



# PAUL ALMOND'S

*JOURNEY*, screenplay and direction: Paul Almond. Director of Photography: Jean Boffety, assisted by Paul Van der Linden, and Al Smith. Starring: Geneviève Bujold, John Vernon, George Sperdakos, Gale Garnett, and Luke Gibson. Shot in 35mm Panavision near Tadoussac in Québec during August/September 1971. Gordon Robinson and Robbie Malenfant were first and second assistant directors. Costumes: Anne Pritchard, still photography: Jean-Paul Bernier. Music by Luke Gibson. Distributed by Astral/Gendon Films, set to be released throughout Canada during first weeks of October.

## *dream and reality*

"My films seem to say things in sort of an oblique sort of way. They seem to be elliptical. But in fact they are the most direct way I have of making statements which have to be made. They are the kind of statements that you can't make in a simple sentence."

by George Csaba Koller

**cinema canada:** Could you explain how *Journey* fits into the trilogy of *Isabel*, *Act of the Heart*, and *Journey*?

**Paul Almond:** There is a very loose narrative thread, in the sense that *Isabel* is a girl going back to her roots in a rural community on the Gaspé coast. Played by Genevieve Bujold, she is a young girl who is not yet really a woman, yet she is full of fear. The film is about fear, and how fear somehow is the block which has to be broken in order to love. I mean at the end of the picture she is on the way towards learning about love. At the end of *Isabel*.

*Act of the Heart* is concerned with various facets of love, sacred and profane. Love: heterosexual, homosexual, mother love, love on all different levels. And of course love, in a sense, of an absolute being, love of God. So it's a girl again from a small rural community coming into the city. In a sense it is somewhat similar to *Isabel*. I mean *Isabel* could be said to be Martha, in *Act of the Heart*.

Now at the end of *Act of the Heart* the girl commits suicide in a sense, gives herself to the extraordinary act, she's pushed to the limit of her existence. The girl at the beginning of *Journey* is at the stage of extreme crisis, and we don't know whether or not she's committed suicide. Basically speaking the *Journey*, the title of the film is her trip, her descent, her vision of how she might be renewed or come back into life. So in a sense it could be said that she's Martha returning, after all the three roles are played by the same leading actress, though in *Journey* her background is more of a city girl, because we hear motorcycles and so on.

*Journey* is a visionary allegory. I know it's a terrible thing to say, but that's what it is. It's an allegorical vision. In

"Hopefully, I will always make films that are going to be commercial and people are going to want to see them. *Isabel* was full of suspense and it had beautiful scenery and it had a young girl. And *Act of the Heart* had a priest making love to a girl in front of an altar. Those things are going to be vaguely commercial. . . ."

**CINEMA CANADA:** How did you learn how to make feature films?

**paul almond:** Don't forget ten years ago in this country — except for the NFB and in French-Canada — nobody knew what making feature films was all about. They knew what it was to shoot a documentary, what it was to make films for television, but not features. I was able, fortunately, to be with Genevieve and watch her make films with Resnais, and with Louis Malle, and with de Broca. Before I made *Isabel* at least I had an inkling of what filmmaking was, but even there on my first film the people had only made TV series and making a feature film is quite a different order of experience. It's a different way — the exterior motions look the same, you've got a camera, you've got lights, but it's a whole different internal organic process — and it's that you can't learn unless you're a part of it somehow.

**CINEMA CANADA:** As a producer, how much thought do you give to the potential commercial success of your films?

**paul almond:** I can't say I don't give any thought to it, but I don't bend the film to suit somebody or other. I mean I am enough aware of the markets having spent fifteen years in television directing and seeing the ratings and watching and getting letters. And I've certainly had enough experience to know what people will like and what they won't like. Part of it is hassling theatres to get the films shown, and it's a fight from



# JOURNEY

"The whole purpose of the film is to show that there are two worlds. At the end Saguenay says, 'There are two worlds, Boulder, yours and mine, but you can't live in one of them, you have to have them both.' You have to have what some people call 'reality' on one side, and you have to have the world of the dream on the other side, and you have to live them both, and have them sustain each other."





medieval times, or in any civilization in a state of crisis, like when the Egyptians were about to have a famine, they got their chief dreamer to dream and then they had somebody come to interpret the dream. You remember Joseph interpreted the dream and said there was going to be a famine and they have to grow all the wheat and keep it, and all that sort of stuff. So *Journey* begins with a girl in torment at a stage of extreme crisis, and she is kind of renewed by coming into contact with a kind of community situation such as might have existed in the Middle Ages or in primitive times. She is renewed by coming in contact with things of the earth, growing things, with birth, death, copulation of animals and people, everyone having their own craft, and so she is renewed by leaving the pollution and the atmosphere in the twentieth century and going back into that.

