghegan, 1973), p. 361.

[23]Jane Kramer, "This So Called New Women in Film," Horizon, May, 1978, p. 30.

[24]Maurice Yacowar, Loser Take All (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1979), p. 207.

[25]Stanley Price, "Play It Again Sam," Plays and Players, November, 1969, p. 24.

[26]Yacowar, p. 197.

[27]Yacowar, p. 215.

[28]Leo Lerman, "Woody the Great," Vogue, December, 1972, p. 144.

[29]Charles Marowitz, "Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Woody Allen," The Listener, July 7, 1977, p. 9.

[30]Yacowar, p. 216.

[31]Kramer, p. 33.

[32]Vincent Canby, "Somber Comedy," The New York Times, Film Reviews (New York: New York Times and Arno Press, 1979), p. 40.

[33]Penelope Gilliat, "Woody at His Best Yet," The New Yorker, April 25, 1977, pp. 136-137.

[34]Janet Maslin, "Woody's New Winner," Newsweek, May 2, 1977, p. 78.

[35]Stanley Kauffmann, "Annie Hall," The New Republic, May 14, 1977, p. 22.

[36]Allen himself has said that the film is not autobiographical, though it contains a few facts like almost all his films. Iain Johnstone, "Anhedonia and Annie Hall," The Listener, May 11, 1978, pp. 603-604.

[37]Yacowar, p. 10.

[38]Maslin, p. 78.

[39]Kramer, p. 33.

[40]Vincent Canby, "Woody Allen is the American Bergman," The New York Times, Film Reviews (New York: The New York Times and Arno Press, 1979), p. 42.

[41]Maslin, p. 78.

[42]Kramer, p. 33.

[43]Ernest Becker, The Denial of Death (The Free Press, 1973), p. 167.

[44]Yacowar, p. 173.

[45]Maslin's reading of scenes as districting is simplistic as the thematic needs for such a device, p. 78.

CHAPTER IV

THE WAR AT HOME AND ABROAD: COMING HOME (1978)

"I want to spend the night with you," Sally tells Luke in the prelude to the most poignant moment in Coming Home. Earlier that day a young veteran, Billy, had killed himself, and Luke, in an act of symbolic protest, had locked and chained himself to the gate of the Marine Depot. At this point, sex is the furthest thing from Sally's mind, and her decision is motivated only by a desire to lend Luke moral support for his action. Vincent Canby's analysis of Sally's motivation is from an entirely different perspective: "Should she [Sally] follow her heart with the other vet who, though paralyzed from the waist down, has taught her the joy of orgasm and who shares her newly raised political unconsciousness?"[1] Pauline Kael's review of Coming Home in the New Yorker also raises similar questions: "The question in the viewer's mind is, what will she feel when her husband comes home and they go to bed? Will she respond and, if she does, how will he react?"[2] Sally's motivation and choices are not as clear cut as Mr. Canby and Ms Kael indicate, and the love-making sequence is clearly symbolic. Luke, for the first time, is able to overcome the physical and psychological limitations of his disability. Even though this scene is more dynamic in contrast to the earlier

scene between Sally and Bob, the vitality is not a sign of lust; it is more an indication of mutual need. Sally responds fully because she is an equal partner for the first time. The excellent camera work in this scene helps in diffusing the erotic effect and transferring the focus on the visual and thematic intensity of the scene. All possible geometric angles and distances are explored, with one shot approximating the likeness of Michelangelo's "Pieta."

Coming Home delineates the conflict between two microcosms--the microcosm of Vietnam, where the harsh rules and laws of a purposeless war operate, and the microcosm of the American society, which operates on traditional norms, has its own concept of hero and heroism, and which refuses to accept defeat in any form. Thus, Bob, Sally, Luke, Viola, and Billy, who are all linked to Vietnam because their lives are shaped by it, must fight for survival as viable human beings in an alien world. In refusing to recognize the realities of the war in Vietnam, American society shirks its moral responsibility. To overcome the prejudice, the survivors must readjust, form alliances, and compromise their ideals. To survive is to ultimately win the war at home.

The anti-war movement, which gathered substantial momentum in the latter part of the 1960s, stemmed from adverse reaction to the draft and the war, and swept American streets and campuses culminating in the death of six people at Kent State and Jackson State Universities. The government's attempts to stifle the movement

failed.[3]

As the 1970s opened, the national character was wrenchingly altered by the widening of the Vietnam War into Laos and Cambodia. The attempt at Vietnamization of Laos and the Laotian fiasco showed how the war in Vietnam would be ultimately lost.[4] The escalation of the conflict changed the basic fabric of American society. In contemporary society, war impinges on the entire population in a much more comprehensive way than earlier wars did. As most armies involve young people, there is the inherent problem of dislocations from society and family, and the subsequent physical and emotional pressures on all parties concerned. Moreover, from the war stemmed "a new type of individualism"[5] which bordered on existential philosophies.[6]

When the first American soldier landed in Vietnam, he was imbued with the traditional idea that he was fighting for truth and justice, and that the war was a quest for adventure and glory. He was on his way to emulate what Joseph Campbell calls the "mythological hero . . . the champion not of things become but of things becoming,"[7] and to proceed to "the crossing of the threshold into another realm of action and experience, the road of trials, and eventually the return to his people to whom he can convey a new dimension of wisdom and of "freedom to live."[8] This vision was also sustained by a nation which had never lost a war. When the debacle finally occurred, American society blamed and ultimately rejected the people who had

fought in it.

In 1975, James R. Schlesinger described what he thought was the prevalent mood in the country:

> . . . the vitality of the nation's military establishment, for its perceptions of itself, its precision of mission, flow from a sense of purpose deriving from that larger national unity and spirit. . . . Vision and confidence have diminished; a vacuum of the spirit has appeared. It has become a grave question whether national unity, combined with freedom, still elicits a response sufficient that, in Lincoln's phrase, nations 'so conceived and so dedicated can long endure.'"[9]

This mood was sustained by the feeling of the returning veterans who were alienated and "had degrees of bitterness, distrust and suspicion of those in positions of authority and responsibility."[10] Murray Polner, who has interviewed a wide cross-section of Vietnam veterans, discovered that "not one of them--hawk, dove, or haunted--was entirely free of doubt about the nature of the war and the American role in it" and they retained the "gnawing suspicion that 'it was all for nothing.'"[11] In assessing the cumulative effect, Polner says:

> . . . the interviews revealed an erosion in faith, a growing degree of alienation that could be of grave import. Vietnam veterans are the children of the era of mass media and mass education of unnumerable wars in a thermonuclear age, and of disapproving climate at home; they cannot unquestioningly accept 'their war' in the way their fathers regarded the fight against Germany and Japan in World War II. . . . Many . . . confess an inability to understand why they and their buddies were forced to undergo such brutalizing experiences. What had it all to do with ideologies? Or with love for their country?[12]

These are symptoms of what has been called the "post-Vietnam Syndrome."[13]

These doubts were also translated into other areas of their lives, including their personal relationships with the opposite sex. Lifton says that "Vietnam had absolutized the whole question of intimacy for its American survivors."[14] These veterans, plagued by recurring visions of death, usually avoided intimate relationships because "love or intimacy, in other words, posed the threat of still another form of corruption and disillusionment of still another death."[15] Also, existing relationships floundered because the veteran was unable to relate to the hostile surroundings at home and communicate his "inner turmoil to his wife because she was also an alien: 'My God [I realized], she doesn't have any idea of what she went through.'"[16]

Finally, the returning veteran was obsessed with a sense of animating guilt and faced with the need for self expiation and "bringing significance to his death immersion."[17] Gregory Lukacs, in an interview shortly before his death, predicted the ultimate result of Vietnam would be beneficial to the Americans because of the object lesson the defeat offered.[18] The benefits would filter through the efforts of the "anti-war veteran who seeks his redemption by 'rejecting the romance of war and exposing the filth beneath.'"[19]

But not every veteran has survived the ordeal of the re-adjustment at home. Thousands have been emotionally crippled for life, and 1,172 returning soldiers committed suicide.[20] Films have only very recently started to portray the problem of the returning veteran objectively. This was a big step for the war film genre, because it had

been shackled to the myth surrounding the American military.

Since the dawn of the film industry, film makers had portrayed the American Army as invincible and the soldiers as heroes who rarely could do any wrong. Their loyalty, nobility, and courage were unparalleled, and war itself was a veritable crusade to be fought with an all-consuming fervor. The reasons for the conflagration were rarely questioned--the implication was that wars fought by the Americans were just, and that the victorious soldier usually returned home to the open arms of a proud family and a grateful nation.

