

## Spencer roasts Brittain

Those of your readers who had the patience to read all of the interview you did with Donald Brittain (*Cinema Canada* No. 126) would have come across the phrase (on page 20, column 2): "He (Michael Spencer) never let his friendship stand in the way of messing up my career." As I am the recipient of this unkind cut, perhaps you would allow me a reply.

Firstly, I note from the interview that Brittain is vastly satisfied with his career - Canada's most prestigious filmmaker; adulation on every hand; frequent trips abroad to discuss his films; familiarity with the press clubs and the race-tracks of the world; consultations with the great and near-great; no worries about money to finance his projects with the understanding support of the Film Board and the CBC. About the only things left are the Governor-generalship and the Order of Canada. Brittain has arrived where he wants to be. Therefore any messing up I was able to achieve certainly had a positive effect.

Secondly, if the above is not true, I'd appreciate it if he would be specific about the form and substance of my nefarious interventions. I don't recall any. On the contrary, among other things, I spent a lot of time at the CFDC trying to get that Harry Oakes project, the only non-NFB film he seems to be keen on, off the ground. Where did I fail to make an illustrious career even more illustrious? If he is referring to the advice I gave him to stick to the public sector to get his films made, it's obvious from the interview that he agrees with me.

On another point entirely, I must point out that to state categorically that film is either an industry or an art, is one of the most ridiculous propositions that I ever heard of in my life. Malraux must be turning over in his grave.

**Michael Spencer**  
Montreal

*Donald Brittain replies:*

Mr. Spencer has good reason for being disturbed. My offhand remark about "never letting his friendship stand in the way of messing up my career" was a repetition of a light-hearted jibe I made during a Roast we held for him when he left the CFDC. It was actually meant as a tribute to his integrity, but perhaps it did not come out that way in my somewhat rambling interview.

Unfortunately his spirited response has revealed my morbid desire to become Governor-General and thus probably dashed my chances. But he too will suffer: he will now lose out on the many lavish vice-regal banquets to which he would otherwise have been invited.

I do, however, intend to invite Mr. Spencer out to a meagre lunch and debate the question of The Industry and The Art, even if it does cause M. Malraux some discomfort in his final resting place.

**Donald Brittain**  
Westmount

## Criticism criticized

Criticism, as any first year Arts student knows, consists, in part, of extracting the specific from a work and placing it in the context of the general. In criticism of narrative, for example, this is usually done by examining the manner in which characters respond to the obstacles they are presented with and by then making inferences as to what these specific responses tell us about the characters in particular and the human condition in general. Less often the critic is able to draw instructive parallels between the nature of the obstacles presented and the larger socio-political environment of the narrative as a whole.

But going from the specific to the general is a delicate business at best. As artists sometimes generalize within a work in an attempt to lend the work an air of significance they are unable to make intrinsic, so critics, eager to display their perspicacity, sometimes outsmart themselves and end up revealing more of their own limited frames of reference than any sort of insight into generalized context.

In art such *faux pas* merely make for poor art. In criticism, however, it is a more serious flaw, for criticism is a parasitic activity. Whereas art is its own justification, criticism, like the little bird that eats the insects harbored in the hide of the rhinoceros, must in some way enhance that which it feeds off of before it can be considered valid.

While the above is trite and obvious, it needs to be restated in light of Mary Alemany-Galway's review of *One Magic Christmas* (*Cinema Canada*, No.127), in the course of which she outsmarts herself not once, but twice.

She calls the film, "beautifully crafted in the old classical Hollywood tradition," yet she is uneasy with the work, as well she should be. There is much to be uneasy about. But the reviewer, either unwilling or unable to dissect the film's many flaws (confusing narrative structure, the abruptness of the denouement) tries instead to show us how clever she is and forsakes old, classical criticism in favour of shallow, hobby-horsing topicality.

First Ms. Alemany-Galway faults a character's dream of owning his own small business as sounding "too much like Reaganomics." Are we to assume, then, that if one were to remake *Grapes of Wrath* one would be well advised to first eliminate the Joad family's dream of owning their own farm?

Secondly she accuses the film of being anti-feminist because: 1) the two single-parent families in the film are poor, 2) Mrs. Claus fixes Santa's sweater and packs him a lunch, 3) the female lead risks her job so she can stay home on Christmas Eve and give her husband their last \$5,000 so he can open the bicycle shop he dreams of. (One shouldn't jeopardize fulfilling careers like being a supermarket cashier for anything as trivial as an expression of love, should one? Also, is there no significance to the fact that the family savings are not disbursed until the wife authorizes it?)

