

the source of that derives from Arcand, or Lemelin's nihilistic destruction of a myth of a golden past that his angry novels never intended, an anger not reflected either in the '50s TV series or the Carle film, or the Héroux's lyrical exploitation of the French connection, hardly matters. For *Le crime*, because it works that loathing so effectively, admits to a corruption in Canadian filmmaking that has until now never been acknowledged, at least never so profoundly – and certainly never before on-screen.

Michael Dorland ●

LE CRIME D'OVIDE PLOUFFE d. Denis Arcand **exec. p.** Denis Héroux, John Kemeny **p.** Justine Héroux **sc.** Roger Lemelin, Denis Arcand **mus.** Olivier Dassault **p. man.** Micheline Garant **loc. man.** Josette Perrotta **unit man.** François Sylvestre **1st a.d.** Jacques W. Benoit **2nd a.d.** Monique Maranda **3rd a.d.** Martha Laing **cont.** Johanne Prgent **d.o.p.** François Protat **1st asst. cam.** Yves Drapeau **2nd asst. cam.** Michel Bernier **stills** Piroshka Mihalka **sd.** Claude Hazanavicius, Michel Guiffan **boom** James L. Thompson, Marc Conil **ed. (mini-series)** Pierre Bernier, Werner Nold **film ed.** Monique Fortier **1st asst. ed.** Suzanne Bouilly **2nd asst. ed.** Anne Whiteside **3rd asst. ed.** Marie Hamelin **art d.** Jocelyn Joly **asst art d.** Raymond Dupuis **art d. coord.** Vicky Frodsham **head props** Ronald Fauteux **off-set props** Jean Labrecque, Josiane Noreau **period vehicles** Jacques Arcoette **set dec.** François Seguin, Jean-Baptiste Tard **on-set props** Patrice Bengle, Ian Lavoie **set painters** Sylvie Lacerte, Claire Alary **set assts.** Jacques Belair, Andre Chamberland, Jean-Maurice Fecteau, Sidney Leger **buyer/constr.** Henry Gagnon **head make-up** Marie-Ange Protat **asst. make-up** Blanche, Pierre Humbert **head hair** Gaetan Noisieux **asst. hair** Christiane Beau **cost. des.** Nicole Pelletier **asst. cost.** Lise Pinet **dresser** Sylvie Rochon **asst. dresser** Sophie Beasse **ward.** Laurie Drew **ward. dressers** Louise Gagne, Mary Jayne Wallace, Claire Garneau, Luc Breton **set dresser** Hazel Côté **asst. set dresser** Robert Houle **gaffer** Don Saari **best boy** Chuck Hughes, John Lewin **key grip** Serge Grenier **grips** Robert Grenier, Gregoire Schmidt **p. assts.** Ken Korral, Michel Côté, Gilles Perrault, Joe Sanchez, Ronald Vachon, Harold Trepanier, Jean Racine, Michel Boyer, Neil Bibby, Jacques Bernier **p.c.** Cine-Plouffe II inc. (514) 284-9354. In co-production with Antenne 2 and Filmax (France) **running time** 107 mins. **l.p.** Gabriel Arcand, Anne Letourneau, Jean Carmet, Veronique Jannot, Juliette Huot, Pierre Curzi, Louise Lapare, Denise Filiatrault, Serge Dupire, Donald Pilon, Roger Lebel, Dominique Michel, Marcel Leboeuf

Jean Beaudin's Mario

Jean Beaudin's (*Cordélia*, *J.A. Martin photographe*) latest work has the ethereal quality of a legend. From the moment its first image bursts onto the screen, you know that, like the evanescent stuff of dreams, what you see will soon quietly disappear in the recesses of your mind, leaving a fleeting, if recurring, impression.

Mario (Xavier Norman Petermann) is a 10-year-old boy who doesn't talk. Whether he is mute or autistic is of little concern. The fact is, Mario does not communicate or feel empathy for anyone except his 18-year-old brother, Simon (Francis Reddy), who populates his dreamworld with visions of past heroes and recreations of the battles they waged. As the film opens, the two boys, after having reversed Louis Riel's defeat and relived the battles of the Aztecs, have turned into Islamic soldiers come to civilize the Gauls.

Mario and his brother live with their parents (Murielle Dutil, Jacques Godin) on the picturesque Île-de-la-Madeleine. It is an isolated existence, and in their isolation the boys have ample time to live out a fantasy existence as rich in their acting out as it is rich – to our eyes – in symbolism.

