

voice dubbed in.

Bloomfield, five years ago produced works like *Eloise* and *Abelard*, and Pinter's *The Basement* for CBC-TV, works that demanded the creation of a highly romantic, dramatic or logically illogical world. Here he once again attempts to construct an unreal dramatic world, but unfortunately his writing doesn't provide him as director with sufficient dramatic strength or logical coherence to carry his moralistic tragedy.

The story of the eternal triangle plus baby-makes-four seems designed as a luscious slick sad story in the women's weepy vein, but lacks the detail, honesty of perception, and style that made most of those underrated forties' films so successful.

Dyan Cannon, used, tanned, practically a personification of California, is the woman who has everything: husband, home, dream cottage, artistic lover, little dog and, best of all, a pretty baby. The moralistic message of the movie suggests she can't keep it all: the burden of mother love requires some sacrifices and decisions.

The potential subjects here are exciting and relevant. How much do children restrict sexual adventure? What duties and responsibilities are essential? Greed, and possessiveness for objects, creatures and loved ones can indeed lead to disaster, and a contemplation of the interlocking uses people make of each other under the banner of love could provide the film with a fascinating examination of contemporary means and morals.

Unfortunately the characterizations are as superficial as the décor. We seem to be watching made-up people in a made-up place, and the surface gloss is so hard we cannot feel the pulse or smell reality anywhere. As a result it is difficult to care what happens to these people, and even the death of a puppy dog or a baby is as uninvolved as a newspaper item. This fictitious world with its unbelievable romanticism, is, in fact, unbelievable.

Don Wilder's photography reveals to us a world that is glossy, commercially pretty and totally false. No amount of subtle acting, plot repair or charged direction can dispel the influence of the visuals as designed and photographed, unless they are calculated for ironic contrast. And when the characters are as glossy and unreal as the environment, there is no contrast. Thus the design of the film, the conflicting art styles purported to be by artist Pilon for instance, the meaningless photography, and the motivational holes in the story (big healthy babies that age don't die instantly from a bit of cotton in their mouths for example) weaken the film drastically.



Dyan Cannon

There is always, however, a favorite scene for me in every film I see. In this it is Al Waxman's hilarious gunshop proprietor leafing through a magazine of sexy pictures, expressing disbelief, amazement and delight in turn. At least the voyeurism and eroticism are frankly enjoyed for what they are and not hypocritically delivered as art. It's a refreshing moment.

The second funniest scene was unintentional, and involves Pilon and Cannon driving their white sports car to their special field to make love. She jumps out and in one swift gesture disrobes and flings her arms up in a gay mother earth come-and-get-it pose. Inspired, he whisks off his shirt (no buttons) but then suddenly sits back down in his car. To take off his shoes and socks? To hide his genitals? No. To drive the thirty feet or so over to her.

Now how much more California can you get?

— Natalie Edwards

Child Under a Leaf

It's all very tragic. The old Greeks would have loved *Child Under a Leaf* with its grand and noble passions and classic themes of Life, Death and Retribution. Of course, the details of *Child Under a Leaf* are long removed from antiquity, although the story has a certain timelessness. It's a tale of two lovers, their affair and the man who comes between them. In years past, it might have been written in rhyming couplets: For never was a story of more woe. . . . Than this of Joseph and his Domino.

She's married. He's not. Together they have a child, a baby girl. The problem is her husband. Who else. He's

in the way, he's suspicious and he's making threats. He has already killed her French poodle, simply because "he knew that (she) loved it". For the same reason, Joseph is in danger. Perhaps the child is too. They discuss murder: "Maybe I should kill him. . . . But what if you miss? I'll practice. . . ." Joseph buys a gun, but they do nothing.

It's a promising conflict of tensions. And the child's presence provides the film with an interesting structural twist on the usual lover, wife, husband triangle. But writer-director George Bloomfield has left his characters high, though not always dry, uninteresting and very much unmotivated. They are, in fact, people with no past, and of

Scene from "Child Under A Leaf"



course a questionable future. Domino and Joseph are in love and that apparently is explanation enough. At least Domino, with a child to love and a husband to hate, is emotionally fulfilled, even if she's not at all happy. Dyan Cannon, in a fiery and provocative performance, captures both the passion and despondence of this woman torn between the child and Joseph. (That sounds significantly Christian, doesn't it?) Unable to have both, she will have neither. The film's development is predicated on her indecision and its resolution on her presumably symbolic talent for unveiling death. It's all very tragic indeed.

It might also be very touching . . . if it wasn't so damned serious. The affair is such a joyless, desperate matter. In the Grand Tradition of love stories, it's an intensely intimate relationship, an all-consuming passion with its own personal humour and rituals. For Domino and Joseph, everything else is unimportant. Its effect on their lives is profound. Played by Donald Pilon, he of the love-lorn stare, Joseph is a painter. And what does he paint? Pictures of the old deserted farmhouses and barns which identify the many countryside locations of their secret rendezvous. His masterpiece is something called *Child Under a Leaf*, a private joke that only he and Domino would understand.

How remote and all-exclusive! And how very typical. It's easy to watch them from a distance, but rarely do they offer an invitation to come closer, to become emotionally involved. They act as if the world were theirs and theirs alone. No one could conceivably be interested in their ritualistic intimacies, complete with wine, grapes, flowing gowns and the occasional Dionysian open-air setting. Could they? Although Euripides would probably be pleased with it, an affair on-screen as off, demands a little more discretion.