To further argue the absurdity of these criticisms is to grant them the

credibility of being worthy of discussion, which they are not. However, before I end off I would like to, myself, make a connection between the specific of Alemany-Galway's shoddy review and the film criticism offered in Canada in general.

One of the primary problems in Canadian cinema is the lack of good film critics. In a country such as ours, far more than, say, the U.S., where there is already an entrenched infra-structure of film analysis, we desperately need critics capable of illuminating precisely when, where and why a film succeeds or fails. Lately, it seems though, what we are getting are invocations of buzzwords (e.g. Reaganomics, anti-feminist) and jingoism disguising a paucity of critical faculties.

**Lyle Burwell**  
Ottawa

## Committing omissions

Friends used to ask me why I didn't subscribe to *Cinema Canada*, and because I have been a Canadian Film Producer for over twenty years, I decided to order a subscription. I have to admit that I found myself reading the issues as they came into my home.

Any good magazine that addresses "the trades" has to have one criteria for success, and that criteria has to be good and accurate reporting. When I received my Feb. issue, I saw there was a section set aside for "The Best of the Fests." That immediately caught my attention because not only had I spent one entire week attending the Yorkton Film and Video Festival, but my production entitled, *A Gathering In Denendeh*, about the Pope's non-visit to Ft. Simpson, N.W.T., had been nominated for the Golden Sheaf Award. It won a Special Jury award. To my chagrin, my production was not mentioned in the article, and neither were others that I knew had won.

What ever *Cinema Canada* paid Chris Worsnop could have been more wisely invested. A competent student in "Journalism 101" at any community college would have been more keen and caring. Chris is typical of that Canadian attitude towards our business that we in the industry are so tired of. Our films can stand with the best, and our so-called media people can learn the American trick of at least listing the award winners to festivals correctly. Such basic diligence would earn *Cinema Canada* the industry's respect it is trying to achieve.

What our friend Chris fails to understand is that in this business we are all friends. I was proud to lose to Barbara Sweete's Academy Award nominee, *Making Overtures*. I was delighted with Colin Strayer's accomplishments in *Red Rocket*. What does disappoint me is Chris's arrogance at dismissing Alan Stein's *Turn It Off* because the author couldn't even remember viewing it in the first place. It was, in fact, one of the better rock videos I'd seen in a long time. It was also screened in its entirety on the awards presentation night. I

know that, because I was there. I am trying to imagine what kind of recall our so-called reporter has?

Then there was the Special Jury Award to Alan Booth's *Ice Roads*. It was a solid, well-crafted documentary on the construction of transportation routes in the sub-arctic across frozen lakes and rivers. The film was shot at 40 below and for that alone it should win an award. Booth operates out of Yellowknife, N.W.T., and deserves our country's recognition. Be that as it may, our reporter failed to mention his production as well.

All of the productions that won were significant nominees in their respective categories, and would hold their own in any of the world's festivals. I am sure that people like Barbara Sweete of *Rhombus* or Bruce Pittman of *Atlantis* would agree. What I can suggest is that *Cinema Canada's* editor put in a simple phone call to Sheila Harris in Yorkton, and in the next issue, make things right. They can do that not just for those that were "left out", but for the spirit of our industry. As I find myself writing this letter to the editor, I am reminded of one of the most valuable lessons Don Haldane of Westminster Films taught me when I was just starting out. "Kid", he said, "be nice to the people on the way up, because you don't know who you'll meet on the way down". I have to admit that I look forward to meeting Chris Worsnop again someday.

**Gary Nichol**  
Ottawa

(More letters, see pp. 19-20.)

**Newsmakers,  
please note**

You've read their names and maybe your own many times in the pages of *Cinema Canada*, but you've often wondered what the others look like... Well, so have we. That's why, *Cinema Canada* puts emphasis on the faces that make up Canada's program production/distribution industry. But don't wait for the news to happen first. Help us get a step ahead by sending along your photo to *Cinema Canada* now. That way, when you're in the news, we'll be ready to go with the story and your picture... while it is still news.

**Hollywood Destinies**

by Graham Petrie  
Oxford University Press, 257 pages,  
photos,  
ISBN 0-7102-0161-3, \$49.95 (cloth)

The insularity of the American market when it comes to selling foreign films and television programs (i.e. anything non-American) to the circuit cinemas and the networks is well-known — although not well enough, it would seem, to some Canadian producers who spend fortunes in the vain attempt to do so.