And at the end of the film when she comes out at the mouth of the river she is in a sense renewed once again and re-integrated with the natural processes. This is what all the commune movements of today are all about, people rebelling against what's going on. And it's sort of like a statement of what mankind must do in order to become reborn. This is what everyone knows today, and it seems to me kind of fun to take that theme and turn it into the personal story of a girl going back and finding that. Just as we are all going back and finding out about nature. When we lose contact with nature and are just living in concrete buildings, everyone goes mad. Everybody knows that now, in a way, I mean it was a big rage two or three years ago, so *Journey* is just a kind of statement of what has been happening recently.

**cinema canada:** Why do you make films?

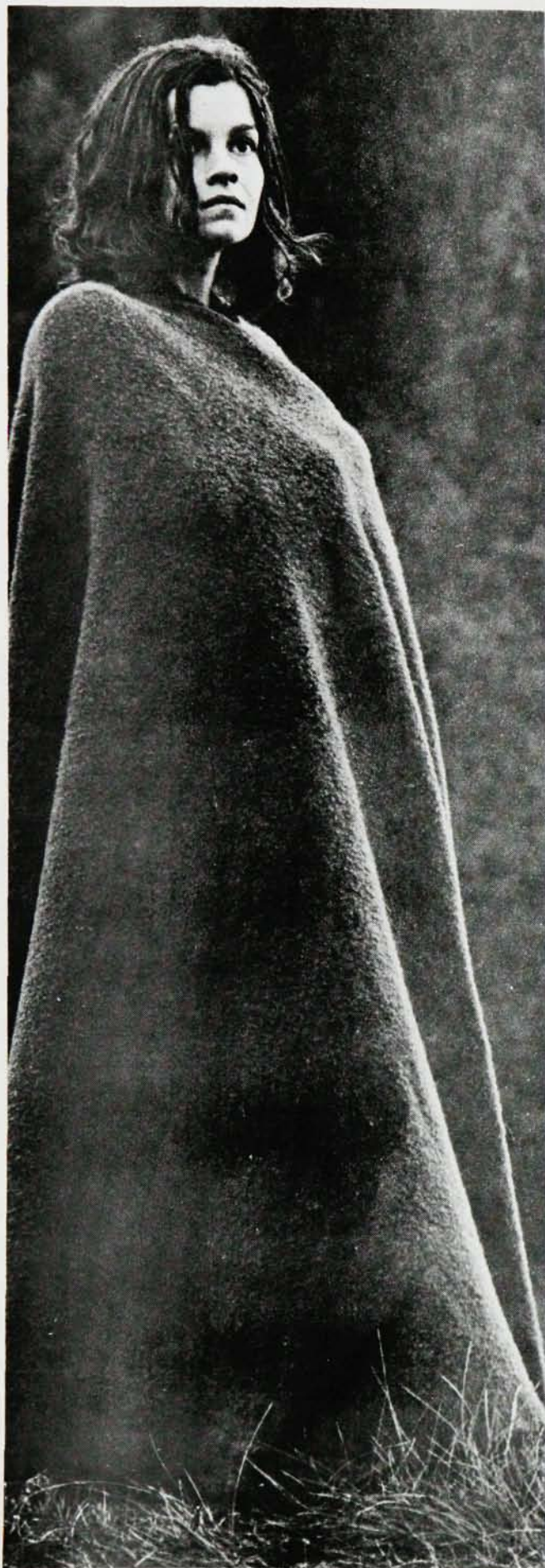
**Paul Almond:** Basically I make films because they seem to be the most complete and honest way of saying something. And then I say it as honestly and as completely and as directly as I can, even though it seems to be elliptical.

