

FILM REVIEWS

Allan King

Who Has Seen the Wind

d. Allan King, asst. d. Ian MacDougal, Rob Iveson, sc. Patricia Watson, from the novel by W.O. Mitchell, ph. Richard Leiterman, ed. Arla Saare, sd. Christian Wangler, David Lee, a.d. Anne Pritchard, set dec. Jean Berger, m. Eldon Rathburn, cost. Anne Pritchard, l.p. Gordon Pinsent, Jose Ferrer, Helen Shaver, Charmion King, Chapelle Jaffe, Patricia Hamilton, Gerard Parkes, Doug Junor, David Gardner, Tom Hauff, Brian Painsaud, **Production Administrator.** Monique Messier, **exec. p.** Pierre Lamy, **p.** Allan King, **assoc. p.** Gwen Iveson, **p. manager.** Gwen Iveson, **p.c.** Souris River Films Ltd., 1976, **col.** 35mm, **running time.** 100 minutes, **dist.** Astral.

The film version of **Who Has Seen the Wind** is a statement of cultural failure. To translate a book into the language of the screen necessitates a comprehension of the medium you're translating from. That means an unavoidable critical engagement with the literary text. Because what has to be transferred from words to moving images is neither character and/or plot and/or theme and/or dialogue and/or incident, but the structure of feeling that is at once the core and culmination of all the novel's separate elements – the essential shape of the work's intention.

W.O. Mitchell's **Who Has Seen the Wind** is a quintessentially Canadian novel, both in its strengths and weaknesses, and an ideal one in many ways for a cinematic treatment. Its central brooding concern, in common with much of prairie literature, is the seemingly inalterable opposition between the raw vitality of natural instinctual life as represented by the prairie wilderness and the straightened exigencies of social existence



Ben (José Ferrer) biding his time in jail

embodied by the puritanical prairie garrison.

The symbolic geography of this conflict is well suited to visual depiction: the prairie town with its false-fronted buildings is a tiny artificial construct perched precariously in the midst of a turbulent sea of earth and sky, its strict geometry of streets defeated with startling suddenness by the curving edges of the grassland. Out of this setting emerge the human terms of the conflict.

Brian O'Connell is a young boy growing up during the Depression in a prairie town and torn between the claims of his animal birthright, innocent kinship with the vast amoral mysteries of the natural cycle, and his human destiny of suffering awareness and moral responsibility. Ranged about him are an array of characters who illustrate the spectrum of different accommodations possible between these rival claims. At one end, is old Ben, the town derelict and his attempt to obliterate in himself all that separates him from the beasts of the field. At the other stands the town's reigning doyen, Mrs. Abercrombie, in total rigidified absorption in her social role. The dilemma

for Brian is to assume his full stature as a compassionate adult member of the community and thinking being, while at the same time maintaining his primal connection with the earth-sources of his existence. The schematics of the novel proclaim that such a compromise will be possible for Brian, but at a deeper level; the romantic and realistic elements in the work never get fully reconciled. It is in this lack of an energizing, felt dialectic between innocence and experience that the book is most profoundly a Canadian statement, an unconscious lament of impoverished cultural alternatives.

If the film **Who Has Seen the Wind** is any indication of the capacities of some of our best filmmakers to grasp literary meaning, then we're all in a pile of trouble. Except for that by-now obligatory tone of gentle well-intentionedness that distinguishes the Canadian feature film endeavor, **Who Has Seen the Wind** is as ramshackle and shallow an effort on a book as the most cynical paste-and-scissor made-for-T.V. assemblage perpetrated south of the border. Frankly, I hated the film with a passion – the passion one reserves, I guess, for the sight of lost and misspent opportunities.

The most we had a right to expect was that a first-rate creative imagination would actually improve the book, sear away the comic and sentimental evasions, heal the split between Mitchell's knowledge that a boy must grow into a man and his emotional commitment to childhood innocence, between his sense of nature as a beneficent mother and his knowledge that the natural processes wear an unremittingly alien face to the human mind. The least we had a right to expect was a competent transcription of Brian's dilemma of growth, certainly on the most obvious, visually accessible level of the clearcut opposition between town and prairie forces.