This was the general pattern until the early 1960s, and there was little reason for anybody to complain. The victory in World War II and the emancipation of the world from Hitler was a singular achievement. The Korean War was only a stalemate; and the politicians, and not the Armed Forces received most of the "flap." And the years of peace during the cold war were credited to an efficient, alert military.[21]

One of the early war films, The Big Parade (1925), set down the general formula which succeeding films followed. It represented a subtle blending of films which were particularly appealing to Americans. As Michael T. Isenberg points out: "The war was perceived not only as democracy's war in a right sense, but also as an intrinsic leveller of class pretensions."[22] The American protagonist, Apperson, was not only a hero, but also a loyal friend, and his eventual acceptance of a peasant girl as his mate made him the epitome

of nobility. Apperson himself sums up his approach to the war: "I came to fight--not to wait and rot in a lousy hole while they murder my pal."[23] He was a perfect manifestation of the popular concept of the American soldier.

While the Big Parade was in no way laudatory of war itself, it did not question Allied aims. Robert M. Finch, in reviewing the film, made a perceptive comment on the traditional pattern it was setting:

> It is the first production that I have ever seen that has caught the spirit of national pride that makes the United States Army the greatest fighting organization on earth--the subtle yearning to acquit themselves honorably in doing what the situation demands that brings heroes out of the slums and the mansions of wealth alike.[24]

This format was generally emulated by war films until the political and militaristic mishaps in the 1960s paved the way for a more objective presentation.

By 1960, when John F. Kennedy had come to power, things in the political arena started changing drastically. The Bay of Pigs disaster was blamed on military planners, and the nation for the first time questioned the efficiency of the Armed Forces.[25] The Cuban Missile Crisis also cast doubts on the assumptions on which peace was being maintained by the military--the threat of annihilation through the deployment of nuclear weapons which were designed to keep the enemy at bay. Thus, Stanley Kubrick's Dr. Strangelove (1964) was not only a grim picture of the technological and human possibilities for the

nuclear holocaust, but also a satire on the traditional image of the military. The importance of Dr. Strangelove to the changing mode can hardly be overemphasized. As Stanley J. Solomon says quite aptly: "it is the high point of the cinema of atomic cataclysm and among the most anti-military statements in the entire war genre."[26] As the nation entered the Vietnam era and felt the socio-cultural impact of the defeat, the anti-war stance became more of a rule than an exception.[27]

Jane Fonda, the star and a co-producer of Coming Home, was actively involved with the anti-war movement. Her anti-war activities got her labelled "un-American," "Hanoi Hattie," and "traitor."[28] But she herself insists that Coming Home was not a "basic anti-war message" film and that it would reveal her attitude toward the soldiers involved in the conflagration. "One things that I hope will come out of this, besides the general impact of the movie, is that we were far from hostile toward the men who fought the war. They were victims of the war."[29] The focus thus is not the actual war, but on its social impact on the returning veteran. In corroborating the importance of the "social context," Fonda says, "You can't avoid the fact that the guy is crippled because he was in Vietnam, and that she is having an extramarital relationship and that her husband is in Vietnam and going crazy."[30] In this sense Coming Home is not a pure war film but a conglomerate of two different sub-genres.

Stanley J. Solomon, in classifying the war film genre, includes

"the Anti-War Film" and "Victims of War" as two subcategories.[31] The recent films on the Vietnam conflict, Michael Cimino's The Deer Hunter, Francis Ford Copolla's Apocolypse Now, and especially Hal Ashby's Coming Home, embrace both categories. The last mentioned film, while taking an "anti-war" stance, also focuses on the problems confronting the returning Vietnam veteran, who is unique because he symbolizes America's first major defeat in a major war which was not fully justified to the American public. The process of readjustment is a big stumbling block for him because not only did he have to confront an animating-guilt, but he has to also validate his existence in a society which is essentially unsympathetic.

The plot of Coming Home has three focal characters whose lives coalesce symbolically at the end of the film. The first is Bob Hyde, a volatile Marine Captain, the second his wife Sally, and third a paraplegic Vietnam veteran, Luke Martin. As the film opens Bob goes off to Vietnam, excited about the heroic possibilities and spurred by a spirit of competitiveness. Sally, as a traditional wife, has to readjust to a new reality after her husband goes away. To make her existence viable, she takes up volunteer work at the base hospital, rents a house on the beach, and buys a new car. At the hospital she meets and has an affair with the paraplegic Martin, who is bitterly against the war and who, with her help, ultimately becomes a more independent and effective human being.

In the process she slowly drifts apart from her husband. When

she meets him in Hong Kong during his "R and R," they are unable to communicate. When he finally comes home, he finds a hostile society to which he is unable to relate. He also finds out (through the F. B. I.) about Luke and his wife and feels totally betrayed and disillusioned. He confronts Luke and then Sally, who tell him that the affair is over and that she loves only him. This explanation does not satisfy Bob, who opts for the only way to preserve his honor--suicide.

Coming Home is a neatly structured film, clearly presenting a conflict between two microcosms of opposing values, Vietnam and its war-enveloped society, and America with its tradition-oriented mentality. Vincent Canby's assertion that the thematic point of view of the film is cluttered because "Too many things have been tacked onto the main body" is unjustified because he clearly misses the significance of the repetitive patterns which help in establishing the conflict between the two worlds.[32]

The opening sequence of the film juxtaposes the healthy, traditionally patriotic Marine Bob Hyde, who is jogging, against a group of maimed Vietnam veterans venting their feelings about the war. Significantly, Bob is on his way to Vietnam, the others have come home. The two detailed love-making scenes in the film are also in obvious contrast. The love-making sequence between Bob and Sally is notable for its listlessness and monotonous quality. On the other hand, the love-making between Sally and Luke is intense and vital. Billy's suicide by self-injection reflects his defeatist credo, and is

quite different from Bob's, whose death is classically heroic. And the final sequence of the film which is a montage of shots contrasting Bob and his ritualistic preparation for death with Sally and her desire for normalcy, and Luke and his didactic attempts at self-expiation, clearly emulates and defines the patterns the other contrasting scenes have already set. Bob, in life, is the "mythological hero," a product of the orthodox mentality of the American society. In death, even though he has seen through the "sham" of the society's beliefs, he chooses to go out in the stance of the traditional hero. Billy, on the other hand, is the victim of circumstances. Unable to handle the transition from the realities of combat to the realities of the every day society, he takes the escapist way out. Luke's course of action is motivated by a desire to redeem himself from his animating guilt by being the new "prophet-hero" and in the process establish a credible existence in a hostile world.[33] And the other survivor, Sally, seeks a new meaning in her life by opting for the security of married life and "normalcy." The significant fact about all the seemingly individualistic actions is that the characters, who are deeply affected by Vietnam, are reacting to the rigid, unsympathetic norms of the microcosm of American society.

All the characters in Coming Home are fighting their own symbolic wars. At the beginning of the film, Bob is on his way to Vietnam to fight the "communists," and he admits that "I am actually excited. . . . I have competitive nervousness. I feel like I am

representing the United States in the Olympics."[34] "He revels," as William Crane says, "in the idea of capturing a 'Commie Ak-47' for his friend, a gift which would symbolize victory and success. . . . He wants to win, but against odds, a feat of Olympic proportions."[35] Bob is the traditionally capable, proud, and competitive Marine, driven by the image that a just war is an opportunity for adventure and glory and also for ultimately becoming the "mythological hero." Compared to the other characters in the film, Bob is the only one who holds on to the traditional ideals, and as the film opens, this distinction is immediately made. As he climbs a hill on his jogging route, the back-lighting from the setting sun silhouettes his aquiline features against the sky. The long shot which frames him, coupled with the slow tempo of the background music, projects a feeling of desolation. Bob appears isolated in his efforts. The love-making scene with Sally, which soon follows, is indicative not only of the state of their relationship, but also of their individual characteristics. As Sally finishes Bob's packing, he approaches the bedroom imitating shipboard commands: "Now hear this . . . go directly to the bedroom . . . Do not collect dinner." (CH) He approaches love-making with the same mechanical stance. Sally is tender but passive--Bob is the demonating partner. His passion has an unspontaneous quality, and he seems driven to justify his manhood. Sally is only the means to that end.[36]

When Bob bids Sally goodbye, he is controlled and unemotional

and maintains his "manly" stance. But by the time Sally meets him in Hong Kong a few months later (Bob is on his R and R), things have changed drastically. He is distinctly alienated, a different man altogether. He appears edgy, distant, brooding, and he tells Sally, "how my men were chopping heads off"--unable to comprehend the revulsion to war in his rigidly programmed mind. It is apparent that, for Bob, the external war had been internalized. When Sally insists, "I want to know what it is like," he in unable to communicate his feelings to her, because he himself cannot fathom them. Bob's alienation confirms Polner's conclusions about the communication gap. His inability to reach Sally is also symbolized in the interior setting, which, for the first time, gives an impression of space and distance. Their hotel room, by a clever manipulation of lenses and camera angles, is made to appear vast and forbidding, quite like the vast expanse of the rooms and halls of Xanadu in Citizen Kane.[37] It is also singularly striking that now "closeness" to people bothers Bob and he chooses to leave the crowded bar for the loneliness of the hotel room. Even though he will never be a conscientious "anti-war warrior" like Luke Martin, the war has already left an indelible mark on him. He had seen through the "sham" of the idealistic concept of war and the mythological hero-role he believed in. His problem was trying to live with the disillusionment.

