

Hubert Yves Rose's
La Ligne de Chaleur

La Ligne de Chaleur is a deeply satisfying film that owes its critical success in equal measure to its direction, writing, acting and the filmmaking integrity of the Association coopérative de productions audio-visuelles (ACPAV). It is a moderately budgeted film (at \$1.3 million) that will not make big bucks at the box office but neither do we live in a perfect world. With the exception of extremely minor roles played by Pat Phillips, Lorena Gale, Charlotte Boisjoli and Charlotte Lelièvre, you will not find women in this film or popular inducements like sex, violence and exotic locations that only money can buy.

Rather, *La Ligne de Chaleur* stands as a reminder to the filmmaking community of what can be achieved with a talented cast and crew and the will to make a good film.

In a word the film is "funereal", with a dark pallor hanging over it. It proceeds in whispered tones yet there is much unrestrained emotion. It is an evocative film about the estranged relationship between father and son, a classical relationship that Rose treats with admirable subtlety and respect.

The story opens on a Montreal snowstorm. Robert Filion (Gabriel Arcand) is obliged to travel south where he must identify the body of his father who has died of a sudden heart attack in a Florida resort. Robert's parents have been separated for years just as Robert is separated from his wife and son Maxim (Simon Gonzalez) who is reunited with his father for the trip.

Father and son get along well during the first sunny day on the Florida beach. They share a kindred sense of trust while living in the deceased's beach apartment. Here, for a brief moment, the old man is dead (long live the old man!) and everything is peachy.

La Ligne de Chaleur, the road movie, begins after the body has been shipped north by train, to be buried. Father and son, who have not planned this trip, follow in the deceased's car to find that the coastal road through Florida, the Carolinas, Georgia and Virginia is lined with overbooked motels. As they drive north, the rooms they do find become darker and colder as does the relationship between father and son.

This relationship finally breaks down on the "heat line" (*La Ligne de Chaleur*) where the warm weather meets the northern cold front. What was once a breezy beach apartment has gradually become a low-lit roadside motel where father and son face, indeed attempt to exercise, the fears and anxiety inherent in their relationship. Thus, what had appeared early in the story to be an awkward but not unusual

father/son relationship requiring a period of reacquaintance, becomes something much more menacing.

Norman G. Simpson (Gerard Parkes) is a cloyingly nice, retired journalist who is working on a photo-essay called "Motels and the Decline of Adventure." He is a key character, a simple-happy-go-lucky individual engendering all the characteristics of someone on permanent vacation (a large percentage of Florida's wintertime population). Maxim is fascinated by this old wizard to whom he can talk regardless of language differences, but Robert cannot put enough distance between himself and Simpson.

Robert chooses not to like this older man who appears to want to play the role of his father. His tolerance of Simpson does not improve even after we learn that Simpson is dying of a terminal illness and is lonely.

By, in effect, bringing Robert's father back to life to show the continuity of the father/son relationship through the years and from generation to generation, Rose and co-writer Micheline Lanctot underscore the complexity of such a relationship.

Guilt, a product of his relationship with his late father and feelings of inadequacy as a father to his son, culminate in Robert's dark - albeit drunken - night of the soul.

Here, on the heat line, in the Motel Drama, Chesapeake Bay, Va., the sins of the father are visited upon Robert while his own son is the sympathetic victim/witness.

Arcand, with minimal (drunken) dialogue, is brilliant and Gonzalez does not deter from this first-class performance.

The story ends the same way it begins - in the north on the cold side of the heat line to where the corpse has been shipped, where Simpson

expects to die, where Robert has experienced the mortification of self.

In the last shot, the coastal road leads north towards a tunnel entrance that expands quietly - save for the beat of car windshield wipers - and envelopes the whole screen in darkness.

La Ligne de Chaleur is like attending your own funeral. It should not be missed. You will marvel at what you learn about relationships you thought you had pegged.