But with the summer season come tourists, including Hélène, a beautiful young girl who casts Simon under her spell. She draws him into the real world, away from his brother and their dreamworld games. Left alone with only his stuffed coyote for a companion, Mario retreats even further into his imaginary world. Incapable of venting his anguish and frustration, he becomes destructive, using the other children on the island as scapegoats. Although vaguely aware of his brother's despair, Simon refuses to acknowledge it; and as long

as Hélène is there, he has other interests.

With summer's end and the departure of Hélène, however, he turns back to his brother... but it is too late: the games have been destroyed. Realizing the ephemeral quality of their world, the brothers resolutely turn away from it in a final search for the absolute. While the social worker who had caught wind of Mario's plight is on the case, trying to take the boy away, Simon scripts a different farewell scenario.

In the end, it is Mario who guides his brother to what seems to be a familiar spot by the ocean... their final escape. In an ambiguous final scene, an explosion occurs: the boys had always imagined going out with a bang, and this seems to be their destiny.

This sad little tale is beautifully told, with a visual integrity and force reminiscent of the magic realism of Pratt and Colville. The bleak and blunt visuals add an ethereal dimension to what is really a tale of misery unto maudlin excess. The acting throughout ranges from the believable to the superb, with the highest marks going to the parents who manage to bring out all the dignity and the sadness of their minor characters. Unfortunately, Nathalie Chalifour (Hélène) breaks the spell her presence creates on the screen every time she opens her mouth, and one wishes she had been cast in Mario's mute role.

Although Jean Beaudin claims that Mario is not so much a story of people and nature, but rather about children, games and real and imaginary worlds, the characters of this film are essentially born of the landscape around them. Mario in particular is a product of sand, and sea and wind. The brothers' death only returns them to what is theirs.

But once the film has receded in the mind's eye, the way a summer romance fades from the heart, what are we left with? As the beauty of Pierre Mignot's camera work and François Dompière's score dominate the film as much or even more than the poignancy of the boys' plight, one could say this film is little more than another moment in the seemingly unending saga of Quebec

angst-on-film. And indeed one wonders if, in reducing the theme of alienation to its most simple form, Quebec filmmakers are not evading the complexity of a more complex composition.

Josée Miville-Déchêne ●

MARIO d. Jean Beaudin **based on the story** "La Sablière" by Claude Jasmin **sc.** Arlette Dion, Jean Beaudin, Jacques Paris **d.o.p.** Pierre Mignot **mus.** François Dompière **ed.** Werner Nold **art. d.** Denis Boucher **p. man.** Lorraine Richard **assoc. p.** Hélène Verrier, Jean Beaudin **exec. p.** Jacques Bodet **cont.** Monique Champagne **unit man.** Ginette Guillard **loc. man.** Louis-Philippe Rochon **asst. ed.** Nicole Chicoine **1st asst. cam.** Jean Lepine **2nd asst. cam.** Christiane Guernon **sd.** François Laplante **sd. sup.** Bruce Nyznik **sd. ed.** David Evans, Wayne Griffin **1st a.d.** Michel Gauthier **2nd a.d.** Phil Comeau **3rd a.d.** Louise Chantraine **asst. sd.** John Brooke, Susan Lindell **asst. mix.** Adrian Croll **boom** Esther Auger **mixer** Hans Peter Strobl **gaffer** Roger Martin **best boy** Guy Becharard **set dec.** Alain Singher **key grip** Yvon Boudrias **grip** Jean-Pierre Lamarche **gen. op.** Eddy Trempe **make-up & hair** Brigitte McCaughy **cost. des.** François Laplante **coyote cons.** Francine Gagne **cost.** Marianne Carter **cost. trainer** André Henault **stage props.** Charles Bernier **prop. assts.** Mario Lapierre, Dino Bonaio **mus. rec.** Paul Page, Louis Hone **sd. efx.** Andy Malcolm, Peter McBurnie **sd. trans.** Gordon Thompson **post-p.** Soundscore Lee, Toronto, Canada **stills** Attila Dory **sp. efx.** Gregg Curtis, Jacques Godbout, Gary Zeller **set const.** Leo Marchand, Eugene Monette **2nd unit cam.** Thomas Vamos **cam. asst.** Francine Tougas **elect.** Daniel Chretien, Claude Fortier, Gilles Fortier, Normand Viau, Michel Periard **make-up** Mikie Hamilton **p. assts.** Alain Belhumeur, Jacques Forget, Pierre Guillard, Richard Karol, Louise Richard, Gaston Solomon **p. coord.** Nicole Hilareguy **post. p.** Edouard Davidovici **admin.** Huguette Bergeron **titles** Louise Overy **clerks** Micheline Sauve-Bernier, Berthe Constantineau, Louise Cousineau **post. synch.** Sonolab Ltee, Montreal, Canada **stunt coord.** Andre Beckrich **stunts (horses)** Graham Caseley, Justin McFadden **stunts (drowning)** Denis Cayouette, Eric Cayouette **l.p.** Xavier Norman Petermann, Francis Reddy, Nathalie Chalifour, Jacques Godin, Murielle Dutil, Claire Pimpère, Christiane Breton, Marcel Sabourin, Jonathan Painchaud, Sylvain Cormier, Marc-André Vigneau, Michel Gauthier, Genevieve Gauthier, Michele Lapierre, Alcide Painchaud, Yvon Boudrias, Monique Champagne, Esther Auger, Marie Christine Perrault, Christine Landry. **colour.** 35mm, **running time:** 99 mins. **p.c.** National Film Board of Canada.