Sally is the most resilient character in the film because of her capacity to adjust from traditional values to the stark realities of

life after Bob leaves for Vietnam. Initially, she is presented as a weak, tender, loyal, and defenseless wife. Bob is aware of her basic character traits and tells a friend that Sally does not understand the war, but accepts it.[38] She is conditioned to be the typical girl; in her high school yearbook she had indicated that what she wanted in life most was a husband. Thus, when Bob leaves for Vietnam, she is not only left without a credible purpose in life, but also without a caretaker in an environment which becomes hostile to her because of Bob's absence. She soon realizes that here at home she would have to fight her own war for a viable existence.

The war manifests itself from the very moment Bob bids her goodbye. She has to leave her home and allies herself with Viola Munson, a lively, spirited girl, who was fighting her own war. Bereft of her wifely duties, she volunteers to work at the local hospital with the veterans. Her initial attempts to assert her usefulness are thwarted. When she proposes to the wives of the officers at the base that they publicize the state of the veterans through their newsletter so as to attract more volunteers to work on the hospital staff, she is curtly turned down. Her feeble protest, "I am really shocked. You wouldn't feel that way if they were your husbands," (CH) hardly creates a tremor to bother anybody.

When she meets Luke Martin for the first time in the film there is a symbolic clash. Luke, on his gurney, runs into her, has a temper tantrum instantly, and has to be drugged. The next confrontation

between the two is more significant because it does reveal Sally in a process of transition to self dependence. When Luke questions her motives for working with the disabled veterans, she is so shocked that her hostility explodes into a manifestation of violence. She screams, "Why do you have to be such a bastard?" Then she lifts his bed, drops it roughly, and walks away.

The war at home which isolates Sally compels her to readjust and struggle for a viable existence, and is also symbolically augmented by the constructive interior setting. Sally is repeatedly shown moving upstairs, and along corridors and aisles. It is not surprising that hardly any top lighting is used. Shadows abound, and the initial outdoor sequences are all set after dark. The listless setting is an important aspect of the representation of Sally's battle, which seems to be not so much against people as against abstract concepts. To overcome this defeatist phase in her life, Sally arms herself and creates a facade, not with conventional weapons, but with conventional symbols.

The first step in Sally's "general mobilization" is the acquisition of a house on a beach and a sportscar to nullify her orthodox "middle of the road" image. She gets a new hairdo in tune with her new image and injects herself into her job to give her life a sense of purpose. Viola not only becomes her roommate, but an ally in her quest for a viable existence. And seemingly for the first time, her newly acquired worldly sense shows through in her relationship with Bob;

she chooses not to mention the new house and the car to him in her letters. When Luke Martin comes into her life, it becomes apparent that the relationship is based on mutual need and is essential to her cogent survival. Luke supplements her need to be depended on and complements her need to be wanted as a woman. Thus her life is given a sense of direction, and the vacuum left by Bob is filled by Luke.

Luke Martin, like Sally, is the typical "all American boy." He was the captain of his high school football team and when the opportunity came to fight for his country, he joined the Marines with the noblest of intentions--to be a warrior-hero, heralded by his nation for his prowess and the glory he would help in attaining. He returns from Vietnam, totally disillusioned. The question of the moral validity of the war obsessed him. But the shock of being totally ignored by the nation he had fought for numbed him into passivity.

The film opens with a shot of veterans discussing the war. Their comments, "Nobody got the right to tell anybody what to do," "Some of us need to justify what the fuck we did there," are authentic expressions of the doubts which plague their minds.[39] Significantly, Luke Martin does not take part in the discussion. He had become a brooding vegetable, submerged in his maiming injury, and like Isiah, unable to justify the fate that had been inflicted on him.

Luke moved around the hospital on a gurney, a fact which stressed not only his limited mobility, but also his lack of faith in his own

capabilities. He sought to assert himself through temper tantrums and self-provoked confrontations with the staff of the hospital. He was clearly "alienated," and this is highlighted by the constricting aisles, hallway, low ceiling, and the hazy light in the hospital. Because of the wheels on his bed, Luke Martin got around, but he failed to realize that he was moving in a maze of rooms and halls, a maze which, like an ulcer, had also scarred his mind.

Things start changing in Luke's life after he meets Sally. Initially Luke avoids Sally, afraid of an intimate relationship, like the typical veteran Lifton describes. But Sally does not pity him; instead, she is genuinely concerned about his depression. When Sally attempts to release the bands which tie Luke to his bed, against her own sense of propriety, he becomes sure of her intentions. Thus, it is not surprising that on the day Sally sports a new hairdo, Luke has a wheel chair. It is apparent that both characters are growing and converging--she, in an acceptance of a non-conventional experience to seek a new meaning in her life, he, in finding a coherent direction out of his new limitations.

Luke is soon able to use his new mobility to take part in wheelchair sports, and he befriends Billy Munson, another veteran who has serious emotional problems. After he is released from the hospital, he gets his "own place" and a car--symbols of his new found freedom and also of his readiness to fight the war of viable existence at home. On the night when Billy takes his own life, Luke locks the gate of the

Marine Corps Recruitment Depot and chains himself to the gate; his act becomes a combined expression of a conglomerate of images and forms, the Vietnam environment, the post Vietnam experience, and the diverse emotions of guilt, rage, and altered self process. Paradoxically, by physically chaining himself, Luke manages to remove the mental shackles which had stifled him for so long.

Bill Munson is a minor character, but his depiction is important to the overall scheme of the film. When he is first shown strolling with his sister on the veranda of the hospital, there is nothing to suggest that he is anything but normal. But as the camera moves the character into closer focus, it becomes apparent that he exhibits all the symptoms of "post-Vietnam Syndrome." He had not only become a neurotic, but also seems to have regressed in emotional maturity, and had the mental stability of a child.

The second sequence Bill appears in shows the extreme volatility of his emotions. The quartet, Luke and Sally and Viola and Billy, were sitting together on the grass right after the veteran's sporting activities, shielded from the rest of the world by a wire fence. After they all request Billy to sing, he gives in with the nonchalant pleasure of a child. But the guitar, which in a way epitomizes his sensitive nature and helps create the aura of normalcy around him, cannot at this point protect him from the onslaught of reality. He breaks down and cries like a child on Luke's shoulder. The aural montage of the scene which juxtaposes a patriotic speech with the handicapped vet-

erans, has developed tensions which Billy reflects. He is a despondent creature capable of surviving only in the confines of the hospital, among other despondent creatures. The fence which symbolically protects the group from the onslaught of reality is not enough to protect Billy. The signs of loneliness and the sun, so foreign to him, affect his hypersensitive soul, and he reacts because he will never be normal.

Ultimately, Billy becomes the first symbolic victim of the war at home. Unable to overcome the mental affliction and unable to comprehend the unnerving picture of reality he sees, he takes his own life. In the process he is reduced to a statistic of the Vietnam era. Like his namesake in One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest, Billy has had his Waterloo and now there was only one way out.

Billy's sister, Viola, is probably the most stoic character in the film. Underneath her outgoing character, she is a sensitive, caring person who becomes involved in the war at home to aid her younger brother in his struggle for a meaningful existence. The initial happy-go-lucky image she presents fades after she takes Sally home. Her plea to Sally, "don't go away," is sincere and reflects her intense need for companionship. And her assessment of her brother's predicament, that, "They sent him home without an ignition," is expressed in her intense drive to be the generating force in his survival. When Virgil has his "R and R" and asks her to come and see him in Hong Kong, her loyalty to her brother and her fierce independence

show through as she tells Sally: "What am I supposed to do? Walk out of my job? Walk out on my brother?" (CH)

In her alliance with Sally, she complements Sally's unsure nature with her outgoing, assured self. But on the day Billy takes his life, Viola becomes the second victim of the war at home. On the evening of that day, Sally returns after seeing Bob in Hong Kong, unaware of what has happened. As she walks up to the house, she sees Viola standing on the beach and staring into the distance. It is a classic scene, with Viola in soft focus in the mellow evening light, and Sally, yelling in urgency, with the ocean background, which seems to mirror the immensity of Viola's grief.