In many respects, the insularity is understandable bearing in mind that Americans are brought up to believe that their films and television programs (along with all things American) are superior. So ingrained is this belief, combined with national pride, that for the U.S. mass audience to watch something non-American (should the unlikely opportunity arise) would amount almost to an act of disloyalty with little attempt being made to understand "foreign stuff."

Graham Petrie's *Hollywood Destinies*, one of the best books on cinema history yet written, provides us

with clear reasons (political, sociological and economic) why this is so and how such a situation came about. Professor Petrie (of McMaster University) did not, however, write the book for the purpose of enlightening Canadian producers; rather his is a fascinating study of the reception of foreign films in the U.S. between 1920 and the coming of sound. Petrie's is a valuable contribution to the study of the silent screen, a comprehensive description and analysis of the American films of German directors F.W. Murnau, Ernst Lubitsch and Paul Leni; Swedes Victor Sjöström and Mauritz Stiller; the Dane Benjamin Christensen, and the Hungarian Paul Fejos.

The author describes how Hollywood's always morbid fear of competition, both at home and abroad, led the studios to invite directors who had achieved recognition in their countries to come to work in Los Angeles (thus eliminating the competition) and expecting them without question to fit into the American way of popular mass entertainment. Some, like Lubitsch, found common ground without losing his individuality, but for the others it was a bitter experience, although not without some triumphs — *Sunrise, The Marriage Circle, The Wind*.

But it was the response of the critics and the public to their work and to European films in general, quoted ex-

tensively by the author (probably for the first time since their original publication), which is so revealing, showing as it does their insensitivity and prejudice, and their belief in fairy-tale films with their nice, happy endings — in what one discerning critic was brave enough to call "the glucose era."

The fact that so many European films were about "real people, ideas and life's difficulties," seems to have inflamed Hollywood and made the studio producers more determined to force the immigrant directors into their scheme of things. It is also true, however, that many American directors with a personal vision also experienced the same conflicts with the heads of production.

Many of today's books on film history are littered with mistakes carried from one to the next, with many writers describing films they have perhaps never seen, or saw so long ago their memories are faulty. Petrie, with his painstaking care in writing and teaching, has researched an astonishing number of original sources, all of them listed or given footnotes; and amazingly, as he properly points out, looked at every film he describes immediately prior to starting this book, necessitating visits to archives in England, the U.S. Sweden, Denmark, Germany, Belgium, and Czechoslovakia.

Coming back to the present-day, it is interesting to note that in recent years

Hollywood producers have again invited European directors of repute to make films in the U.S. (Antonioni, Wertmüller, Wenders, to name a few), this time giving them a free hand and generous budgets. Only to be rewarded by disappointing, if not dreadful, films. The lesson seems to be that artists in film, with very few exceptions, are better off working in their own countries with the societies they know and under conditions they feel at home with.

Exceptionally well-written, a pleasure to read, arguable in places, with a mass of detail which is never overwhelming (the notes themselves are an education in the subject-matter), *Hollywood Destinies* is a most welcome book. Its high price will put it out of reach of many, but all libraries and university film departments should have it.

In his final comments, the author notes that the feeling in Hollywood concerning foreign films at the end of the period he writes about was best expressed in the statement: "The conclusion must be arrived at that it is not for us." Last year, the head of the Arts and Entertainment pay-tv network expressed dissatisfaction with the many excellent British programs that A&E was showing, saying that "We must find more programs that are about us." *Plus ça change...*

Gerald Pratley ●

● B O O K S H E L F ●

The first two volumes of *The Motion Picture Guide*, a 12-volume encyclopedia covering all English-language films since 1927, have been issued. Over 6,000 movies are listed alphabetically in volumes A-B and C-D, with lengthy plot summaries and in-depth discussions of social, historic and technical aspects of each film, a distinctive feature of this collection. Expertly edited by Jay Robert Nash and Stanley Ralph Ross, each entry includes full credit lists, production data, year of release, awards, ratings and cassette availability (*CineBooks, Chicago, \$75/ea., \$750/set*).

Raymond Fielding's authoritative *The Technique of Special Effects Cinematography*, now in a thoroughly revised 4th edition, includes all current visual effects. Detailed and clearly written, with appropriate illustrations, it describes significant advances in standard processes, especially front projection, travelling mattes and the use of computers and motion-control hardware (*Focal Press, Stoneham MA, \$24.95*).