The kind of truths that I'm trying to arrive at are not truths that are said, you know, one word after another. They are things that enter through other means of consciousness. People understand the film intuitively. In human encounters things are going on all the time that are not said in words, and they are the most valuable things. So in films too you don't come out and make statements that smack you. You try and reach in behind, through the back door. And that's why so far the kind of things I say in films are to a lot of people obscure, diffuse, they don't dig it at all. But other people, you know, they have other doors of perception open, they say I know what that's about. They don't say it in so many words, it's just a way of looking.

I think *Journey* is another way of looking at certain kinds of experience, certain kinds of realities that you don't normally see in films. Hopefully there will be enough people who will dig that way of looking at things and will like the film. But I'm sure there will be quite a number of people that won't see it or dig it. I have no idea whether *Journey* is a commercial film or not.

**cinema canada:** I suspect it's going to be commercially successful. It will probably be hailed as one of the best features made in Canada up to this point.

**Paul Almond:** Hey, thank God! You wouldn't believe the hassles I've had over it. I've had more hassles over this film than my other two films and I've tried to say more honestly what I felt in this film, what I really felt needed to be said. I worked it through in the most thorough, most complete manner. The actors themselves were into it in a big way, they were practically writing the script! The crew worked like dogs on the picture, giving far more than they would ever give on any other kind of picture because they believed in making the



*Genevieve Bujold as Saguenay*



film. We all believed in it, but somehow it's been the most difficult to get off the ground, it's been the most difficult to get into the cinemas. From all the vibrations we get from all the commercial cinema owners, the film is a big no-no. Yet on another level, hopefully it might just take off. It would really blow everybody's mind if it did just that, I mean all the people who have been associated with it. There was a great atmosphere of harmony around the film when we were making it, the feeling that we were saying something.

**cinema canada:** You could sense that harmony and that family kind of feeling at the screening. Everybody felt really together.

**Paul Almond:** Very much, very much. Very communal, very family. I was editing the picture and a lot of people were living in the house with me and we were all just cutting the picture and everyone was into it, like very big. And Luke (Gibson) wrote all the songs when he was up there. I would say to him, Luke, we've decided, you know, that the picture is going to take this kind of direction (this would give a heart attack to a Hollywood producer), okay Luke, let's hear your song today. And that was the day we were going to shoot it, and he would magically come up with a song, a beautiful song, a fantastic song. The words are right in the heart of the experience all the way through, beautiful lyrics. Like the theme song which we use over the closing titles: "Silver lady river journey down, silent stands the rock she will surround. What will she bring him? What will she bring him?" And it's the river and the rock, sort of Zen opposites, it just sums it all up. In fact we were going to call the picture *Silver Lady River Journey Down* and just use *Journey* for short, and people loved that, but it turned more people off than it turned on, because some would say *Silver River Lady*, or something. So we decided just to call it *Journey*, it's not a great commercial title, but at least it doesn't turn anyone off.

**cinema canada:** Yeah, there was a lot of confusion, since the original working title was *Undersky*, then *The Journey*, then *Silver Lady River*, and now just *Journey*.

**Paul Almond:** Well, we called it *Undersky* (under sky) for a while, because that's the name of the community in the film. But that seemed to turn people off too, in a way, they didn't seem to like it in New York. My lawyer kept kidding me because he thought it was a film about a Polish immigrant, named *Underski*. (laughter)

So finally we settled on *Journey*, and I think in French it's going to be called *Le Detour*, which is not like a detour, it's a whole different sense, the word has a whole different meaning in French. It's sort of a little thing of the heart, a little side trip.

**cinema canada:** Did you experience life in a rural commune before you made the film?

**Paul Almond:** No. What happened is there were all these vibrations going around, all the ideas flying around the earth at the time. But I've always been close to the earth. In a sense I grew up on a farm on the Gaspé coast, and I've always felt kind of close to nature. I mean I really like having a dishwasher at home now, because I don't like washing dishes, so in that sense I'm partially a child of the twentieth century, too. But I believe that it was my love for nature and my contact with an organic kind of living that brought me into that aspect of the film. And it just seemed that at the time communes were the way people were getting out and living together. People needed to get out and live in the country, but there were city communes also. So I actually did a lot of research. When I say research I actually mean that I went and met a lot of people who were in communes and talked to them.