Jan Chantale •

LA LIGNE DE CHALEUR p. Marc Daigle d. Hubert-Yves Rose sc. Micheline Lanctot, Hubert-Yves Rose d. o. p. Michel Caron sd. Yvon Benoit p. man. Danny Chailour 1st a. d. Lise Abastado continuity Thérèse Bérubé loc. man. Carle Delaroché-Vernet casting Deirdre Bowen. Annie Pierard makeup Micheline Trépanier dresser Mario Davignon props Simon La Haye chief elect. Jean-Marc Hébert electricians Pierre Provost, Jean Courteau key grip François Dupère grip Christian Benard 1st. cam. asst. Christiane Guernon 2nd cam. asst. Martin Dubois gaffer Claude La Haye set designers Jean-François Leblanc, Simon Laforge p. admin. Marina Darveau p. asst. Louise Cloutier p. sec. Suzanne Castellino, Denise d'Amours accountants Luc Forcier, Marie-Reine Mailhot ext. loc. man. Marie Potvin, Jennifer Jonas prod. assts. Alain Labrosse, François Paille, David Morin, André Dupuy still photog. Paul-Émile Rioux a. d. trainee Annie Pierard American crew: prod. coord. Gary McNutt, Ron Oer electrician Russell C. Parsons Jr. Virginia: prod. man. Timothy Gabbert 2nd cam. asst. David L. Haycox prod. assts. Denise Nations, Donna Toole, George Koury, Vernon Nimetz Florida: p. man. Sally Glaesner 2nd. cam. asst. Gary Schlifer grip Scott Mumford p. assts. John Piccolo, Ray Nieman orig. music Richard Gregoire musicians Marc Gillett, Pierre Daigneault sd. rec. & mix. Joe Petrella sd. ed. Marie-Claude Gagné sd. fr. Lise Wedlock sd. fr. rec. Jocelyn Caron asst. ed. Theresa De Luca asst. sd. ed. Paule Bélanger ed. trainee Marnie Stubble mix Michel Descombes l. p. Gabriel Arcand, Simon Gonzalez, Gerard Parkes, Charlotte Boisjoli, Gérard Poirier, Pat Phillips, Lorena Gale, Jean Mathieu, Paul Glaros, Vlasta Vrana, Charlotte Lelièvre, Carl Norling, Moses Gibson, James C. Montague, Lucien Hamel, Herb Lifschultz, James W. Almond. Produced by the ACPAV, with the financial participation of Telefilm Canada, Société générale de cinéma du Québec. 35mm, colour.

Bruce Elder's
Consolations (Love is an Art of Time) Part III: The Body and the World

"Well this is a mission and I do hope to say that Western concepts of reason have driven us into an absolutely extreme situation - a situation that threatens life on this planet, actually. And these films are partly a call to recognize this extreme condition."
(Bruce Elder, *Cinema Canada* #124.)

It's a small word, but it means a lot, "us." In the above quote it seems to me to be the key to understanding Bruce Elder's recent film work. Though the quote is taken from an interview conducted after the completion of Elder's *Lamentations*, it remains applicable to *The Body and the World*, and it sums up what I believe to be that film's central issue - community.

The Body and the World is the last film in the *Consolations* trilogy, a 14-hour experimental work completed this year. Elder describes *Consolations* as being about "resentment and its overcoming, that is, about the overcoming of the pastness of the past through grasping its presentness and through a thankful submission to the Wholly Other, since nothing is more obvious than that Hell is to be one's own." Hmm.

But *Consolations* appears to be about nostalgia rather than resentment. If, as Michael Dorland suggests, *resentment* is in part "the emotional content of the catastrophe of modern culture", with modern culture being defined as that which totalizes and obliterates difference, nostalgia precedes it. Nostalgia felt and re-felt develops into *resentment*. But *The Body and the World*, the culmination of a trilogy that purports to be about the overcoming of *resentment*, instead travels back through the layers of "re-feeling" to reclaim the original sentiment - nostalgia.

Instead of rejecting totalizing forces, *The Body and the World* swoons elaborately in a wished-for but never realized unity with a whole host of others, among them women, tropical cultures and the landscape. And the film's strategies - epic length, extensive quotation, avant-garde formal practices, "essential" concerns (being, knowing, loving, losing, etc.) - allow it to take on the guise of universality, certainly of Significance. The film presents such exhaustive "evidence" and cloaks itself so completely in the garb of Western intellectual avant-gardes that it forgoes its status as the product of a single



A drunken Robert (Gabriel Arcand) struggles to communicate with his son Maxim (Simon Gonzalez) in *La Ligne de chaleur*

PHOTO: PAUL-ÉMILE RIOUX