The 1986 edition of Peter Cowie's *International Film Guide*, now in its 23rd year of publication, covers with its customary competence and reliability, production activities in 65 countries. Leading directors, notable films, animation, archives, festivals, publications and schools are also included (*NY Zoetrope, NYC, \$12.95*).

Director Edward Dmytryk collects in *On Filmmaking* the texts of four previous manuals dealing with directing, writing, editing and acting, the latter written with his wife, actress Jean Por-

ter. His extensive experience provides a wealth of practical guidelines for handling film and television production (*Focal Press, Stoneham, MA, \$34.95*).

New volumes in the outstanding "Celebrations" series, *James Cagney* by Richard Schickel and *Frank Sinatra* by Derek Jewell, survey the lives and careers of two highly popular performers. Well-documented and superbly illustrated, these biographical studies offer insightful analyses of the characters Cagney and Sinatra portray in films, and the social impact of their screen personalities (*Little Brown, NYC, \$19.95 ea.*).

A notably serviceable three-volume reference source listing motion picture production personnel, the 1985-86 edition of *Credits* has been compiled by Debbie Brenner and Gary Hill. It covers over 900 English-language films released since 1979. Vol. 1 carries an alphabetized catalogue of these films, cross-indexed in Vol. 2 by production companies, and in Vol. 3 by individual technician (*Maggie Press, Wallington, NJ, \$75/set + \$3.50 handling*).

In Clint Eastwood, a film-by-film survey of his career, François Guérif records the development of Eastwood's screen character into a fully realized personality (*St. Martin's, NYC, \$10.95*).

George L. George ●

**Correction.** Carmine R. De Sarlo's excellent book, *TV Commercial Film Editing*, recently reviewed in this column, is published at \$29.95 by McFarland & Co., Box 611, Jefferson, NC 28640.

● L E T T E R S ●

**Repatriate primetime**

*(The following was addressed to the Task Force on Broadcasting Policy)*

After studying the Canadian broadcasting system for the past 15 years, I have come to the conclusion that there is one key factor essential to its future development: **REPATRIATE PEAKTIME**.

We must drop the Canadian content quotas and encourage the broadcasting industry to concentrate their technical, financial and human/creative resources into making 8 p.m. to 10 p.m. totally Canadian entertainment programming on all TV stations across the nation. Peaktime must be Canadian entertainment programming (not news, current affairs or sports coverage).

The remainder of the time on Canadian TV stations can be any kind of programming (non-American on CBC) — Canadian news, current affairs, sports, reruns, old movies, quiz games, panel shows, and foreign programs. The one exception would be the requirement for a Canadian children's program between 4 and 5 p.m. every weekday.

The public commitment to Canadian entertainment programming in peaktime must become the major require-

ment for licence renewal. No Canadian commitment — no Canadian licence.

Mr. Al Johnson, president of the Canadian Broadcasting League and former CBC President, has proposed EQUAL TIME FOR CANADIAN PROGRAMS IN PRIME TIME. However, given the requirement to schedule two hours of Canadian content between 7 and 11 p.m. each night, most stations will put the Canadian programs into the 7 to 8 and 10 to 11 p.m. slots...leaving the 8 to 10 p.m. peaktime period to American shows. Mr. Johnson's idea is a good one but it doesn't go far enough to accomplish real change. We must be tougher...we must **REPATRIATE PEAKTIME**.

One peaktime is filled with Canadian entertainment programming, the quality and marketing of these programs will make them competitive with the American channels available on cable. The Canadian stations will be forced to do a good job or lose ratings and revenue.

As Canadian viewers switch channels in peaktime, they will see attractive and distinctive Canadian programming on all Canadian channels. Canadian programs will become popular and Canadian entertainers will become stars without having to leave Canada because Canadian TV shows will earn their way around the world.

Therefore, I urge the Task Force to recommend that the government changes The Broadcasting Act to **REPATRIATE PEAKTIME**.

Clive J. Court,  
Willowdale, ON

## The real Elder

Bruce Elder is not a Nietzschean camel bearing the "burden of belatedness" He is rather one whom we could call a Nietzschesque historian, making use of history in a "monumental" sense.