It was a private sort of search, but that was after I realized what the film would have to be. Rather than me going and

reality.

beginning to end.

**CINEMA CANADA:** Isn't it frustrating, though, having gone through the intense, exhausting, artistic, creative stage, and then to have to go through the business bullshit?

**paul almond:** Since I have to do it, you know, I don't mind. I must say that the big thing we lack in this country is good producers. I've basically always wanted to work with a producer, the problem is to find the right one. If I could find somebody who really knows a lot about filmmaking, and about how to set films up and what to do, if I could find somebody like that it would be fantastic, I wouldn't have to bother. And on the next picture, I'm definitely going to work with somebody as producer. Peter Carter helped me on the first two pictures and helped me set this one up a bit, but he's now directing his own. Being a producer of a picture is one of the necessary hassles that you have to go through in order to make a film.



*John Vernon as Boulder*

**CINEMA CANADA:** So you worked on *Journey* for most of the summer?

**paul almond:** Up until the end of June we did a lot of recutting. We took apart the composite print you saw, shortened it a bit, redubbed a lot of stuff and changed some dialogue. We shortened John Vernon's character, made him more enigmatic. Then, since July, August I've been concerning myself mainly with the release of the picture. The distribution company that was going to do it which is Gendon Films has been taken over by Astral which is why I'm here now. So during the summer there were all the problems with the sale of Gendon, which meant that everytime I talked to an exhibitor, since I wasn't the distributor, it became a problem. We weren't able to go ahead with any of the bookings until the sale went through and even then it was a problem getting the right theatres. I mean in Canada now we're getting expertise in production, but in terms of distribution we haven't got a great deal of experience at distributing our own product and there's a lot of tangles to be ironed out. Astral is the biggest Canadian distributor, and so far I'm very happy with them, but in general when we're making a Canadian film we're not working as closely on the release pattern as we might. In the major film producing markets (U.S., England, France) they more or less begin to plan distribution when they're actually making the picture, and they edit for a specific release date, and so on. I've been learning an awful lot about distribution with this film, because since the money is put in privately in Canada, I feel an immense sense of responsibility in seeing that the film





*Jean Boffety's cinematography is excellent and beautiful to look at.*

living in a commune and making the film that way. Also, the film is not about the commune, there is a community in the film which could be a pioneer community or it could be a present day commune. The film takes in quite a sweep, because we keep returning to that. That's how the tribes used to live, and the religious communities a hundred years ago, and people now on the Gaspé coast. They all had that very strong bond of community, and its precisely that bond which nobody feels in big cities today.

In the film the characters arrived there as a result of something that happened seven years before. It's a mystical number, seven, and it also takes seven years for the community to become self supporting with that number of people and that kind of land. It takes a man a year to clear an acre, so they clear so many acres. Anyway, it's all been thought out, the substructure of the film was all carefully worked out, even though during the film you hardly know it. It's only hinted at, but there's a very strong substructure of ideas behind the film.

So the commune side of it was not really written, as I've said, because I had that kind of an experience, but because I felt that today what people need is to come closer together in a sense, and this is one way of saying that.

Another aspect of commune life is that everyone had his function. One guy made shoes, another guy was a blacksmith, they were all farmers, and they all had functions which they knew they could probably do better than anyone else. Today in North America our civilization is filled with people who do not believe that they are in any way essential. When you work in a factory, you know that anyone else can be hired and do your job as well as you. The old idea of craft is gone, and it's only the artist who feels, if not exactly needed, but at least that he's an individual.

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"In communes or medieval villages there was always a guy who was a really good singer, There was a troubadour like (Luke Gibson) in the film, who was the embodiment of the group consciousness. He sort of would tell the stories, then create the myth and the consciousness of that particular tribe, of that society. Nowadays, the pop groups sum up the same feelings, which is why they are at the heart of things. And people say that the singers are expressing something which is very important with music, they're summing up where we're all at. Well, you know, I try in films to sum up where we're all at too, although film is such a different kind of medium. And I'm not, you know, good enough yet to be able to catch it. But if I was good enough, then you would really see in my films what people are saying today with music."