Stephanie McLuhan's Marshall McLuhan The Man And His Message

There have been several previous screen productions concerned with Marshall McLuhan and his ideas, but it is fitting, four years after his death and in the resonant year of 1984, to have yet another look at the man who devoted his life to understanding media. This particular program – telecast by CBC on Oct. 18 – takes us a step closer to demystifying the man, and to a certain extent McLuhanism, mainly because it is produced and directed by his daughter: Stephanie McLuhan. She has wisely used, rather than masked, the intimacy of her knowledge to inform this production.

The structure of the program is a fascinating interweaving of the public and private sides of McLuhan. The former is conveyed through a remarkable selection of televised appearances by McLuhan on various talk-shows – Stephanie McLuhan says she culled 118 hours of archival tapes to make her selection – in which his aphorisms on media pile up in layers. For viewers new to McLuhan's thinking, these sequences may spark curiosity and intrigue, sending



● Sad little tale of sand, sea and wind: Francis Reddy and Xavier Norman Petermann in *Mario*

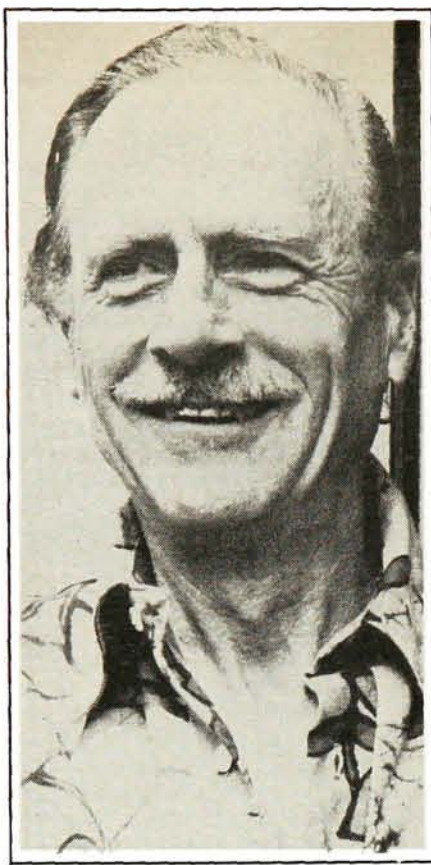
them to the original texts. For viewers already somewhat familiar with McLuhanism, the archival talk-show sequences may resonate at other levels: reminding them of, for example, the sheer extent to which this "media guru" was courted by television itself. For either type of viewer, there are moments of delight here: the famous extract from *Annie Hall* in which Woody Allen puts down a pompous communications teacher (loudly pontificating behind Woody in a movie line-up) by producing McLuhan himself to give the final word; or late-night talk-show host Tom Snyder trying to grapple with McLuhan and McLuhanism.

It is interesting to consider this TV production in terms of the "media guru's" own *esthétique* for TV, some of which is revealed in the program itself. At one point, for example, McLuhan – being interviewed on a TV talk-show the day after the first 1976 U.S. presidential debate – succinctly points out that "Chatting casually without a script is what works on TV, not debate." Unfortunately, his words have been somewhat ignored for this production. This is especially true of writer/narrator Tom Wolfe's presence on screen. He is so obviously reading the cue cards for his delivery that any sense of spontaneity and full engagement is eliminated. Even Wolfe's potentially lovely anecdote about taking McLuhan to a strip-joint finally comes across as rehearsed and stilted.