*If there is no constructive impulse behind the historical one, if the clearance of rubbish is not merely to leave the ground free for the hopeful living future to build its house, if justice alone be the supreme, the creative instinct is sap- ped and discouraged.*<sup>1</sup>

Elder suggests in *Lamentations* that we disattend to representation and attend to presentational symbols. This constructive insight that there is a great more for Elder, and for all of us, do do than just "go home." He experiences our postmodern mindscape not as a trap but as a tourniquet. Is it not possible that shifting our focus will loosen some of the pressure? When some circulation is restored, the question of what it means to be in control must be reframed. Control sustained by a pressure bandage is quite different from the involuntary control of the natural healing capacities of an organism. In his review of *Lamentations* (*Cinema Canada*, No. 124), Dorland interprets Elder's scenes of wildness as a breakdown of the filmmaker's "imaginative control." This "breakdown" is the viewer's opportunity for reconnection of the objective with the sensual, the eye and the heart, which Dorland has misread as Elder's frenzy. The filmmaker believes this dis/reorientation to be necessary so that we may "take care to give hope" and "attend to the withdrawing of the Holy."<sup>2</sup>

If this departure from the lie of objectivity is what Dorland sees as a weakness within Elder, then he recognizes neither the intense fiberoptic probing of the rapid and global film-collages, nor the schizoid struggle of the narrative scenes. These "historical" vignettes are taken up by actors who are not really actors wearing costumes only approximating the appropriate dates and places, who are reading lines which are developed from edited reprints of biographies and manuscripts written by people who we really know very little about. Such dramatizations are intended to convey, not the message that Elder would like to become another Syberberg, but rather that "You can explain the past only by what is most valuable in the present."<sup>3</sup>

To Elder, what is most powerful in the present is simulation. In showing us the extent to which our taken-for-granted perspective on what is valid and essential is disconnected from our everyday experience of how we see the world, *Lamentations* offers one interpretation of why it has become difficult to trope, to "know" anything in general. In seeing the turns of *Lamentations* stop at my own experience, I understand why Bruce Elder found it hard to make an ending. Whenever I have tried to impose closure on situations in my own life, I have been disquieted by the arbitrariness of such a methodic gesture.

*...for the residue of truth, after the obscure and insoluble part is removed, is nothing but the commonest knowledge.*<sup>4</sup>

I agree with Dorland that *Lamentations* can be read as a confession, if by this he means a personal struggle to find and express something "real." The best Elder is able to do in this regard is to display a unique combination of simulacra. This is the essence of his lament. If such an exploration and its telling are a fantasy to Dorland, then I would be very interested to know in what way his own life is more "real."

### Loretta Czernis

York University  
Toronto

### NOTES

1. Nietzsche, F., *The use and abuse of history*, A. Collins (trans.), Ind.: Bobbs-Merrill, 1957, p. 42.
2. Subtitle-style script from *Lamentations* by Bruce Elder, Lightworks, 1985.
3. Nietzsche, *Op. cit.*, p. 40.
4. Nietzsche, *Op. cit.*, p. 39.

## Elder's errors

Bruce Elder's first mistake (see *Cinema Canada* No. 126) is to have written the piece.

His second error is a general misunderstanding in the attitude of many of the artistic ilk.

His third error is in the fact that he argues himself around into a position where he proves 'Dorland' not to have made an error at all, except in writing a review of *Lamentations* in the first place.

In writing "Dorland's error" Elder has broken what would seem to be the first rule 'art' implies. He offers us in his wordy diatribe an interpretation of his film *Lamentations*, an interpretation that sticks with the intention and flows with language. It is the narrative formalization of the 'artist's' idea for a film; whether it is the film is another point, one that has relevance only in the structural whole, as a medium inherent with connections.

Film depends on *this* whole more than any fragment of utopian wish. This is essential whether the pieces come together in a narrative or an anti-narrative, (usually referred to as 'artistic'), form. Either of these genres is subject to the critical eye which tests that which has the potential to be creative. (By creativity I mean that which is not destructive, that which furthers the creative process be it through the communication of ideas, the active process of generating actual or metaphoric growth, or through sheer inspiration of the viewer to creative action.) It is essentially pointless for the 'artist' to supply this test of potential. As Peter Lipskis states, (also in issue no. 126), to do so is to display "an inflated sense of self-importance."

Elder has, in effect, reiterated the entire premise of *Lamentations*, or, at least the premise he hoped to get across. If, as "Dorland's error" suggests, Elder intended to make a clear statement, perhaps that is best left in written form with all the flourish of his obviously wide and elusive vocabulary and tireless literary references. Perhaps all this time "the filmy shell that circumscribes (him)" should not have been so *filmy*. But as an 'artist', filmic or not, he may have to realize that it is not for him to deem his work a creative success. Though there is always the factor of 'art for the artist' there is no use in showing it if those that see it must be lead by other means, besides the work itself, into an understanding of the work. Elder's piece does nothing to show how the film through film form transmits the message he so clearly establishes in the written work.