Removing the young child from the story is almost like removing the prairie itself. Except that for all the symbolic tension that director King and cinematographer Leiterman manage to create between the natural and human environments in the film, the prairie might as well have been omitted too. The intimacy and lush wilderness brings all distances near, familiarizes the alien – to such an extent

Film Credit Abbreviations: d.: Director, asst. d.: Assistant Director, sc.: Script, adapt.: Adaptation, dial.: Dialogue, ph.: Photography, sp. ph. eff.: Special Photographic Effects, ed.: Editor, sup. ed.: Supervising Editor, sd.: Sound, sd. ed.: Sound Editor, sd. rec.: Sound Recording, p. des.: Production Designer, a.d.: Art Director, set dec.: Set Decorator, m.: Music, m.d.: Music Director, cost.: Costumes, choreo.: Choreography, l.p.: Leading Players, exec. p.: Executive Producer, p.: Producer, assoc. p.: Associate Producer, p. sup.: Production Supervisor, p. man.: Production Manager, p.c.: Production Company, col.: Colour Process, dist.: Distributors, narr.: Narration.

that the prairie comes to seem a mere backyard extension of the town. What Mitchell's material needed anyway to counterbalance some of its sweetness was the correcting chill of clean, hard visuals, like those in **Why Shoot the Teacher** (which by the way is a vastly superior film on every count), conveying the unassimilable rawness of the prairie wilderness. In the context of this script, which gathers together the weakest, most cloying elements of both the realistic and the romantic strains in the novel, Leiterman's cinematography establishes an exterior setting that is highly oppressive in its confinement. Aside from a night sequence and a storm sequence that begin, at least, to approach, by the very nature of their content, the requisite sense of awe for the landscape, the prairie in this production wears a consistent pastoral golden glow that entirely subverts its meaning as the empire of the title's unseen wind.

The urge to domesticate pervades everything. The Young Ben. Brian's untamed alter-ego child-of-nature, is in the novel a semi-mythic figure, emerging suddenly on the horizon of the landscape as though he had come out of the earth itself. Handled poetically, in a somewhat surrealist fashion, this character could have carried terrific impact on the screen. Instead, from the beginning he is depicted in totally realistic terms, close-up and accessible, so that the vital point of his difference from the other children and his joint link with Brian and the prairie is thoroughly obscured. Likewise, much of the ferocity and viciousness of the Old Ben is removed, even his run-down farm is polished into idyllic picturesqueness.

I could go on and on - because virtually every choice made in this film represents, from my point of view, a direct violation of the spirit of Mitchell's book and devastating incomprehension of the larger life-issues he is engaged in exploring. The principle of savage wilderness inside and outside the self that operates in polar opposition with the civilized values of the town and the adult mind, vitalizing them into significance, has been stripped away - and with it, the entire romantic, mythic dimension of the novel. What remains is the sentimental blandness of a maturity won without cost - a truly childish theme for adults.

Katherine Gilday

Ed Hunt's Starship Invasions

d. Ed Hunt, sc. Ed Hunt, ph. Mark Irwin, sp. ph. effects Dennis Pike, ed. Millie Moore, Ruth Hope, sd. ed. Alban Street-er, m. Gil Melle, l.p. Robert Vaughn, Christopher Lee, Daniel Pilon, Tiiu Leek, Helen Shaver, Henry Ramer, Victoria Johnson, Doreen Lipson, exec. p. Earl A. Glick, Norman Glick, p. Norman Glick, Ed Hunt, Ken Gord, p.c. Hal Roach Studios, 1977, col. 35mm, running time 89 minutes, dist. Warner Bros.

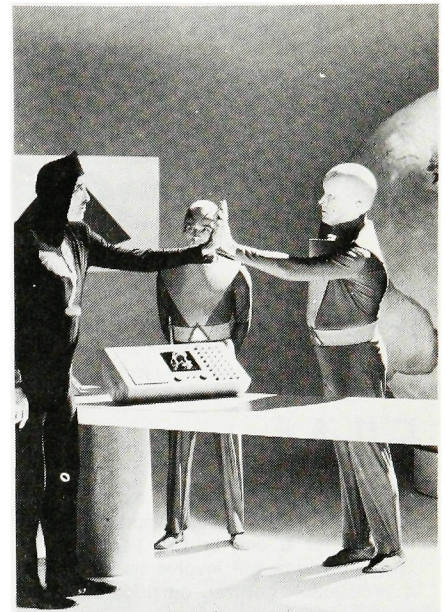
Starship Invasions is a science fiction picture, shot in Toronto, which features a battle between two groups of beings from outer space. On one side are the villains, who are dressed in what appear to be converted football sweaters. On the other side are the good guys, who are meant to appear as humanoid creatures with bulbous heads but who look more like humans wearing clumsy prosthetic make-up.

