

Robin Wood — A Dissenting View

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In the late 1950s and early 1960s, film criticism in this country was forced to examine its current attitudes and assumptions. The examination was begun by Lindsay Anderson and continued by the *Movie* group of critics. Anderson suggested that the critic should operate on the basis of clearly defined values to which he should be resolutely committed. Coming from quite a different direction, the *Movie* critics argued for a shift in critical interest which was, roughly speaking, from the realistic documentary tradition in the cinema (embracing Italian Neo-realism, the Soviet silent cinema and the British documentary movement) to a cinema which was more preoccupied with form and artifice (principally the American cinema and especially directors like Hitchcock and Hawks). They also put more emphasis on developing a critical vocabulary, introducing concepts like 'auteur' and 'mise en scene' to this country.

The critical scene today does not suggest that this examination had much effect. The ideas that Anderson and the *Movie* critics attacked still control critical writing about the cinema. Criticism is still principally a matter of expressing a personal taste that needs no other justification than that it is considered to be a superior taste; an impressionistic account of the critic's immediate response to a film is still the characteristic method; no critical vocabulary has been developed; amateurism is still a matter of pride.

Not only has the challenge put forward ten years ago failed but the people responsible for it have dispersed. Anderson and people associated with him have become film-makers exclusively – Anderson's own occasional critical forays are ignored; for example, the total lack of response to his attempt to challenge Eric Rhode's article about the British cinema in a recent issue of *The Listener*.

The *Movie* critics have either disappeared (the magazine itself only appears in a fitful irregular way) or been absorbed

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into the critical establishment; for example, its editor, Ian Cameron, has become the critic of *Queen* and now appears in the company of his former opponents on the back of the *Monthly Film Bulletin*, Mark Shivas is the front man for the mediocre television programme about films, 'Cinema'.

This background must be borne in mind to understand properly Robin Wood's achievement as a critic. Through his occasional writings and the three books he has now published, *Hitchcock's Films*, *Howard Hawks* and *Arthur Penn*, Wood has sustained the challenge set up by Lindsay Anderson and the *Movie* group. This is an odd claim to make, perhaps, because in many ways the two positions were opposed ones: Anderson being both more attached to the realistic/documentary tradition and also more suspicious of the effects of the Hollywood system than the *Movie* group were. Wood himself (as the subjects of his books suggest) has always been close to the *Movie* group. But he has been set apart from most of its members by his involvement with the critical attitudes and methods of F. R. Leavis; this involvement has given him the firm attachment to a set of values that Anderson demanded of the critic.

This marrying of the two traditions is important in itself. But Robin Wood added another element which seems to me to be of tremendous importance for British film criticism. This was the determination only to write about a subject after a long and sustained involvement with it. This determination gives his criticism a depth and seriousness that has never been a feature of British film criticism. This quality can best be established by comparing his book on Howard Hawks with John Russell Taylor's *Cinema Eye*, *Cinema Ear*, which I think can fairly be taken as an example of the orthodox approach to film criticism. Any one of John Russell Taylor's essays suggest that he has seen most of the director's films once or twice, read the relevant literature and on the basis of this written the essay. Any of Robin Wood's books suggest that he has seen as many of Hawks's films as he possibly could, as often as possible, discussed the films with friends and colleagues, mulled over what they have had to say, read the relevant literature and then written his book. The result is that in Taylor's case his essays never show a particular familiarity with any of the directors he discusses so that his criticism is never particularized and tends to be a summary of current opinion about a director. In Wood's case there is an easy familiarity with Hawks's work that allows him to range right across the director's work, com-

paring a wide variety of films; in all the judgements that he makes about Hawks there is the sense that whether they follow current opinion or not they have been personally arrived at. (In comparing *Cinema Eye, Cinema Ear* with *Howard Hawks* I am comparing a book of essays with a monograph. I do not think this invalidates the comparison. Taylor's level of critical involvement naturally leads to the essay. I think he would be very hard put to it to sustain a monograph.)

I hope I have given sufficient indication of Robin Wood's achievement as a critic since I want to devote the rest of this article to some criticisms of his position. Not least of his critical virtues is the way he forces other critics to confront his judgements and sort out their own ideas.

The central problem that Robin Wood's critical writings provoke is that of critical method. His method is essentially that developed by F. R. Leavis and his followers and for that reason difficult to come to terms with. This is because there is, inherent in the Leavisian position, a suspicion of the critical act which springs from a fundamental assumption about a work of art. The great work of art (the only one that Leavis thinks the critic should concern himself with) is great because of its 'organic quality'. Criticism seeks to break down the organic quality of the work in an attempt to understand and evaluate it. The tension set up by this contradiction is never resolved in Leavis. Its signs are revealed in Robin Wood's writings by remarks which are scattered throughout his work like 'Interpretative criticism has an inherent tendency to schematize and it is precisely scenes like this that can easily become coarsened in the process of analysis'.