That evening Viola puts back her mask of self assuredness. Along with Sally, she goes to a bar where they allow themselves to be "picked up" by two men and accompany them to their apartment. There, Viola's masochistic disrobing becomes a symbolic baring of her suffering soul and she crumbles under the strain, revealing psychotic tendencies for the first time. In fighting the war at home, she has herself become a casualty. Viola's disrobing has a literary precedent in O'Neill's use of masks in the Great God Brown, where Brown's mask is used as a camouflage to hide his soul.[40]

The focal point of the film is the relationship between Sally and Luke, which develops more out of mutual need than because of any physical attraction. The initial conflict between the two thaws after Sally's conciliatory gesture of attempting to release his hands which

were bound to the bed. When Sally gets a new hairdo and Luke gets his wheelchair there is a change in their relationship. They both realize that they are fighting the same war for meaningful survival. The poignant dinner scene which follows is one of the most memorable in the film. The scene of homely familiarity is charged by the fact that Sally realizes for the first time that she is alone in the presence of a man. But her moral conditioning shows through, and she says, simply, "I have never been unfaithful to my husband." Later on in the film this becomes a superfluous question because this moral point of view is not the essential point. As the sequence ends, they touch as an indication of a bond based on interdependence and a mutual quest for viability.

In the scene in which Sally tells Luke that she is leaving for Hong Kong, a symbolic fence still separates the two. While she is away there is a progressive development in Luke--he gets a car for himself, asserting his new independence. And on the night Billy kills himself, and Luke locks the gate of the Marine Depot in protest, Sally sees his new sense of direction. He was not only protesting Billy's death, but, in an extended sense, fulfilling his role of the "prophet-hero" by taking a definitive stance against the war. After this, their climactic union becomes more than a simple physical union. They both realize that their alliance was an endeavor to find a meaningful existence.

The progression of their relationship after the love-making is

indicated in the quickened pace of the film and in a time transition montage of sequences in which the two are shown doing things together, creating, sharing, laughing. The scene in which Sally rides on Luke's lap on the beach is indicative of the new status of their relationship. Luke has not only assumed a more assertive and supportive role, but also helped Sally in filling the vacuum in her life created by Bob's absence. Luke and Sally create a cocoon around their relationship, and yet they never lose perspective. After they learn that Bob is returning home, they realize that their lives were destined to take different courses. But for a moment, at least, their life had meaning and they had transcended the effects of the war.

The title, Coming Home, is used in an ironic sense, and this becomes apparent in the scene in which Bob comes home. Bob's inner turmoil is evident on his face as he steps off the plane; the camera frames both him and Sally in a single shot, and a huge wire fence looms between them, indicating the impasse in their relationship. Bob's coming home is not what he had expected it to be. He still maintains the visage of his former beliefs as he shows his aversion for a group of young people demonstrating. But at home he finds that the transition from one microcosm to the other is not automatic. He becomes edgy and neurotic and is unable to communicate with Sally or Viola. When Viola questions him about his wound, he explodes. Viola and Sally and their society seem like a hostile world to him; he retreats to the only semblance of familiarity left for him--

the officer's club. When Bob returns home with a group of enlisted men, he is dead drunk. He has, for the time being, managed to weave his own web of reality; but the illusions he had built in his programmed mind were crumbling.

The following day turns out to be the last day in Bob Hyde's life. Since the day of his arrival in Vietnam, he has seen all his ideals smashed by unexpected complications. The Marine he discovered was not an angel; the war not just; the mythological hero was only a victim of chance. And on this day the climactic blow--he finds out that the fairy tale princess, in waiting for him, had like Annie, broken out of the traditional mold and disgraced him. The fact that Sally has betrayed him seems to be beside the point--more important was the fact that he, the "mythological hero," had lost face, and that his final illusion of life had crumbled. When he confronts Luke, he is the epitome of self-control and restraint. The scene has significant melodramatic possibilities, but is more memorable because of what is not said, the body language. Bob's slow, almost tedious walk, that of a broken man, the finality in his tone, "that is all I have to say," (CH) and Luke's nonplussed face, indicate that the two cannot communicate. Luke has readjusted to the new realities of life in the microcosm of American society. Bob, with his traditional mentality, is an alien. Unable to comprehend or to sympathize with the situation, he retreats to his home, his "castle."

At home Bob puts up a last desparate struggle. Stanley Kauffmann,

in discussing this scene, oversimplifies Bob's reaction: "When he finds out about his wife's affair he threatens killing . . . ."[41] Actually, Bob's final illusion is destroyed in this scene. He reverts to his original personality, a soldier in battle, and waits for Luke with a loaded rifle. When Luke finally arrives, they cannot communicate, speaking on entirely different levels. Bob, with his idealistic notions, interprets Luke's affair with Sally as an act of hostility and re-lives the war experience. And when Luke takes away Bob's rifle and unloads it, the mirror of his "mythological hero" personality, he symbolically castrates him. The only alternative for Bob after this is to die with his illusions.

The final segment of the film is a montage suggestive of existential beliefs as it posits three varying examples of individual existence: Luke's radical method of self-expiation, Sally's stoic adjustment, and Bob's stance of a classical hero.[42] Luke's speech to the group of high school kids is directed to act as a deterrent against war. He, like the soldier-hero of All Quiet on the Western Front, who declares "when it comes to dying for one's country, it is better not to die at all," is forced by his own bitter realization and animating guilt to do whatever he can to redeem himself. Sally, on the other hand, with her remarkable resiliency, prepares to help Bob in rediscovering his bearings and in etching out a viable existence. But Bob, consistent to his traditional concepts of heroism, seeks to expiate himself.

Bob's insistence "to go out a hero" is consistent with his charac-

ter. There are obvious classical echoes. It is significant that he, like Achilles, is struck in his heel. And after he receives his token of earthly recognition, the Purple Heart, and realizing fully that a viable existence was impossible for him, seeks the classical expiation by symbolically "cleansing" himself in the sea.[43]

The two major flaws in the film lie in the delineation of two different aspects of the plot. The first flaw is the insertion of the F. B. I. surveillance segment, which is used later to let Bob know of his wife's activities while he was away. Even though such events have historical precedents, the whole sequence in the film appears contrived. The most logical solution to this problem would have been to have Sally tell Bob of her affair with Luke. Her character in the film is fully developed and consistent, and an impression of integrity pervades it. Bob's life was built on an illusion of preconceived notions, and, coming from Sally, the news would have more aptly fit the pattern of self-realization he experiences. The second flaw has to do with the logical thematic development of the film. In the last segment of the film there seems to be an implicit insistence by the director on apologizing for the relationship between Luke and Sally. After Bob becomes aware of their affair, both Luke and Sally stress that there was nothing between them. This obviously disturbs the thematic integrity of the film, because the mere moral sexuality point of view is never the center of focus. The issues involved are more comprehensive, and dealing with the question of a credible survival in a symbolic war.

Their relationship is the matrix of life itself.

Frank Rich, in reviewing the film for Time notes that the stories' relationships are not resolved.[44] But, that is precisely the point being made. Resolutions in life are not clear cut as Mr. Rich thinks they are, and that is the enigma of life. This in no way takes away from the thematic unity of the film, which is sustained also by a relevant musical score. Vincent Canby's objections that "Mr. Ashby has poured music into the movie like a child with maple syrup on his pancake"[45] is inconsequential. The music is not only a point of reference but is also a mood-evoking device. And throughout the film, it is in harmony with the expressed thematic concerns. Without doubt, the impact of the war at home is more poignant and more credible because of this fusion.

Thus, Coming Home graphically projects the conflict between a traditional society used to winning and a society where the inconsequential norms of an unjust war operate. The victims of the Vietnam war are the warriors who must somehow learn to live in the traditional society which rejects their heroic role because the war had been lost. To survive in the 1970s, they must learn to live with the stigma and transcend it by finding a new meaning, a cogent direction in life.

ENDNOTES

[1]Vincent Canby, "Detritus of War," The New York Times Film Reviews, 1977-78 (New York: The New York Times and Arno Press, 1979), p. 170.

[2]Pauline Kael, "Mythologizing the Sixties," New Yorker, February 20, 1978, p. 121.

[3]C. B. S. Documentary, American Dream/American Nightmare: 1970's, 1980.

[4]American Dream/American Nightmare: 1970's.

[5]Edward Shils, "American Society and the War in Indochina," The Vietnam Legacy, ed. Anthony Lake (New York: New York University Press, 1970), p. 44.