Jean-Luc Godard said: "A story must have a beginning, middle, and an end, but not necessarily in that order." Godard was a verbally expressive, and filmically impressive force for the anti-narrative. Few people will deny his work a place in the realm of art, nor in the realm of film. In breaking away from narrative, Godard created a visual language separate from any other form of language – he broke film away from the traditional arts and jumbled it around to stand firmly on its own. Though we find in his statement the necessity for 'story' still prevailing, and, therefore a type of narrative, Godard brought new ways of expressing the ideas of narrative – ideas that reaffirmed the idea of the "filmic."

In the archaic days of film – and history moves so much faster in a mass media society – film, cinema, or movies were argued to be "art" by comparison with the other arts (the novel, painting, poetry, music, and even 'live' theatre). To take this even further, filmmakers made films of famous books, plays, and poems. So we got the narrative film, the poetic film, the painterly film, the lyrical film, and a whole series of theories that argue the place of film in the arts with terms familiar only to other arts. In his written explanation of the purpose of his film Elder uses these archaic reference points, connoting a mind drenched in the educated unreality of the literary – another point for his writing rather than shooting.

"I must assure you, I am as opposed to narrative as when I wrote 'The Cinema We Need,' "certainly he fails to mention *Lamentations'* tragic structure... A tragedy is a drama in which the protagonist finds himself caught in a situation in which he is forced to choose between opposites because there is no middle way between opposites as there is between extremes, and, whichever choice he makes will be made at some cost."

In assigning a "tragic structure" to his film, and in defining that structure as a "drama" in which the central figure (protagonist), "finds himself" in a "situation", Elder implies a narrative structure to the film. At the onset of his letter Elder finds objection to Michael Dorland's "conclusion that *Lamentations* gives evidence (his) work (was) progressing towards narrative," and yet he later makes the statements above which give evidence that the film contained narrative; or at least a structure reminis-

cent of narrative form.

It is interesting to note that in Dorland's review (in *Cinema Canada* No. 124), he at no time says that there is evidence of a "progression towards narrative", but states that "*Lamentations* produces the strong suspicion that Elder is teetering on the verge of abandoning experimental film altogether." "Suspicion" and "teetering" are in no way close to "evidence", which is empirical, and "progression", which is definite. Surely Dorland does imply a direct opposition between the 'experimental' and the narrative, which Elder seems to object to when he says that the only reason Dorland asserts Elder's "progression" (which Dorland does not assert), towards narrative is that "(Dorland) assumes that narrative cinema is the anti-thesis of experimental cinema." Elder's assumption of Dorland's assumption is presumptuous – it is also reflective of the Godardian myth of non-narrative film – that is the myth that Godard perpetuated of his own films' being were laced with narrative. Godard bridged the gap between the formalist experiments and the narrative form. But the gap existed, and still exists today. They are synthesised only by being part of the same synthetic elements inherent in their shared medium. This is basic theoretical fact as far as film is concerned – it is not so evident in literature, though one might liken it to the difference between Homer (the narrative poem) and, say, Ezra Pound.

Realizing this, Dorland, even without being misrepresented in terms of his choice of words, was not in error when he recognized the narrative, dramatic structure of *Lamentations*. However, I may suggest that in the future, to avoid any further misinterpretations of Elder's work, that the artist be contacted to supply his own reviews, as he has done with this last letter.

I am opposed to artists presuming to explain works of their own making, even though it is possible to compare what is said with the actual product (all art is a product), because what they say inevitably colours the viewing of the work by each individual. If the work cannot communicate its own desired effect, then it will be up to the artist to create another work that does.

Secondly, I am continually confronted with poetic parallelism and literary correlation in regard to cinema: grammars of film, film as art, art as movies, photographs as film as movies in cinemas that used to be theatres, etc.

Third, I hate to see someone in one medium go into another medium and muck it up so badly as to place one word with one meaning in the place of another word with a completely different meaning.

Fourth, I am forever reminded that experimentalists, slipping into the narrative every now and again, tend to do so with the same worthless spit – that it was necessary to the presentation of that particular segment of the film and to the film as a whole and therefore is part of the experimental nature of the film. Which does not mean to say that they do not, by shooting and including that section of celluloid in their work, "teeter" into the narrative form for some ideas.

**Sam Zero**  
London