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## dream:

**cinema canada:** But I think *Journey* does catch a lot of it. I was intrigued by one aspect of how you structured the film. The people in the community were very secure as long as they were building the community. But as soon as the seven years elapsed, as soon as they completed what they set out to do, then they started having all these doubts and fears and jealousies.

**Paul Almond:** That's it! The problem is, once a society gets into a state of equilibrium in which everything is all functioning beautifully, then you've got to watch out. That's why the girl coming down the river is like the X-factor that stirs up a lot of shit. So everybody in the commune, they're all feeling restless and uneasy and nobody really has to struggle any more. Because the buildings are built, they say look, what's the problem, everything's done, everything's functioning. So in a sense that's the time that you need to have somebody stir up a little bit of shit, and let everybody get jiggled out of place again and then all back into a new kind of pattern. Because in a sense the only real creative life comes out of chaos. From the community's point of view, Saguenay represents just that disturbing factor which will allow them to move on to a new level of consciousness. So even though you don't go back to the community afterwards, hopefully at the end when you think about it, that community will have reached another kind of level of awareness because Saguenay will have brought in a lot of disturbing ideas.

**cinema canada:** But this change and struggle almost result in destroying the community because of all those fears and jealousies and hate, instead of the previous love and harmony.

**Paul Almond:** Right! But I think when you're creating something new you really - anybody, any relationship, any society you have to live dangerously. They may end up with either destruction or something new, and it's out of that Phoenix symbol, you know, that something new is born.

**cinema canada:** And midsummer night's dream turns into a nightmare.

**Paul Almond:** Yes, the whole thing gets wild and it does get like a nightmare, right, but somehow, I may not have done it well, my intention was to show that you have to destroy in a sense to build. Or you keep building, but you go through periods of tense agony or criticism or destruction or whatever.

I mean that's what's been happening to our society. There is a big jiggling going on now in terms of North American society, and I don't think it has in any sense found an equilibrium right now. People are saying old Nixon's going to get back in and Trudeau, and everything will be calm and peaceful, but not really, because we haven't really reached another level of consciousness. But we are certainly, in terms of our thinking, way ahead of where we were ten years ago.

**cinema canada:** In the vocabulary, of let's say five years ago, *Journey* is very much like a psychedelic experience. I mean it's very trippy.

**Paul Almond:** Yes, it's very much, oh yes, very much, that's why it's called *Journey*, because it's like a trip, sort of, but I don't know if any one will get that. The problem is that the people who own the theatres don't. They're mostly in their fifties and sixties and so on and they don't dig the film. The people who are in positions of power in North America are successful because not only do they not want the ~~new~~ trip, but they are very happy with concrete and with pollution and with everything, and that's how they make their livelihood. So they are not into the film. And I don't even know if the people who sympathize with and really dig the film are the people who go to the cinema. That's the problem, it remains to be seen. Maybe a lot of people who are content, you know, and they are living on farms or whatever, are living their lives



# reality:

gets out and gets sold. With the other two pictures it was Paramount's and Universal's problem to sell it.

"There's always been in the industry that split between producer and distributor. The producers think they make great pictures and the distributors just lock them up; the distributors think they're great salesmen, but the producers just can't make the right pictures to sell."

Now the two sides are kind of coming together and realizing how they can both help each other a lot. And you make a picture to help fulfill the distributors needs, and the distributor has also used producers and actors much more closely in creating sales concepts and advertising.

I know the CFDC is now very concerned with linking their means of distribution with their means of production, in the sense that filmmakers will have something to do with the distribution. The government is moving toward a comprehensive film policy, which will embrace distribution.

CINEMA CANADA: Do you think that this will include a Canadian content quota?

paul almond: I don't know, We all hope it will, but we don't know if it is practical. The problem is also provincial, I think. Everyone wants a quota, but I don't know how practical it is because we haven't been making in Canada enough commercially viable films. I mean which comes first, the chicken or the egg? But once they said on the network you have to have enough Canadian singers, magically there were all the Canadian singers — great, wonderful, creating good songs. So maybe we'd make more commercial films if we knew that we had to fill certain spots and that there were cinemas waiting for our films.