[6]According to the precepts of existential philosophy, existence is always particular and individual, always "my" existence, "your" existence; and that existence is primarily the problem of existence. There are diverse possibilities as to the means out of which the existent must choose a way and commit himself. And because the various possibilities are constituted by man's relationship with things and without other men, existence is always a being in the world. Because the returning veteran was initially rejected by society he was forced to take a different stance, and his view of the world was conditioned by this rejection. A fuller discussion of the precepts of existentialism is contained in Walter Kaufmann, ed., Existentialism from Dostoevsky to Sartre (Cleveland: The World Publishing Co., 1957).

[7]Joseph Campbell, The Hero With a Thousand Faces (New York: Meridian, 1950), p. 337.

[8]Robert J. Lifton, Home From the War (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1973), p. 26.

[9]Quoted by W. Scott Thomson and Donaldson D. Frizzell, eds., The Lessons of Vietnam (New York: Crane, Russal and Co., 1977), pp. iii-iv.

[10]Veteran's Administration views quoted by Lifton, p. 35.

[11]Murray Polner, No Victory Parades: The Return of the Vietnam Veteran (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971).

[12]Polner, pp. xiv-xv.

[13]A term attributed to Lifton, but he himself admits it was first used by Veterans Administration psychiatrists. Lifton, p. 420.

[14]Lifton, p. 268.

[15]Lifton, p. 271.

[16]Polner cites the relationship between a veteran, Pete, and his wife, Sally, as a case in point. The marriage eventually breaks up because of the inability of the two to relate to each other at the same level. Polner, pp. 127-133.

[17]Lifton, p. 305.

[18]In the interview Lukacs compares the debacle of Vietnam with the Lisbon earthquake of 1755 and visualizes the potential aftermath of the war. George Urvan, "A Conversation with Lukacs," Encounter, October, 1971, pp. 30-36.

[19]Lifton, p. 326.

[20]C. B. Bryan, Friendly Fire (New York: G. P. Putnam Sons, 1976), p. 380.

[21]Lawrence Suid, "The Pentagon and Hollywood: Dr. Strangelove," American History/American Film, eds. John E. O'Connor and Martin A. Jackson (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1979), p. 220.

[22]Michael T. Isenberg, "The Great War Viewed From the Twenties: The Big Parade," American History/American Film, p. 27.

[23]King Vidor, dir., The Big Parade, with John Gilbert, Renee Adoree, MGM, 1925.

[24]Robert Finch, "The Big Parade," Motion Picture Director, November, 1925, p. 59.

[25]Robert F. Kennedy, Thirteen Days: A Memoir of the Cuban Missile Crisis (New York: W. W. Norton, 1969), p. 112.

[26]Stanley J. Solomon, "War Hot and Cold," Beyond Formula (New York: Harcourt, 1976), p. 247.

[27]A glaring exception is John Wayne's The Green Berets, which expoused the traditional ideals of the American soldier. It received extremely adverse reviews. Reneta Adler, writing in the New York Times declared that the film was "so unspeakable, so stupid, so rotten . . . false . . . vile and insane."

[28]Margaret Ronan, "Jane Fonda: Rebel With Many Causes," Senior Scholastic, March 9, 1978, p. 3.

[29]Joel Kotkin, "Fonda: I am not More Respectable," New Times, March 20, 1978, p. 58.

[30]Kotkin, p. 58.

[31]Solomon, pp. 251, 259.

[32]Canby, p. 170.

[33]Lifton, pp. 307-327.

[34]Hal Ashby, dir., Coming Home, with Jon Voight, Jane Fonda, Bruce Dern, United Artists, 1978. Subsequent references will be inserted in the text of the film.

[35]William Crane, "Bruce Dern: Actor and Filmmaker." Paper, Oklahoma State University, 1979, pp. 11-12.

[36]Crane, while recognizing the difference in the two major love-making sequences, fails to see their basic import. Though he is right when he says that "perhaps she has modified her ideas about love and sex," the change is brought about by Luke's attitude and his need for her, a fact which Crane fails to consider. "The real issue is that Bob does not get a chance on screen to show his unique love for Sally. Where Luke has many film minutes with her, including their love scene, Bob does not," says Crane. But this is a conscious choice, an aesthetic choice on the part of the filmmaker--to project the character type he needed.

[37]Xanadu is Kane's dream abode in Orson Welles' Citizen Kane. In the particular sequence, the deteriorating relationship between

Kane and his wife is symbolically represented in the physical distance between them and in each shot.

[38]A typical comment which stresses the fact that Bob's character is based on preconceived notions. In this case, his conception is Sally as the dutiful wife who supports unquestioningly anything her husband does.

[39]In Born on the Fourth of July, Ron Kovic describes his experiences in Vietnam which he feels are imbedded with a sense of worthlessness. Luke Martin's character bears shades of Kovic's attitude. At one point in his narrative Kovic says: "All I could feel was the worthlessness of dying right here in this place at this moment for nothing." Ron Kovic, Born on the Fourth of July (New York: McGraw Hill Book Co., 1976), p. 206.

[40]In a few of O'Neill's plays, including All God's Children Got Wings and Great God Brown, the mask is used as a symbolic device to conceal one's true self/soul from the outside world. In Great God Brown, Margaret, Dion's wife, is unable to recognize him when he does not have his mask on. Eugene O'Neill, Nine Plays (New York: The Modern Library, 1971), pp. 307-377.

[41]Stanley Kauffmann, "Far From Vietnam," The New Republic, March 4, 1978, p. 26.

[42]The actions of all three individuals are particular and individual. When Bob says to the group of high school students, "There is a choice to be made here," he is underlining the diverse possibilities of existence, and the fact that a man at some point has to make a decision and live with it. His vital problem thus is the problem of existence.

[43]In classical mythology a man could "purify" himself by either going through fire or water.

[44]Frank Rich, "The Dark at the End of the Tunnel," Time, February 20, 1978, p. 68.

[45]Canby, p. 170.

CHAPTER V

THE RESOLUTION OF TENSIONS THROUGH MYTH: STAR WARS (1977)

The climatic moment in Star Wars is the duel between the two knights of the Jedi, Obi Wan Kenobi and Darth Vader, fighting for contrasting goals. Kenobi is the epitome of good; Vader has been seduced by the "dark side of the Force" and represents all that is evil. The almost ritualistic import of the scene is accentuated by the stained glass impress of the walls, Kenobi's hooded monastic robe, and the laser swords clashing like shafts of lightning. The shifting point of view, the camera angles, and the religious leitmotif in the background stress the emotional intensity of the scene. This mood is re-inforced in the close-up of Ben's face. There is a mystical peacefulness in his eyes, etched sharply in the close-up, right after he decides to let himself be killed so that Luke, Han Solo, and Leia can escape from the Death Star. His Christ-like action is imbued with immortality as his spirit lives on to guide the "rebels" to a victory over the satanic Darth Vader and the Galactic empire.

Commercially, Star Wars is the most successful film ever.[1] Yet, some of the major film critics, while praising its far reaching

achievements in the areas of special effects and costuming, have criticized its overtly simplistic plot and character conception. Stanley Kauffmann felt the plot was "corny" and structured like a comic book episode with no hidden levels of meaning beyond the immediate one.[2] Richard Corliss went even further: "The film's story is bad pulp, and so are the characters of the hero Luke and the heroine Leia."[3] And Molly Haskell, writing in the Village Voice, summed up the entire film in one word: "childish."[4] Yet Star Wars projects a depth of theme which transcends this "childish" image. Denis Wood, who sees a strong similarlity between T. H. White's The Once and Future King and J. R. R. Tolkien's The Hobbit and The Lord of the Rings, comments on the new direction of these works:

> Although all three narratives--Tolkien's White's and Lucas' --have experienced great popularity, they have little in common with the bulk of contemporary narrative art. . . . Tolkien, White and Lucas adopt a mise-en-scene which--while realistic--is not realist; they reject sexual tension between men and women as their central concern; and they severely temper--without rejecting or impinging--post-enlightenment empiricist materialism. They manage, nevertheless, to remain firmly within and actually enrich, the larger traditions of Western Humanism.[5]

His observation is the key to the unique quality of Star Wars.

Star Wars, in breaking from the trend of "problem oriented" films, creates a contemporary fairy tale which is nostalgic because it is basically a pastiche of older, popular stories and myths. It also has characters without the Oedipal complexities, which the characters in other recent films exhibit. And there is a clear-cut

division between good and evil. In the process, the film creates a microcosm of ideals and complacency, a world in sharp contrast to our own. "Its fundamental appeal," as Andrew Gordon argues, "... lies precisely in its deliberately old fashioned plot, which has its roots deep in American popular fantasy."[6] This is only partly true, because Star Wars embraces a larger concept of the rejuvenation of the American Spirit. To a nation besieged with the problems of everyday reality, the film offers a re-affirmation of the American way of life.

