

## More women in films

by Eleanor Malin

*Depart to Arrive.* Just as the title indicates. This film depicts the story of Anna, a young woman who does not take the ending of a romance at all well. She is dumped by her lover, Regine, who began her journey into the realm of lesbian lovers with Anna. Now Regine breaks off the relationship to go to another woman, claiming she needs what

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her new lover can give her, at least right now.

In truth, Anna had been immature, demanding, heavy of personality. She was nervous, manic, a nag. One can sympathize with Regine.

But Anna cannot face life without Regine, despite her former lack of satisfaction with the way things were. She quits her photography job, borrows a VW van, and journeys to a beautiful valley in the south of France. To forget. To remember.

In the fully equipped van (with a "real bed" in the back), she takes her camera equipment, but doesn't touch it for the longest time.

Instead, she dissolves into a world of soul-searching and memory sifting. Her memories, the sad, the happy, the embarrassing, come back to her transformed into a psychic collage, some transformed into surreal dream-like sequences. Cinematically, this film is very good. The almost sampler-like snippets of memories and surreal dreamettes interspersed with the pastorella of Anna fixing vegetables and drinking wine in the summer valley makes for a nice contrast. We see the helter-skelter of her memories and dreams being played out against the everyday beautiful emptiness of the valley. Anna has simply expected too much of herself and others, and wasn't looking past herself to see the rest of the universe. We all know people like Anna. In our twenties, we all were people like Anna.

In the beginning scenes, we see Anna breaking the glass of a mirror she is staring into. In the final scene, she is sitting at a table, wearing gloves (back in the swing of things), preparing a photo montage. She has sized a photo of herself Regine took when they were still together, and she is going to set it into a photo of a barn, with door flaps cut into it. I take this to mean that she has forgiven herself and Regine for an imperfect past (whatever that is), and is putting herself back in the picture.

Directed by Alexandra von Grote, photographed by Hille Sagal, this 1982 West German film does hit to the heart of the matter regarding what many women go through during the growth, decline and disintegration of romantic liaisons.

This film played June 28th at the NWFVC. It should reappear at art movie houses at some time in the future. It's a bit on the slow side, but it is an honest and worthwhile endeavor.

*Three Men and a Cradle*, also conceived, written and directed by a woman (whose name I have somewhere in my notes, which are somewhere else), played earlier at the Movie House, to mixed reviews. It was funny, as most people would agree. It was a tear-jerker, as most people mentioned. Most of the people in the audience cried during parts of the film. And it was not very realistic. What mom would go off for six months and leave her baby with the father (unauthorized to do so), to punish him, and still expect to get the baby back at the end of six months? And does such a mom deserve the little tyke? I think not. But it was, still in all, fun most of the way through. Again, it was beautifully filmed, in a huge old Paris apartment, replete with antiques and Persian rugs, works of art and bric-a-brac.

The baby, played by two different little girls, was a charmer, and here's what I liked about the movie. It gave a lot of us in the audience, who are not currently raising children, the chance to experience such nurturing, however vicarious that experience was. Watching the guys trying to cope, getting testy, finally getting suckered into really loving that little baby, was great. In one scene, the three men cluster around the cradle, and sing *Au Clair de la Lune* in three-part harmony. It was both funny and touching.

Feminists have complained about the ending of the movie. I'll put in a complaint, too, but not from a feminist perspective, merely that of a filmgoer. I hate bad endings, but it seems that there's a lot of that going around. Ever since *Carrie* we have been inundated with double, triple, quadruple, surprise, anti-climactic, and drippy endings. This was a drippy ending. If the filmmaker

chose the ending to show that women can't cope with raising a child, that is her right. Women with children should be getting all the help they can. It really is too big a job for one person, at least one who is trying to do anything else at all. The three guys could just

barely do it, between them. *Three Men and a Cradle*, however, is funny, well-acted (the baby is so sweet), and if I have to close my eyes to 30 seconds here or there to keep from losing my cool, I'm up to it.

## West Coast Women's Festival dates set

The 7th Annual West Coast Women's Music & Comedy Festival will be back in Yosemite, on Labor Day Weekend, Aug. 29-Sept. 1, 1986. The camp is beautiful, private, wooded and has a gigantic swimming pool, lake & river. It is located 3½ hours East of San Francisco.

Last year's Festival was sold out, with close to 3000 women attending. This year, a partial list of musical performers will include Alix Dobkin, Mary Watkins, Diedre McCalla, Kay Weaver, Swingshift, Karen MacKay, The Washington Sisters, Kellie Greene, Gayle Marie, Hunter Davis, Girl Talk, etc. Comics include Kate Clinton, Delaria & Strobel, Lori Noelle, Lynne Lavner, Robin Tyler, & Karen

Ripley.

With the accent on Comedy, Theatre Groups include the Cherry Cokes and Over Our Heads. Special guest will be Pat Bond, recreating both her theatre roles — as Lorena Hickock and Gertrude Stein.

Guest Speakers will include noted authors Katherine V. Forrest (*Curious Wine*), Lee Lynch (*The Swashbuckler*), Paula Gunn Allen (*Sacred Hoop Indian*), Judy Grahn (*Another Mother Tongue*), S. Diane Bogus (*Black Lesbians in Literature*), Max Dashu (*Oppresse Herstory Archives*). There will be a film festival, a dance every night, as well as a crafts area, workshops and sports. Three and four-day ticket prices will include camping or cabins, & food. Boys 10 and under welcome. Childcare provided. Concerts interpreted for the hearing impaired. For further information, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to W.C.W.M.F., 13514 Hart Street, Van Nuys, California 91405, (818) 904-9495.

## Coming out stories wanted

Alyson Publications is in the process of compiling two collections of coming-out stories. They are looking for both lesbians

and gay men who would like to write about some aspect of their own real-life experiences. For a set of guidelines, please write to Alyson Publications, attn: Coming Out Project, 40 Plympton St., Boston, MA 02118. They would especially welcome inquiries from the physically challenged, minorities, older people, and others who have too often been invisible.

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