CINEMA CANADA: So when is *Journey* set to open in Toronto?

paul almond: The first week of October. We'll have the world premiere in Montréal with English and French and Toronto the next day and then we'll move across the country with openings out West in the third week of October — the third and fourth weeks of October in the major centres out West. And I believe that in Ottawa, the Canadian Film Institute will be doing a retrospective of some of my films and we'll probably open the film in Ottawa at that same time. Then in French-Canada we'll be following a pattern through October as quickly as we can, to move the film directly into the Province on a large release pattern, immediately after the Montréal opening.

CINEMA CANADA: Was it simultaneously filmed in French?

paul almond: No, I don't believe a good picture can be made simultaneously. I've tried directing a half-hour play on CBC like that five or six years ago, and we found that the two languages produce different sets of internal rhythms, different sets of movements, they have different language patterns of their own and the patterns of ideas are just different. We had to cut things out of one version, add things to the other, so we ended up with two different productions of the same play with the same actors, the same sets, the same lighting. So that taught me once and for all that you can never try to shoot a film in English and French simultaneously.

CINEMA CANADA: Are you perfectly bilingual?

paul almond: No, I have trouble with French. I can understand it, I can speak it. But they would all laugh if I said I was perfectly bilingual. But I am bilingual since I can speak French and I can understand it.



*The women of Undersky, the commune that could be contemporary, or back in medieval times.*

CINEMA CANADA: Are you accepted by the québécois filmmakers?

paul almond: No. It's very curious, my situation. There's the conseil québécois pour la diffusion du cinema, and they never include my films in any of their showings in the province or abroad.

"I'm not considered by the critics part of the French-Canadian film scene. And I'm certainly not part of the Toronto English-Canadian film scene. My films are completely different from the kinds of films they make. I'm apart from them both, so I'm not part of either. In that sense, I kind of stand outside. I'm sort of in my own little world."

But I like making films in the Province of Quebec, and my crews are usually French. Jean Boffety, who shot my last picture is a French cameraman.

CINEMA CANADA: His camerawork's really beautiful.

paul almond: Oh, it's astonishing on this. Now in this picture I worked much more closely with the cameraman than I did on *Act of the Heart*. I put a lot on his back. I said, we have to create a visual style for this community, with — of course — no electric lights, you have to give that quality of light to the interior. And a quality of light outside that will give the kind of scene we're trying to create. So I leaned very heavily on

*The main building at Undersky, built by experts in early Canadian and Québec architecture.*





# dream:

and maybe don't have two dollars to go and see the film.

On the other hand, because it's kind of a visionary film and it's not meant to be a real commune, but a visionary commune, an idealized way of life, in a sense, we found during the previews that middle-aged people tended to love the picture because it's an idealized version for them of how their children gather into communes. And it's all so beautiful, which it was meant to be because it's a vision. So they sort of dig it because of its extreme beauty, but they're not altogether into the head scene, that escapes most of them.

**cinema canada:** Well, people used to drop acid in order to love everybody and be harmonious, but then on acid a lot of hellish things can happen, and when you come out the other side, you realize that all the shit is still there, and you just have to plod along.

**Paul Almond:** I think the drug scene doesn't seem to be quite as heavy now as it was, precisely because people have gone through and seen the other side of things. Well, that's the whole purpose of the film, too. To show that there are two worlds. At the end Saguenay says, "There are two worlds, Boulder, yours and mine, but you can't live in one of them, you have to have them both." You have to have what some people call reality on one side, and you have to have the world of the dream on the other side, and you have to live them both, and have them sustain each other. If you're on acid all the time you are neither going to achieve anything or do anything, but on the other hand if you've never had any experience, with drugs or anything, never tripped out on anything, it's just like having the old nine to five caper. I mean nothing is going to come out of that, either.

It's the two worlds, you know, the creative life has got to be both reality and the dream and you have to use them both in a kind of balance together. In a sense I don't know if people are arriving at that other mode of experience now without drugs, or whether that has been learned. I mean all the early saints and the mystics and the dreamers or visionaries throughout the ages have known all the things, but it's just that nowadays many more people know what a lot of people have known for a long time. Drugs just opened a lot of doors that people wouldn't have otherwise unlocked, or they would have taken much longer to unlock. A trip will do it to you right away, more or less. That fantastic book, you know, *The Teachings of Don Juan*, for example. Those Indians had known all along what people are now beginning to understand about levels of perception and levels of reality, which we are in touch with all the time, a lot of us. But to get back to the film, I don't know exactly how many people are going to see that and be in on it and how many aren't, I just don't know.