The result is a critical method which avoids developing an analytic and evaluative apparatus. The method as it emerges in the practical criticism of Leavis and his followers can be characterized as follows. Confronted by a work of art, the critic submerges himself in it (close reading, repeated readings); he consequently 'apprehends' the work of art and is in a position to interpret and evaluate it. His interpretation has weight because of the attention he has devoted to the work, because of his general knowledge of the art and because of his sensitivity. Essentially the critic is a more sensitive and knowledgeable 'common reader'.

A number of issues are dramatized when one disagrees with an interpretation offered by a Leavisian critic. How can a

disagreement be settled? The natural way would be to ask how judgements had been arrived at, e.g. what assumptions were made, and how were they applied. One might find that critics who disagreed over a work had arrived at different conclusions because they started from different assumptions or had applied them differently. But such a procedure isn't easy to follow with a Leavisian critic, who will find it difficult to articulate his assumptions and the way in which he has applied them.

Leavisian critics have normally avoided this issue by arguing that criticism does not demonstrate but seeks to gain assent. 'This is so, isn't it?' is the question that criticism should always provoke in this view. But, as Perry Anderson points out in an article in the *New Left Review*,² 'The central precondition of this epistemology – the interrogative statement – demands one crucial precondition: a shared, stable system of beliefs and values. Without this no loyal exchange and report is possible. If the basic formation and outlook of readers diverges, their experience will be incommensurable'. Once this happens disagreement inevitably moves to the level of rival assertions.

The central precondition of the method that Anderson points to: 'a shared stable system of beliefs and values', is missing in film criticism. There is no agreement as to who are the important artists, no consensus about critical method, no agreement about the crucial relationship of which the artist and the industrial system of which he is part; film critics even lack the social cement of a university community.

Too often I am confronted by a sense of nothing more than critical assertions. I am puzzled by Robin Wood's conclusions and the way he reaches them. This dissatisfaction occurs at two important critical levels, that of value judgements and that of interpretation.

The difficulty of justifying value judgements can be seen by referring to Robin Wood's comparison between *Rio Bravo* and *High Noon*. He writes: 'It (*High Noon*) strikes me as the archetypal "Oscar" film, product of the combined talents of the archetypal "Oscar" director (Zinneman), the archetypal "Oscar" writer (Carl Foreman) and the archetypal "Oscar" producer (Stanley Kramer): three gentlemen whose work has been characterized by those Good Intentions with which we understand the road to Hell to be paved. *Mental* intentions, not emotional or intuitive inten-

tions: intentions of the conscious willing mind, not of the whole man. The film reeks of contrivance. Every sequence is constructed to lead up to, and make, a simple moral point, character, action and dialogue being painstakingly manipulated to this end. Nowhere is there that sense of inner logic, of *organic* development, of the working out of natural processes through the interaction of the characters, that one finds in the best films of Hawks. This characteristic is not only in the script. Zinneman's direction, external and shallow, matches it perfectly. His handling of the actors is almost universally abominable, cliché gesture following cliché gesture . . . just as cliché set-up follows cliché set-up in the camera positioning'.³ This passage would hardly persuade somebody who thought *High Noon* a good film. It is no more than a mixture of abuse and assertion.

Robin Wood is in fact aware of the problem posed by comparisons like this. At the end of this comparison he writes 'Judgements of this kind are notoriously difficult to enforce when dealing with the cinema (how great an advantage the literary critic has in being able to quote!): one has to appeal not only to the reader's *common experience* (my italics) but to his memory of that experience'. The phrase 'appeal . . . to the common experience' is the crucial one since it takes us back to Perry Anderson's critique of the Leavisian method. If there is no common experience, all the quoting in the world will not support Wood's judgement.

The issue also arises when an interpretation is offered. Take Wood's account of the hero of *North by Northwest*, Roger Thornhill, as an example. After describing how the film characterizes Thornhill at the beginning (irresponsible, a heavy drinker, divorcee, mother dominated, etc.), Wood goes on: 'Indeed he is a man who lives purely on the surface, refusing all commitment or responsibility (appropriately he is in advertising), immature for all his cocksureness, his life all the more a chaos for the fact that he doesn't recognize it as such: a man who relies above all on the exterior trappings of modern civilization – business offices, cocktail bars, machines – for protection, who substitutes bustle and speed for a sense of direction or purpose: a modern city Everyman, whose charm and self-confidence and smartness makes him especially easy for the spectator to identify with . . .'

In a passage like this Wood moves from description that is uncontroversial – we are told in the film that Thornhill is a heavy drinker, etc. – to moral/social estimates of the

character that need substantiating ('immature', 'his life a chaos'). I see no evidence in the film that Hitchcock invites us to make such a judgement of Thornhill and Wood quotes none. Nor can I see evidence to suggest that Thornhill should be regarded as 'a modern city Everyman' rather than just a smart advertising man. This point is of some importance because in the rest of his account Wood puts some stress on Thornhill's representative quality ('. . . the film's first movement is devoted to a systematic stripping away of the protective armour of a modern city man . . . 'In the midst of this he stands, an isolated speck with the whole world against him, absolutely exposed and vulnerable: modern man deprived of all his amenities and artificial resources') and clearly part of his high estimate of the film depends on the representative quality it has for him. There may be evidence to support this account, but it is not given. It cannot be taken for granted that there is one 'correct' way to read the film.