In his famous "crisis of confidence" speech, President Jimmy Carter elaborated on what he thought was the crux of the problems confronting the American people:

> I want to talk to you [now] about a fundamental threat to American democracy. The threat is nearly invisible in ordinary ways. It is a crisis of confidence, the erosion of confidence in the future, threatening to destroy the social and political future of America.[7]

President Carter's perceptive assessment isolates the malignant area which, as Pete Axthelm points out, is the direct result of the two major catastrophes of the decade:

> Vietnam and Watergate played their part in all this, as we learned to beware our leaders and to scrutinize them, warts and all. The media have done so with a vengeance, and few leaders can stand up to the barrage.[8]

"Humankind," in T.S. Eliot's famous phrase, "cannot bear too much reality."

Star Wars, accordingly, is a "wish-fulfillment" fantasy which

offers solutions to the problems confronting everyman. It erases the effects of the defeat in Vietnam by depicting a superlative victory originating in the throes of seeming defeat. It offers new, enterprising leaders as heroes to a nation in constant doubt about the integrity of its leaders. And it re-defines the man/woman relationship, a bond conceived in simple, romantic, and platonic terms as an alternative to the mercenary and rigidly practical state of affairs deriving from the Women's Liberation Movement. In a time when the de-personalization and prostitution of the individual to corporate goals is the norm, and when man is slowly merging with the technology he has created, the film celebrates the integrity of the individual, his existence as a separate entity, and his judicious use of the machines he creates to serve his own ends. When Obi Wan Kenobi tells Luke that "The Force will always be with you," he is actually paying a tribute to Luke's self-confidence and, in a larger frame, giving us the antidote to Carter's diagnosis of America's illness.[9] Star Wars is a futuristic film, but it also glorifies a past way of life. In the process it implicitly suggests that the ideal is probably a proper blending of the two.

Star Wars did not initiate a new genre. Escapist films were regular fare during the Depression, when people, burdened with the problems of living, crowded the theaters for an evening of diversion. Similarly, the cold war and the period of McCarthyism in the 1950s saw the revival of escape films. The 1970s also saw a resurgence of

this genre, because of the massive economic and socio-political pressures on the individual. Films like Close Encounters of The Third Kind, Star Trek, and Star Wars heralded the new, futuristic direction the genre was taking. Robert Aldiss, in identifying this type of film as a "space opera," outlines its basic characteristics:

> Ideally, the Earth must be in peril, there must be a quest and a man to meet the mighty hour. That man must confront aliens and exotic creatures. Space must flow past the ports like wine from a pitcher. Blood must run down the palace steps, and ships launch out into the dark. There must be a woman fairer than the skies and a villain darker than the Black Hole. And all must come right in the end.[10]

Star Wars fits this description neatly, yet manages to convey a deeper meaning than that present in the mechanical outline. As the narrator of "The Making of Star Wars" comments: "Its power is to rise from something simpler to something rarer, the romantic spirit. Before it, we are young again and everything seems possible."[11] This assessment is a fitting tribute to the progenitor of Star Wars, George Lucas, whose life's ambition is synthesized in this film.

Star Wars is George Lucas' third film. His first, THX-1138, was an expansion of a science fiction short he had developed while he was an undergraduate at the University of Southern California. The film failed at the box office, but impressed the critics who saw sparks of originality in Lucas' handling of his material. His next film, American Graffiti, however, was an overwhelming success. It was a re-working of his entire adolescence and, through the delineation of a visual journey into the past, managed to give the audience a flavor

of "the happy days." But, as Alice Sodowsky, Roland Sodowsky, and Stephen Witte point out:

> The movie imports more than mere nostalgia for a past: it explores the consequences of technology upon an age that still has the need to understand experience through a mixture of epic, myth, and romance patterns. American Graffiti's achievement--or near achievement--is that it gives us a chance to satisfy this need, to find these patterns in a mundane, all-too-familiar mechanized world.[12]

This perceptive assessment also establishes the thematic link between American Graffiti and Lucas' next film, Star Wars. Whereas his focus in the later film shifts from the past into the future, his basic concerns and values remain the same, although they operate in an entirely different context. Both films yearn for prelapsarian eras. James M. Curtis, in identifying the logical progress from American Graffiti to Star Wars, notes:

> American Graffiti represents the short lived innocence of the Kennedy years, while Star Wars expresses the anxieties of the Nixon years. In both movies, the rebels are inexperienced and poorly equipped, while the establishment is powerful and confident. And in both movies as in any good romance, the underdogs win . . . the subliminal associations with Watergate had a good deal to do with the widespread, intense reaction to Star Wars. Great visual effects alone do not a great movie make, and important movies, ones which people want to see again and again, connect with the national psyche in visceral ways.[13]

Star Wars was, thus, a reaction to the problems confronting Everyman.

Since the release of Star Wars, George Lucas has had ample opportunity to discuss his motives for making a "space opera." In

an interview published in Rolling Stone magazine, he said:

> I didn't want to make a 2001. I wanted to make a space fantasy that was there before science took it over in the Fifties. Once the atomic bomb came . . . they forgot the fairy tales and the dragons and Tolkien and all the real heroes.[14]

The distinction Lucas draws between Star Wars and 2001 is significant. When Kubrick's film was released in 1968, America was in the midst of the Vietnam war and man was on the verge of landing on the moon. American society had its problems, but the general impression was that "Uncle Sam's" ingenuity and military strength were unsurpassed; there were no problems that could not be solved. Thus 2001, in its treatment of the conflict between man and automation and man and his immortality reflected the American consciousness. Star Wars, however, came after the debacle in Vietnam and at a time when everyman's confidence in his leaders had eroded. In offering the audience an escape from reality, the film was also symbolically sublimating the problems which confront the average citizen.

Lucas further elaborated on the specifics of his intentions in an interview with Stephen Zito: "I wanted to do a modern fairy tale, a myth."[15] Star Wars is just that. It creates a myth and heroes for a generation which had lost its myths and whose heroes are really "anti-heroes." As Lucas himself noted: "I think one of the key factors in the success [of Star Wars] is that it is a positive film and has heroes and villains and that it is essentially a fun movie to watch."[16] One of the hallmarks of the film is this framework of simplicity. It

has no psychological pretensions and thus does not turn the viewer away by challenging his intelligence. All distinctions are elemental, as clear as black and white.

The film begins in medias res, and the credits explain that there is a civil war going on between the evil Galactic Empire and a group of rebels fighting for the old Republic. The setting is "A long time ago on a galaxy far away," and the distancing prepares the audience for the futuristic sequence of events that is to follow. Led by the Grand Moff Tarkin and the sinister Lord Darth Vader, the Imperial Storm Troopers go about executing a plan to systematically neutralize the rebel resistance. The Empire's secret weapon is an armored space station called the "Death Star." This station, which has the capability of destroying an entire planet, is soon to be deployed to end the insurrection.

However, rebel spies manage to steal a master plan of the aerial defense system of the Death Star and transmit it to Princess Leia Organa, the leader of the rebels. When her space craft is overrun by Darth Vader and his storm troopers, she inserts the plans, and a plea for help, into the memory banks of a robot, R2D2. R2D2 and C3PO, another robot, slip away in an "escape pod" to deliver Leia's message to Obi Wan Kenobi, a knight of the "Jedi." Obi Wan Kenobi allies himself with Luke Skywalker, a young farm boy from Tatoonie, Han Solo, an unprincipled space cruiser operator, and his co-pilot, Chewbacca, a "wookie." Together they manage to rescue the Prin-

cess from the Death Star and ultimately destroy it. In the process, Obi Wan Kenobi is killed, but his spirit lives on to guide Luke and the rebels to their ultimate victory. The film ends in a scene of celebration where Princess Leia decorates the heroes for their superlative victory. In this simple tale of good versus evil, Lucas manages to create a coherent universe, and still offers symbolic solutions to the problems presented by the "problem-oriented" movies of the decade, such as Coming Home, one of the significant films of the decade, which delineates the diverse effects of the Vietnam War.

Coming Home reflects on the aftermath of the first major war America ever lost. The political and military reasons for the debacle were numerous, but what seems most significant is the spiritual reason--America was not fighting for a moral cause. This sense of utter defeat in Coming Home is further amplified by the fate of the soldiers who return home. They come back "anti-heroes," "unsung" by the nation they fought for. Thus they are alienated and exhibit the symptoms of "Post-Vietnam Syndrome." They are outcasts at home because the average American does not care to lose--that has not been a part of the American heritage.