**cinema canada:** I was talking to Michael Snow about the *Teachings of Don Juan*, and he said he was surprised at how stupid Carlos Castaneda was. I didn't agree with him.

**Paul Almond:** Well, I think he made himself seem more of a fink than he actually was. I mean he spent five years of his life and he wrote two books, he wouldn't have written the books if he didn't really believe. I think the *I* of the book is different from Castaneda. The personality in the book is clearly different from the real person. I think Castaneda had to make himself appear in the book like a fink, because then all the finks like myself who read the book kind of jump every time and say, oh, you nit, can't you see this or that. So you sympathize, and that's why it's such a knockout seller. If he'd gone along saying, listen to me now, guys, I'll tell you where it's at, I mean I saw this Indian and there were these things coming out of his stomach and he obviously *knew* and that's the way life is. Well, you'd just throw the book away. But because of the way he did it, I kept asking, my God, what does



*A gentle communitarian breastfeeds her baby. "Saguenay is renewed by coming into contact with things of the earth, with birth, death, copulation of animals and people, everyone having his own craft."*

this mean, you know. So he obviously appears like a fink in the book, so you'll think you're way ahead of him.

**cinema canada:** You wrote the script of *Journey* with the river and the rock balance thing, and you mentioned Zen.

**Paul Almond:** Yes. I have a nodding acquaintance with Zen and with the sort of Yin and Yang, the opposites which, you know, seem to be everywhere. In all of my films I am dealing with some kind of opposites and certainly in *Journey* the concept of the river and the rock both needing each other and the river of intuition and the rock doesn't move, and yet the rock has to move and all those ideas are in the background. I've read a lot of Zen stories, but I never actually went into it wholeheartedly.

**cinema canada:** You've beautifully contrasted that kind of thing. Like the Taurean John Vernon character and the bull copulating with the cow and Genevieve's fluid, Cancerian femininity.

**Paul Almond:** Yes, yes, yes. I'm a Taurus and Genevieve happens to be Cancer.

**cinema canada:** I'm a Taurus too, maybe that's why I could tune into that aspect of the film and get off on it.

**Paul Almond:** Well, I hope there are a lot of Taureans out there.

**cinema canada:** But how did you tune in to that flowing, dream-like, Cancerian stream of the subconscious?

**Paul Almond:** It's funny, I suppose, and it's curious that all three films were written more from a woman's point of view and about a woman. I mean Isabel and Martha and Saguenay, the roles were deliberately written for and they are women's films. I know the women reviewers really went for it in a big



Jean. And I backed him up with Paul Van der Linden who is now shooting the Kadar feature, and Al Smith. So we had a phenomenal camera crew, I mean really professional, really marvellous. The three of them worked like magic together, and it was a joy to watch them. Van der Linden and Boffety have worked together before on *Act of the Heart*, so they knew each other and worked really well together.

**CINEMA CANADA:** Was it a union crew?

**paul almond:** Yes. S.N.C. (Syndicat National du Cinema) of Quebec and ACTRA as well.

**CINEMA CANADA:** Who built Undersky?

**paul almond:** It was built by our film company, produced by the local craftsmen in the Tadoussac and Sacre Coeur, under the direction of Elton Hayes, who is my cousin and is the farmer in the film. He came up and built the actual Undersky himself from the designs by Glenn Bible. Glenn was the top student in architecture at McGill University and he dropped out for a year to make the film with me, and his specialty is early Canadian architecture and early Quebec architecture. So he and Elton and I more or less designed it together, and then Elton and Glenn built it together. They were helped in the aging of certain things by a German painter who is living in Montréal, and it was the creative combination of all, including Anne Pritchard who worked on the picture and did the costumes. She was in from very early on, discussing it.

**CINEMA CANADA:** How did you find that beautiful location?

**paul almond:** It was quite an adventure, because I knew it had to be on a river somewhere, and I didn't know exactly where. But I kept looking over different rivers, and when I found the Saguenay, I sailed up and down it many, many times before I finally decided where it should be. I write for locations, I



mean I look for a location and then write a script, it's more like that with my films so far. So you know the story grew with the buildings, and the buildings grew with the film. And there was also unity there from beginning to end, because the high place at the end in the shelter, the film was written for that, as I found that place. It fitted, and then the story grew as the location grew, and then as the house grew.