The good guys with the funny heads ally themselves with a UFO specialist from planet Earth in order to defend the planet from the villains, who are led by Christopher Lee. Robert Vaughn is cast as the UFO expert, but in fact plays the role of Robert Vaughn playing Robert Vaughn, the actor waiting for the shooting to be over so he can get back to doing something more interesting, or at least more professional.

Christopher Lee, for his part, spends most of his time scowling, while other principals in the film pass their time lining up or standing around wondering what to do next.

These quibbles aside, Vaughn and Lee are strong assets to the film. Their names figure prominently in the film's print ads, and **Starship Invasions** was in its third week at Imperial Six in Toronto at the time of this writing.

The film's box office fortunes have likely been boosted by the success of **Star Wars** and the advance reviews of **Close Encounters of The Third Kind**. According to Hunt, however, he began his script in July 1975 and had gone through pre-production and had begun shooting before he knew about **Close Encounters** and had almost finished shooting before he knew about **Star Wars**.



Starship Invasions

By way of invidious comparisons, the special effects in **Starship Invasions** are no match for **Star Wars**, in which Douglas Trumbull and a multi-million dollar facility to work in, in contrast to the warehouse on Queen Street and an Arriflex and occasionally a Mitchell used by Dennis Pike for the special effects for the **Starship** space battles. (The live-action flying saucer shots were executed by Warren Keilor using a matte-glass technique.) Nor is the \$1-million budget a match for the \$19-million of **Close Encounters**.

In scripting, the effects of insufficient funding for script development during the eight dry months that Ken Gordon and Hunt sought initial funding are evident in the final film. For example, the flow of the storyline is often interrupted by meandering talking-heads dialogue... as in the conversation between Vaughn and the computer expert about the legitimacy of making a scientific study of flying saucers.

Nonetheless, the fact that Hunt was able to get Robert Vaughn interested in his script, and to put together a \$1-million film with backing from Earl A. and Norman Glick of Hal Roach Studios, and to get distribution from Warner Brothers, is an accomplishment.

Jaan Pill

canadian filmmakers distribution centre

We are the
largest
distribution
outlet for
independent
Canadian
filmmakers.

406 JARVIS ST. TORONTO, ONTARIO M4Y 2G6 TEL. (416) 921-4121



FILM

Simon Fraser University expects to make two visiting faculty appointments in Film for a one or two year term. Both positions will involve teaching in a production centred curriculum presently under development.

The two individuals appointed will together be responsible for introducing students to the film medium, teaching fundamentals of the craft, and guiding student productions.

Qualifications should include substantial professional experience and demonstrated teaching ability. Rank and salary commensurate with qualifications; current Assistant Professor floor is \$17,888. Duties to begin September 1, 1978.

Letters of application will be accepted until the positions are filled, but should be sent as soon as possible to: Dr. Evan Alderson, Director, Centre for the Arts, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, British Columbia V5A 1S6.

DO YOUR EDITOR A FAVOR
CUT YOUR NEXT FILM AT

CINEMA PRODUCTIONS

THREE GREAT STEENBECK EDITING ROOMS

100 Richmond St.E., Suite 207, Toronto M5C 1P4

Tel: 362-7530/362-4553

A LOT CAN HAPPEN BEFORE YOU GET IT IN THE CAN

Play it smart and protect yourself in the professional manner with insurance

Let's discuss it

Arthur Winkler, CLU

Consolidated Insurance Agencies Ltd.

3101 Bathurst St., Suite 201, Toronto, Ontario M6A 2Y1

Telephone (416) 787-0304

ADVERTISING INDEX

Alpha Cine Service	15
The Yorkton ethnic march-on	
Arthur Winkler	42
Bellevue Pathé	31
Bonded Services	15
CBC	39
Canadian Filmmakers	
Distribution Centre	13
Cine Audio Ltd.	42
Cinema Productions	42
Danton Films	7
Famous Players	12
Film Opticals	15
Frezzolini Electronics Inc.	31
Direction General du Cinéma	43
Jack A. Frost Ltd.	5
Kingsway	2
MS Art Services	15
National Film Board	14
Panavision	9
PRO Canada	13
Racal Zonal Magnetics	11
R.S.L. Productions	38
Simon Fraser University	42
Sonolab	44

CLASSIFIED

For Sale:

Eclair ACL, with Angenieux 10 to 120 Zoom lens, two 200 ft mags, two batteries and charger, 24 fps crystal motor with crystal for Nagra 3, carrying case. Dave Smith, Box 747, Elora, Ontario, 519-846-5771.