— Mark Miller

Three short films on old people

Why are we reviewing shorts — is this a new policy? Yes.

Were You There When — the president of one of (Canada's) foreign-owned theatre chains publicly maintained that his houses couldn't run Canadian shorts because they were not told about them? Cinema Canada is trying to ease this situation by periodically covering short films which could beautifully precede features in theatres from coast to coast. (Who ever said we weren't willing to cooperate with Big Business, anyway?)

Here's hoping you will soon see such lovely documentaries in our theatres.

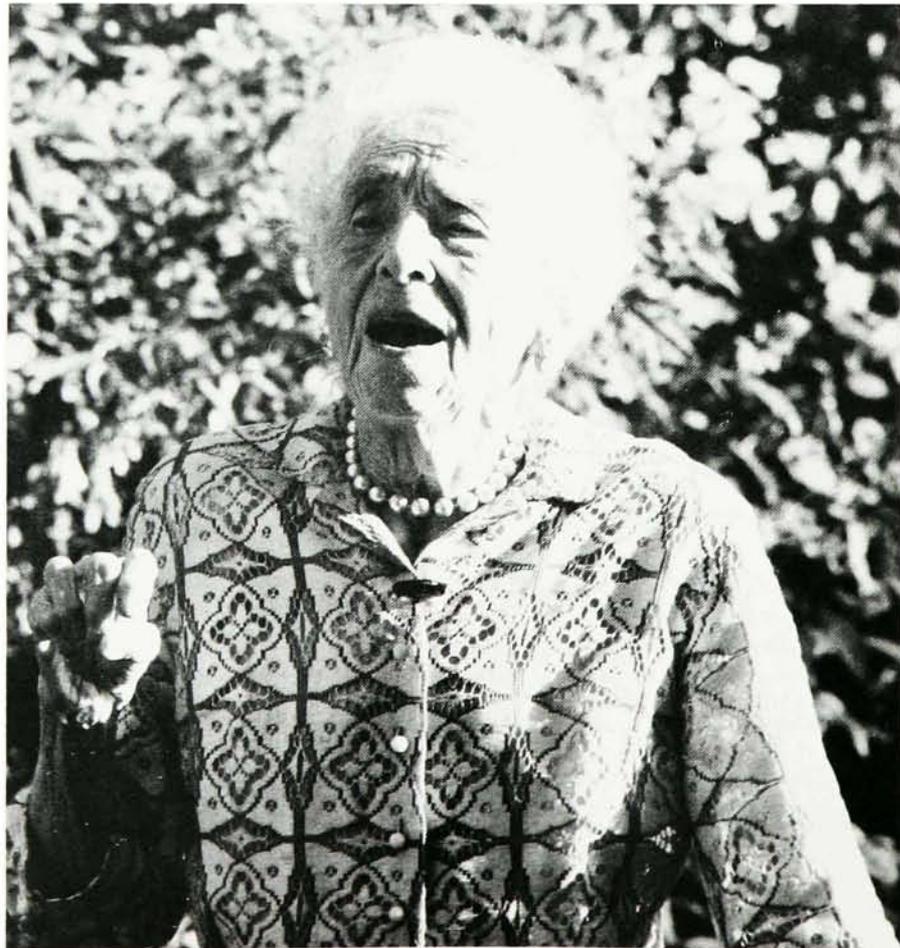
All three of these films reflect the phenomenon of increasing fascination with the aged, and are probably a healthy reaction to the youth-cult of the 1960's.

Granny's Quilts

Directed by Zale Dalen, produced by Laara Dalen. (Full crew list slipped us by folks, sorry . . .) Highlight Productions, 24220-112th Avenue, R.R.no.1, Maple Ridge, British Columbia.

A lovely documentary besides a step-by-step illustration of how to make quilts, *Granny Quilts* captures the mood of long quiet hours spent meticulously producing folk-crafts. The "Granny" of the title lives on a farm in B.C. and still uses the frame her grandfather constructed out of hand-hewn wood. Last year, she made a dozen quilts — over her lifetime, hundreds. However, the art of making quilts might not survive her generation since machines can now produce them so much quicker and cheaper. Even if it can't spur a quilting movement, *Granny's Quilts* has captured the beauty of this lady and her quilts in a warm and lyrical film.

Louise Tandy Murch



At 99 — A Portrait of Louise Tandy Murch

Produced and directed by Deepa Saltzman, cinematography by Hideaki Kobayashi, sound by Koji Ota, edited by Lorne Gould. Sunrise Films, 344 Walmer Road, Toronto, Ontario.

Shot mainly in the house this amazing lady has lived in for 61 years, *At 99* is a strong yet gentle film about being in love with life. We follow Louise Tandy Murch through her daily activities, at her 99th birthday party, performing for a group of senior citizens, and simply being wonderful. She radiates enthusiasm while singing her favourite songs (You've got to accentuate the positive, Eliminate the negative . . .) and accompanying herself on piano. Her joy is so contagious, she even managed to get the film crew into a singalong of "The Sound of Music" during shooting! Music is her main passion, ". . . because it's invisible". She took up yoga at age 90, which she happily demonstrates while exclaiming, "Breath is life itself! Oh! That feels good!" In answer to whether she enjoys being old, she smiles, pours a