**CINEMA CANADA:** How long did it take you to make the film?

**paul almond:** It took two years to plan it and to write it. The shooting took eight weeks, right on schedule. We had a budget of half a million dollars, and we went over ten per cent, which is not bad.

**CINEMA CANADA:** Were Genevieve and you already separated when you made *Journey*. If so was that any problem?

**paul almond:** Yes, but it wasn't any problem. As a matter of fact we both respect each other very highly as a director and as an actress. We both enter filmmaking as a way of life, so that's no problem. In a way it was easier this way, because if we had a particularly hard day on the set and we were both exhausted in our roles as director and actress, that was it, we didn't have to take all our problems to bed with us as man and woman.

**CINEMA CANADA:** How did you choose John Vernon to play opposite her?

**paul almond:** I worked with him on *Wojeck*, and I also remembered him from *Point Blank* in which I thought he was marvellous. He seems to have a very strong screen presence and he's a very vital person on the screen. He's always played heavies, he hadn't played romantic leads, which I had seen Boulder as being, more of a romantic lead. But John has great strength, and one essential quality of Boulder is great strength. He's a very powerful person, who during the course of the film reveals that there are more facets to him than meet the eye. So John Vernon seemed to me one of the most strong and forceful stars, and he's also Canadian. I like to use Canadians in the lead roles — Donald Sutherland, Mark Strange — and I always try to find names of stars who are well known, even if they're not necessarily living in Canada, but who will bring something to the box office and who will also bring something of their experience outside, yet whose roots are Canadian and are a part of our cultural environment.

**CINEMA CANADA:** What future features are you planning now?

**paul almond:** I've got two or three in mind, sort of turning, but nothing I want to talk about yet, it won't be for quite a while. No, I want to take off for a few months, which I normally do after the picture comes out and just go away to Europe to sort of see what strikes me and also to think about setting up production deals.





# cream:

way, and a lot of women were greatly moved by the films. Mind you I was writing also for and working with Genevieve who is a woman, so I was able to get into that world, through her, more.

**cinema canada:** You used young people from Loyola College on your crew.

**Paul Almond:** Yes. And now they're all actually working for a production company in Montreal.

**cinema canada:** So you'd be in favor of a kind of an apprenticeship program for aspiring filmmakers?

**Paul Almond:** Yes, I really like the idea, for I find that the making of a film is largely the question of energy and where the energies come from. Because a film is like an accumulation of a great deal of energy, and the young kids today with their intense excitement are a very valuable source of energy in making films.

These kids worked like dogs from morning to night and loved it and they were one of the major driving forces in the film. And I think you'll find that young filmmakers today have lots of energy.

You know, a film is a product of a lot of explosive energy which kind of focuses in on and sets celluloid almost alight. That's why I try to gather energies, and you'll find that they'll guide you in the right direction. Young people can go to film schools and to university, but when you get down to it, the only way you finally learn about all the problems you have is actually making a film or working on one. Because filmmaking is not just pointing the camera or getting the right script. That's only the mechanics. Filmmaking is an attitude toward content which is shared by everybody. It's kind of a community experience which you will go through when you are making a film. Real filmmaking you can't learn in a university.

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# RESULTS OF IMPORTANT SURVEY JUST IN!

An exhausted survey among the owner and president of Quinn Laboratories, Mr. Findlay J. Quinn respectively, has just been digested by the computers, wheezing, hissing and zapockating.

The key question in sub-section 18C, namely #319 a, b, c, & d, ran as follows:

*"What, in your unprejudiced opinion, is the overwhelming causative factor in the unprecedented success of your film laboratory; (a) because your people care more, (b) that your technological advances, both (b1) chemical and (b2) mechanical, have revolutionized film processing, (c) that your (c1) size and (c2) ultra-modern procedures have resulted in (c3) faster, (c4) more accurate customer servicing, and that, (d) if given half a chance, you will do even better?"*

In a firm, clear and unequivocal gurgle, the computer printed out Mr. Quinn's retort:

"I like your style!"

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