Coming at a time when the scars of Vietnam were still fresh on the average American's mind, Star Wars signals several things. First of all, it helps to alleviate the defeatist mentality. "More important," as Robert G. Collins points out, "it demonstrates a need,

and a growing desire, for positive myth, a force to bolster the life patterns of common man."[17] The distinction in Star Wars between good and evil is clear-cut. Grand Moff Tarkin and Darth Vader, the oppressors, represent evil. The regal Princess Leia, the innocent Luke Skywalker, the arrogant Han Solo, and the saintly Obi Wan Kenobi represent good. This distinction is also reinforced by the chiaroscuro used to compose the shots. The white ships against the black void of space and the contrast between Princess Leia's white robes and Darth Vader's black ones reinforce contrast.

The rebels were fighting against a power superior, not only in numbers, but also in the innate capacity for destruction. The general image pattern in the film is a dichotomy between dominating large objects and vulnerable small ones. Dan Rubey, in recognizing this pattern, stresses its thematic magnificance:

> In the opening shot . . . a tiny space ship is pursued by another ship of enormous size which slowly enters the screen from the right top corner, moves into the center of the screen, and finally fills it entirely, engulfing the smaller ship. The visual dichotomy of small and large reinforces the dichotomy of good-young-less powerful versus evil-older-more powerful which organizes the plot, and it helps the audience participate emotionally in the vulnerability of Luke and the Princess.[18]

Basic motivation between the two sides is the important difference. The "Old Empire" was fighting the Galactic Empire for a just cause--freedom from oppression. Their ultimate victory against great odds is a vindication of truth and justice. In an extended sense, it represents to the insecure audience a re-affirmation of the American

tradition of winning in a just cause.

One of the significant achievements of Star Wars is that it creates a new breed of heroes. Molded more in the pattern of Achilles, Flash Gordon, and the Knights of the Round Table than the "anti-hero" Luke Martin, Luke Skywalker, Han Solo, and Obi Wan Kenobi display courage, loyalty, and supreme dedication to their ultimate cause. Luke's surname is apt. It seems like a title out of Homer's Iliad and Odyssey and signifies a knight who will conquer the aerial seas of the universe as a champion of the forces of good. His given name "Luke" is also extremely connotative. It means "light," and at once signifies his "role," and, in a larger sense, his place in a gigantic galaxy where light is the "measure" for everything.

Luke is not a farmer, we learn, but the son of a knight of the Jedi, a group of select warriors fighting together to safeguard truth, justice, and fair play. Luke, a typical knight out of a medieval romance, goes on a quest to destroy the Evil Empire, the Satanic Darth Vader, and in the process rescue the "damsel in distress." Obi Wan Kenobi also gives him his father's "light sabre," which is a symbolic equivalent of "Excalibur," the sword of Siegfried, the Armor of Achilles, and the Singing Sword of Prince Valiant, and thus links Luke to a chain of traditional heroes.[19] In the process he approximates Campbell's concept of the "mythological hero."[20]

Luke completes his quest with remarkable dexterity. When he finds out from C3PO that Princess Leia is on the Death Star, it

becomes incumbent on him to rescue her. To achieve this, he overrides Han Solo's practical objections and exhibits unbridled courage in overcoming hordes of storm troopers and in escaping a near fatal experience in the garbage chute. He emerges unscathed, to finally destroy the Death Star, literally by faith in the "force," which is a symbolic equivalent of religion reduced to basics. In the ultimate analysis, he is also the epitome of purity with his total lack of sexual inclination. To a generation obsessed with sex and burdened with visions of illicit physical relationships as projected in Coming Home, Luke's voluntary celibacy offers a logical and viable alternative.

The heroic character of Luke also displays elements of the "frontier tradition of the western American hero." His Uncle Owen, the farmer, is scared that he "will turn out like his pa." The surrounding terrain in Luke's home planet Tatooni also has a suggestive cast of characters--the sand people, who seem to represent the stereotyped Indians in a typical western. The ambushes also evoke this debt. In the scene where Luke is searching for R2D2, the camera focuses on a backdrop of a typical valley with the sandpeople on top of overlooking crags. The sudden and unexpected nature of the attack on Luke recalls any Gary Cooper or John Wayne movie. The scene is executed with dexterity, and Lucas' equation is deliberate.

This sequence is followed by the intense massacre scene in which Owen's homestead is levelled. The mise-en-scene here, with its

impress of total destruction amidst the ominous smoke rising upwards, establishes a definite connection with its American prototype. All this is designed for one purpose--to make Luke not only a mythical hero, but a protagonist who stands for a particular culture. In this case he represents the frontier tradition and revalidates the cogency of the American way of life.

Luke's partner in the crusade, Han Solo, is the "devil may care" type, cast in the mold of an Errol Flynn or a Douglas Fairbanks character, with the additional traits of the hired gun in the old West. Yet, as the plot unfolds, it is apparent that he is more than an incarnate ego. Beneath the facade of mercenary practicality is a man capable of dreaming and displaying affection and loyalty.[21] In his enigmatic personality, Han Solo seems like a logical extension of Rhett Butler.[22] His character thus helps infuse romance into the image of the American hero, a trait which had been out of style for quite some time.

Obi Wan Kenobi represents another facade of the new breed of heroes. Though he is probably based on Merlin and the Wizard of Oz, Kenobi is almost a Christlike figure in his concern for the welfare of the people of the galaxy and his stance of defiance against evil. Just before Darth Vader strikes him, Kenobi says, "If you strike me down I will become more powerful," and reveals his inherent immortality. In this, he approximates Christ, and his role in Star Wars is thus highly symbolic.

The 1970s have seen the diminishing role of religion in people's lives and its total absence from the character of their heroes. Contemporary heroes, ranging from Dirty Harry and the Sundance Kid to Luke Martin or Alvy Singer, have self-aggrandizing motives and do not require the discipline that faith and belief can infuse. The alternative is Obi Wan Kenobi, a "messiah" whose life suggests that faith is a logical step toward solving all problems.

The final scene of Star Wars is significant because of its obvious contrast to the "coming home" in Coming Home. In the latter film, when Luke Martin returns home after fighting for his country, society rejects him and refuses to bestow on him the traditional status of a returning veteran. Similarly, Bob Hyde comes back from Vietnam to a world which is notably hostile, but which dispossesses him of his wife, his honor, and his manhood. He is awarded a Purple Heart but the reward is a farce and inadequate compensation for his total destruction. There are no such philosophical implications in the companion sequence from Star Wars. The returning warriors are normal people and do not exhibit symptoms of "Post-Vietnam Syndrome." They are awarded medals, are applauded for their singular achievement, and the scene diffuses into the sense of satisfaction of the moment. Quite aptly, it is a world at peace with itself.

The focal point of the second problem film under consideration, Annie Hall, is the new relationship between men and women. The typical woman in Annie Hall comes across as a Machiavellian crea-

ture bent on inverting the traditional male/female relationship and, in the process, using man merely as a means to an end. The traditional virtues of compassion and motherhood are also of no consequence to the new women. The changing image, which is obviously influenced by the dogmas of the Women's Liberation Movement and the "Me Decade," has thrust man into the background and transformed him (as in Annie Hall) into the embodiment of a pathetic, narcissistic semblance of his former self.

Star Wars offers a different perspective by imbuing the male/female relationship with romance and conceiving it in entirely platonic terms. There are only two women in the film, Princess Leia and Luke's Aunt Beru. The film seems to propose that Leia is the ideal woman. She is beautiful, and in the scene where Luke rescues her from her "cell block," decidedly ravishing. Yet she has compassion and is literally in tears when she sees the destruction of Alderron. When she needs to convince Han Solo to do her bidding, she offers no sexual bribe. Her strength comes from her spiritual purity, symbolized in her shimmering white dress.

Still she manages to be contemporary. Her logical thinking and her leadership qualities, displayed when she decides to send for help through R2D2, and in her active role in the escape from the Death Star, make her a part of today's world. Her relationship with Luke is not based on mutual "convenience." It is more in the spirit of sharing the same ultimate goal. Luke is obviously in love with her,

but his love is distinctly platonic. There are no sexual overtones. Even though Leia probably does not reciprocate Luke's "Petragean" feelings, there is an emotional bond between them.

Leia, however, seems to be more attracted to Han Solo's dashing ways. There is a constant and witty exchange between them as they fight their way out of the Death Star. The dialogue is intended to establish a parity between them, thus negating the obvious social barriers. At the award ceremony, when Han winks at Leia, there is a definite indication that the two may eventually fall in love; thus, the relationship is not denied an aura of romance. When Han asks Luke, "Do you think that a Princess and a guy like me . . . " he is re-introducing the romantic norm as an integral part of the man/woman relationship. To a nation cursed with a high divorce rate and obsessed with affairs which are purely business/sexual endeavors, as in Annie Hall, Star Wars introduces a new pattern of interpersonal relationships based on mutual concern and devoid of any narcisstic implication.