This is not the case with other interviewees, who are allowed to reminisce or "chat" about McLuhan. Mrs. Marshall McLuhan, Pierre Trudeau, Father John Kelly, Jonathan Miller, Norman Mailer, David Garth, Richard Salant, Arthur Schlesinger Jr., brother Morris McLuhan and son Michael McLuhan all provide interesting glimpses of the "monomaniac." Somehow Mailer is the most engaging, and surprisingly so. Surely he is far more "hot" than any of the others in his speaking style. By contrast, Trudeau is "cool" to the point of suspected cryogenics. (One wonders, too, at Trudeau's admission that it took a personal explanation from McLuhan to make him understand the impact of inflation on daily life: that "each person was diminished.")

The most fascinating aspect of *Marshall McLuhan – The Man And His Message* is the personal glimpses of his home life that Stephanie McLuhan interweaves throughout. Wisely drawing upon candid remarks by family members, as well as home-movies and intimate knowledge, she allows for a far more personal (and therefore, far more intriguing) portrait to emerge.

The result, however, is oddly disturbing. McLuhan's media persona ("monomaniacal" guru of the electronic age) seems, it is hinted here, to equally summarize "the family man" as well. His widow talks of his "jillion ideas" constantly coming at her in their daily life, to the point where "I'd consciously turn off." His son, Michael, talks of being raised on McLuhanisms all his life and tells a revealing anecdote of his father's intellectual stubbornness to the point where "I gave up." A fascinating film clip, excerpted from footage of a daughter's wedding, contains McLuhan – in the dressing-room with his daughter before the ceremony – pontificating about some intellectual idea on the subject of "fatherhood". His daughter, clearly disappointed, ignored and upstaged despite her lovely gown and the occasion, finally turns away from him, back to the mirror. McLuhan, however,



● McLuhan: fascinating but tragic figure

drones on, seemingly oblivious to the emotional context of his chosen stage.

In this production, then, Stephanie McLuhan has taken some definite personal risks – using subtle ironies to quietly (but also, lovingly) suggest that life with father had its down-side. The importance of this program arises from just this personal touch. If we are alert at all to its nuances, we must then slightly reconsider McLuhanism itself. The portrait that emerges here is of an intellectually driven man, somewhat detached from family and friends.

This helps explain (for me, at least) a contradiction present in his work. Late in *Marshall McLuhan – The Man And His Message*, McLuhan tells an interviewer: "Anything I talk about is usually something I am resolutely against!" Arguably, this tone never emerged in his writing, except, possibly, towards the end of his career. Instead, the predominant impression is of someone excited and enthusiastic (even wholly optimistic) about the electronic media age. In the many talk-show excerpts here, there is certainly little sense of a man "resolutely against" what he so clearly saw happening in our times. Perhaps, had he included his emotions in his analysis, the result would have been far different.

As it is, McLuhan emerges as a fascinating, but tragic figure – understood in his lifetime largely by the very people who would use his insights to further what he was "resolutely against." It is no secret that McLuhan was courted – and won over – by the Madison Avenue advertising/political consulting expertise that has so altered our lives over the past 20 years.

Marshall McLuhan – The Man And His Message is being telecast as part of a new CBC-TV series of Thursday night "specials." It is well worth watching.

Joyce Nelson ●

MARSHALL McLUHAN – THE MAN AND HIS MESSAGE d./p. Stephanie McLuhan sc./narr. Tom Wolfe cam. Randall Platt mus. Michael Montez running time: 55 min., colour video, 1984. p.c. McLuhan Productions, in association with CBC-TV, Toronto.

Camera Canada

Three short films this month, including two seen at Toronto's Festival of Festival in September.

TRASH TO TREASURE

The prosaic garbage truck is centre screen, there's a drum beat or two, and then into the titles. An interesting opening to a look at Ana Teresa Novaes, a talented and energetic artist who arrived in Canada, looked around, and decided to teach kids an "alternative language through puppets." Combining her worry about technology and "what is left behind" with her considerable creative talents, she hit upon a kids' workshop utilizing "usable garbage."

Ana Teresa Novaes has found a way to link children and seniors with the huge amounts of trash discarded by today's society. She says, quite rightly, that old people are the best collectors – they keep everything – and she encourages them to collect for her and her kids.