CINE

AUDIO LTD.

Main lab:
10251-106 St.
Edmonton T5J 1H5
ph. (403) 423-5081

1027-6th Ave. S.W.
Calgary T2P 0W1
(403) 266-3310

- Color Neg. II (7247) & Pos. (7383)
- 7239/40, 7252, 7242/41/56
- B & W Neg/Pos
- Complete Post-Production Services
- Editing Facilities, featuring Clean Air Neg Cutting Room
- Equipment Rentals



Gouvernement du Québec
 Ministère des Communications
Direction générale du cinéma
 360, rue McGill, Montréal, Québec, H2Y 2E9
 Canada Telephone: (514) 873-2205

The *Direction générale du cinéma et de l'audiovisuel* (DGCA) is a government agency that comes under the *Ministère des Communications du Québec*. It coordinates the production and promotion of audiovisual material on behalf of the various departments of the Government of Québec, as well as promoting Québec cinema as a whole. The DGCA is responsible for acquiring, preserving and distributing government and Québec productions, or productions from elsewhere which are of interest to Québec. The following films, and many more, are available for purchase from the DGCA.

La leçon des mongoliens

Michel Moreau

french-colour ● 77 minutes ● 1974

Society has always regarded the mentally deficient and the mongol as "retarded". This film presents them to us simply, from another angle. Mongol children, who can teach us a great deal, are scrutinized directly, minutely and systematically by the camera.

Of Matter and Mettle

Jean Lepage

english-colour ● 10 minutes ● 1975

The viewer takes part in the preparations, efforts, joys and disappointments of young Québec athletes during the annual events of the Québec Games. The film, which moves at a swift, lively pace, won the highest award in the short subject category at the 8th Virgin Islands International Film Festival.

Mail the coupon below today to:

Jean-Maurice Tremblay

Direction générale du cinéma

360 McGill St. Montreal, Quebec H2Y 2E9

- Please send your catalogue
 I am interested in the following titles:

.....

Name:

Address:

.....

City:

..... Postal Code:

Un petit canard pas comme les autres

Claude Roussel and Gilbert Gratton

french-colour ● 20 minutes ● 1972

If you adopt an animal, you become responsible for it. This is the story of a young boy who finds, looks after and heals an injured duckling. He then sets it free.
 (Prize: Canadian Film Award)

White-tailed Deer

Bernard Beupré

english-colour ● 11 minutes 48 seconds ● 1976

This film is intended to make known the deer-yard work of the biologists of the *Service de la Faune* of the *Ministère du Tourisme, de la Chasse et de la Pêche*.

UMIMMAQ

Bernard Beupré

english-eskimo-colour ● 26 minutes 50 seconds ● 1976

The musk ox has been imported into Québec and every-thing suggests that this animal, whose habitat is the tundra, will be able to survive here without difficulty. For eight years now animals have been raised at Umimma-quautik, where they are doing well and reproducing. In the film we witness the realization of the aim of the experiment, the adaptation of the musk ox to the Québec tundra.

Wildlife no 1

Bernard Beupré

english-colour ● 26 minutes 50 seconds ● 1976

Film to make known the work of the research workers and biologists of the *Service de la Faune* of the *Ministère du Tourisme, de la Chasse et de la Pêche*, dealing specifically with land wildlife.

Wildlife no 2

Bernard Beupré

english-colour ● 26 minutes 50 seconds ● 1976

Film to make known the work of the research workers and biologists of the *Service de la Faune* of the *Ministère du Tourisme, de la Chasse et de la Pêche*, dealing specifically with aquatic wildlife.

Sonolab and Tele-Metropole

HOME OF FILM AND VIDEO IN MONTREAL

University of Toronto Library
Serials Department
Toronto, Ontario
M5S 1A5



Our technical facilities are one of a kind in Montreal, and rank among the world's finest. Shooting stages, recording studios, screening, editing, video recording, dubbing and language adaptations. It's all here and more.

For modern, high-quality audio-visual productions and service, SONOLAB gets top billing. Great producers have already made use of the many services we have to offer. What about you?

Consider Montreal. Consider SONOLAB... superstar of the Canadian film industry.

sonolab INC.
FROM SCRIPT TO SCREEN

1500 Papineau Street.
MONTREAL, QUEBEC, CANADA. H2K 4L9

TELEPHONE (514) 527-8671

TELEX 05-267-329