Beru, the other female in Star Wars, is more of a stereotype as Owen's dominated wife. But she is obviously a tempering influence on Owen when she suggests he let Luke go to the academy. Though her relationship with Luke is not elaborated in the film, her motherly stance cannot be missed. Compared to the glaring superficiality of the relationship between Mr. and Mrs. Hall and their relationship to Annie, Beru, Luke, and Owen, appear as a traditional family

because the ties run strong and deep. The alternative to the stable family unit is chaos and internal turmoil for all concerned, and creation of emotionally unstable characters like Duane, Annie, and Alvy.

What Star Wars stresses most equivocally is the resurgence of the American Dream, with the possibilities of success open to the average enterprising individual. Individual traits are highlighted, and it is made clear that man is different from and superior to the technology he has created. The purpose of the technology is thus only to serve him. Paddy Chayefsky's Network, on the other hand, while dealing directly with the adverse effects of television, also shows how people prostitute themselves to base ends, are depersonalized, and in the process, negate the concept of the American Dream. Frank Hackett, Arthur Jensen, and, especially, Diana Christenson, are grotesque and dehumanized replicas of homo sapiens who subordinate their conscience and their rationality to reach their materialistic goals. When Max Schumacher tells Diana, "You are television incarnate," he attests to the fact that she had become what Chayefsky calls a "humanoid," and in the process merged with the technology which has been created to serve mankind.

The individual is an important element in Star Wars. The difference between Luke, Han, Kenobi, and the storm troopers is that Luke and his friends are distinguished as persons--the storm troopers are not. They are homogeneous mechanical contraptions, and their reaction to commands is machine like. Luke's ordinary background and

his natural surrounding put him within the framework of the American everyman. And the entire plot of the film revolves around individualistic actions. Kenobi's wisdom and insight, Han Solo's mercenary ways, tempered with his charismatic dexterity as a pilot, and Luke's sense of dedication and courage are personal traits which coalesce to bring about the ultimate destruction of the Death Star. Dan Rubey's objection that "Because of this focus on individualism, collective action does not serve collective goals" seems irrelevant because the actions of all the rebels taken together lead to the destruction of the Death Star, and the eventual emancipation of the oppressed people of the galaxy from the Galactic Empire.

Technology is not the focal point of Star Wars, as a critic insists, but the backdrop for the action.[24] All the characters and the races use technologic extensions of themselves. The Jawas use energy guns, the Sand people breathe through metal sandfilters, Beru's kitchen is computerized, and Owen uses droids as farm hands. Even Kenobi has use for a spacecraft and his light sabre. Luke and Han are also dependent on their cruiser, their blasters, and the robots, R2D2 and C3PO. But the movie, while "Accepting technology as a fact of galactic existence [it] does not take a stand for or against it. Star Wars is not about technology at all, but people and their relations to it."[25] This aspect of Star Wars is important because it suggests that the ideal state is that man be the master of the technology he creates. This point of view is in obvious contrast to the stance in

Network, which is that man had not only merged with the technology, but has become its servant.

Within the framework of the traditional "master-servant" concept, Star Wars defines the relationship between man and technology. In the sequence of the final attack on the Death Star, Luke makes a conscious decision not to use the targetting computer, but to depend on "The Force" instead. His decision is not a rejection of technology, as Rubey says, but an affirmation of his faith as the ultimate power and is strictly a personal choice.[26] Luke's success in destroying the Death Star, and the failure of the storm troopers to stop him, is a vindication of the strength of individual prowess and Faith. Thus, true individualism entails a belief in an ultimate purpose and the forces that govern life. The whole film implies that the Galactic Empire is destroyed because of its dependence on the power of technology and sheer numbers. To an audience nurtured on technology instead of faith, and de-humanized by the automated structure of society, Star Wars symbolically solves the problems which Network depicts.

Star Wars has its share of technical flaws. The structure is problematic because too much time is spent on the initial exposition and we are introduced to the protagonist only after some twenty minutes. Also, as Robert Ashahina points out, "Individual sequences are connected by 'wipes' and 'irisisms'--techniques that were old hat 30 years ago."[27] However, the use of outdated techniques is justi-

fied because they are part of the nostalgic aura of the film and help in sustaining its "feel good" label.[28]

Probably the most basic difference between Star Wars and the "problem-oriented" films discussed is the musical score, which contributes significantly in sustaining the positive feeling. In Network, Coming Home, and Annie Hall, the music is used only in specific sequences as a mood evoking device. In Star Wars the entire score is intricately woven into the overall structure and complements the theme of the film. Thus, when the film ends, the audience is left with a feeling to total buoyancy.

Star Wars not only revived the "Hollywood Film," but also set a trend. In its wake, films like Star Trek and the sequel to Star Wars, The Empire Strikes Back, have followed. The 1980s will probably be a decade of the Fantasy Film.

President Carter's term in office has been marked by his indecision and the lack of a coherent policy. Economically and socially the burdens on the average man are multiplying every day. The national prestige has been seriously hurt by the impasse in Iran. And the entire life style of Americans is being altered by the energy crunch. Thus, the backdrop is appropriate for the continued need of the "escape film." When asked about his "specific goal" for The Empire Strikes Back, director Irvin Kershner said: "We wanted to make a film that would really involve children. We wanted them to be able to laugh, to identify with the characters and dream about

them afterwords."[29] It seems to be the fitting fare for all ages in a troubled time.

Star Wars creates a myth out of our own past, and carries it into the future, making "the old fable of a fateful youth rising to combat universal tyranny with a paean of communal hope."[30] Coming in the 1970s, when the common man is buffeted by the repercussions of the Vietnam War, the disintegrating family, and the adverse state of relationships between men and women, and is being replaced and dehumanized by his technological extensions, Star Wars offers simple solutions to problems of great magnitude. In the process it re-creates the American dream and re-affirms the American way of life.

ENDNOTES

[1]By the beginning of December, 1977, Star Wars had grossed more than 201,000,000. Variety, December 7, 1977, p. 7.

[2]Stanley Kauffmann, "Innocences," The New Republic, June 18, 1977, p. 65.

[3]Richard Corliss, "A Cool Look at a Hot Star," New Times, June 24, 1977, p. 65.

[4]Molly Haskell, Village Voice, June 13, 1977, p. 40.

[5]Dennis Wood, "Growing Up Among the Stars," Literature/Film Quarterly, 6 (1978), 327.

[6]Andrew Gordon, "Star Wars: A Myth for Our Time," Literature/Film Quarterly, 6 (1978), 314.

[7]Robert Guenette, The Making of Star Wars, ABC, 1977.

[8]Pete Axthelm, "Where Have All the Heroes Gone?," Newsweek, August 6, 1979, p. 44.

[9]George Lucas, dir., Star Wars, with Mark Hamill, Carrie Fisher, Alec Guiness, United Artists, 1977.

[10]Brian Aldiss, Space Opera (London: Futura, 1974), p. 10.

[11]The Making of Star Wars.

[12] Alice Sodowsky, Roland Sodowsky, and Stephen Witte, "The Epic World of American Graffiti," Journal of Popular Film, 4, (1975), 47.

[13]James M. Curtis, "From American Graffiti to Star Wars," Journal of Popular Culture, 13 (1980), 600.

[14]Paul Scanlon, "The Force Behind George Lucas," Rolling Stone, August 25, 1977, p. 43.

[15]"George Lucas Goes Far Out," American Film, April, 1977, p. 13.

[16]The Making of Star Wars.

[17]Robert G. Collins, "Star Wars: The Pastiche of Myth and the Yearning for a Past Future," Journal of Popular Culture, 12 (1977), 3.

[18]Dan Rubey, "Star Wars--Not So Far Away," Jump Cut, No. 18, p. 9.

[19]Collins, p. 6.

[20]Joseph Campbell outlines a hero of an epic myth, called monomyth, who stands for his culture. The hero finally "brings back from his adventures the means for regeneration of the society as a whole." Joseph Campbell, The Hero With a Thousand Faces (New York: Meridian, 1956), p. 38.

[21]Near the end of the film, Han Solo asks Luke if there was a future "for a princess and a guy like me." He also comes back at the end to save Luke's life.

[22]This link may be deliberate as there is a graphic similiarity between the publicity posters of the two films.

[23]Rubey, p. 11.

[24]Rubey, p. 13.

[25]Denis Wood, "The Stars in Our Hearts," Journal of Popular Film, 6 (1978), 264.

[26]Rubey, p. 13.

[27]Robert Ashahina, "Flying High," The New Leader, July 4, 1977, p. 24.

[28]Judith Crist, "'Feel Good' Film," Saturday Review, July 9, 1977, p. 40.

[29]David Reiss, "Making the Impossible Come True," Filmmakers, June, 1980, p. 24.

[30]Collins, p. 9.

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