From plastic bottles, egg cartons, paper tubes – almost everything cuttable and bendable – she motivates the children in her workshop to use the emotions inside them. They invent weirdly unique puppets, cutting, glueing and experimenting, and talking about creating with "stuff" that isn't new. Novaes shows them how to bring life to the puppets with movement and dialogue in their own words. The kids admit to being scared at first, but progress rapidly to enjoyment and showmanship, and stage entertainments for local audiences including the seniors who gather the discarded material for them.

Ana Teresa Novaes has a vivid and delightful personality that shines out of the screen, and the kids are fun too. However, the film is rather awkwardly put together, with a plethora of information and effects scrambled together – a collage of family photographs recollecting the artist's Brazilian background; travel-

ling matte; old people collecting; the workshop in operation; the puppet performance – but hey! let's not come down too hard on Steven Deme. He's obviously talented and in love with his chosen craft, so one looks forward to more of his films.

d./cam. Steven Deme p./ed. Helen Henshaw orig. mus. Michel Therrien p.c. Compass Films, 4B Selwood Ave., Toronto M4E 1B2 (416) 694-6449. 16mm., col. running time: 25 mins. (video format also available).

REVOLUTION

An animated piece involving first of all, a triangle lazily revolving, and then joined by another shape. And that's all it is really, lots of shapes having a good time. Rough round the edges, a sort of *naïf* film, but curiously hypnotic and restful. As the miscellaneous shapes metamorphose, and spin and turn in space, it could be interpreted as being about making decisions, choosing the right paths or, again, anything the viewer wished to inject into or impose upon it. Of course, what is anathema to some is paradise to others...

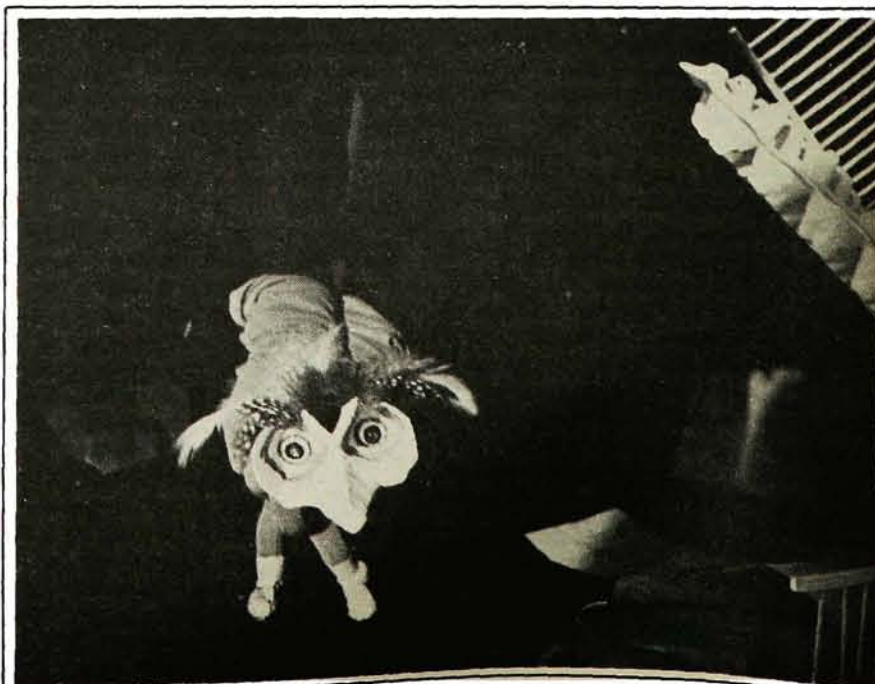
A film by Daniel Sokolowski, 1984, 16mm., col. running time: 10 mins. Availability: (613) 728-9850.

LAS ARADAS

In many ways, this is a non-film. The eye feasts on peaceful visuals of trickling streams, rivulets of water over rocks, a mountain path – but the female voice-over is recounting in graphic detail the 1980 Sumpil River slaughter, when an entire village was massacred by San Salvadorean soldiers. A deeply disturbing emotional experience, considerably heightened by the simple structure of the film.

A film by Janice Lundman, 1984, 16mm., col. running time: 8 mins. Dist.: Canadian Filmmakers Distribution Centre, 299 Queen St. W., Toronto M5V 1Z9 (416) 593-1808.

Pat Thompson ●



● Movie with legs: puppeteer Teresa Novaes' fingers do the walking