There are other points in Wood's writings where similar issues are raised: for example, when he says of the opening of *Vertigo* that we never know how Scotty manages to extricate himself when hanging over the gutter has the effect of 'leaving him metaphorically suspended over a great abyss'; or in his accounts of the effect of Hitchcock's use of back projection. But I hope by now that the issue is clear.

Robin Wood's critical method raises two issues: how do critics substantiate (a) value judgements (b) interpretations they offer. I am inclined to think that the issue of interpretation is the one that critics should concern themselves with at the moment as the most likely area to produce developments in criticism. The problem of substantiating value judgements is a notoriously difficult one. In the cinema I think it is best left until we have a much better sense of the nature and limits of the art.

If this is accepted, along what lines could interpretative method be developed in film criticism? On the basis of recent critical writing, I am sure that the 'auteur' principle provides the most useful line of development. However, since the principle has been used in rather different ways, it is necessary to clarify what I mean by it. By the 'auteur' principle I understand a descriptive method which seeks to establish, not whether a director is a great director, but what the basic structure of a director's work is. The assumption behind this principle is that any director creates his:

films on the basis of a central structure and that all of his films can be seen as variations or developments of it.

I think I can best demonstrate the value of the principle by confronting my view of Arthur Penn arrived at on the basis of it with Robin Wood's view. But first a further clarification is necessary in the light of Robin Wood's seeming use of the 'auteur' principle in his account of Hawks.

Wood's book on Hawks is in outline organized around the 'auteur' principle. That is, Hawks's career is not followed chronologically. The films are grouped together on the basis of thematic resemblances. Thus, a Western, *Rio Bravo*, is grouped with two adventure films, *Only Angels Have Wings* and *To Have and Have Not*; a gangster film, *Scarface*, is grouped with comedies like *Monkey Business* and *Bringing Up Baby*. To put seemingly disparate films together like this is a useful critical act in that it immediately provokes the question why and puts an onus on the critic to answer.

However, Robin Wood's use of this method is qualified in a number of ways. Even along the lines I've described it is not a complete attachment. In a minor way it is abandoned at the end of the book, which is chronological in organization, so that the last chapter but one deals with *Hatari*, *Man's Favourite Sport* and *Red Line 7000* and the last chapter deals with *El Dorado*, Hawks's latest film.

More important, the films are grouped together not only on the basis of thematic resemblances but also on the basis of the estimate wood has made of their quality. So *Only Angels Have Wings*, *To Have and Have Not* and *Rio Bravo* go together and are dealt with first because Wood regards them as Hawks's masterpieces. The other chapters move down the scale from the masterpieces to the failures (relegated to an appendix). This is an important difference in our use of the auteur principle. My use would be exclusively on the basis of thematic resemblances and would totally ignore questions of quality. I might well have included *The Big Sleep* under the heading 'Self Respect and Responsibility' but Wood doesn't because he regards it as a failure.

Important too is the way Wood groups the films on the basis of their thematic resemblances. The groupings are on the basis of particular resemblances like Self Respect and Responsibility, The Group, The Instinctive Consciousness and The Lure of Irresponsibility. When examined these terms reveal themselves not simply as descriptive terms but

also as evaluative ones. Wood is saying not just that the films express these themes but that the films are good by virtue of so doing.

To understand what is at stake in this procedure, it is necessary to refer back to a basic assumption of Leavisian critical method: that one of the conditions for a work of art to be great is that it should express central moral values. They are not usually defined explicitly but as they emerge from Leavisian critical writing they might be characterized as the central values of English non-conformity as they appeared in the early part of the twentieth century with the particular emphasis and distortion put on them by D. H. Lawrence.

On examinations the terms under which Robin Wood groups Hawks's films can be seen to refer to these values. A term like 'The Instinctive Consciousness' is characteristically Leavisian and refers back to the psychology created by Lawrence. 'The Lure of Irresponsibility' refers to the Leavisian/Lawrentian assumption of 'the split between the rational and the instinctive, the civilized and the primitive'. (Needless to say Leavis and Lawrence are not the only people to have discerned this split.) 'Self Respect and Responsibility' is defined within the same framework. Defining the essential condition for a man to have self respect, Wood uses the characteristically Leavisian formulation 'such a man should be a conscious being who lives from his own feeling sense of identity'.

The result of this way of grouping is that Hawks is presented as being very close in outlook to those novelists Leavis deals with in *The Great Tradition*. (Significantly Hawks's work is compared with Conrad's at several points.) The accounts of Hitchcock and Penn assimilate them to the same outlook. All three directors are assimilated into a perspective that might be described as Leavis with a Conradian (rather than Lawrentian) bias – that is a view of the world which sees the individual as confronted by the forces of darkness in the universe and trying to maintain his equipoise, integrity and honour.

The assumption that there are a set of absolute values that all great artists will express even if they work in very different social and cultural contexts seems to me a metaphysical assumption that is difficult to sustain. But I am not concerned here to challenge it but to demonstrate a difference in critical method. Robin Wood's grouping of Hawks's films

springs from treating each film as a separate entity. It is only when each film has been separately interpreted that similarities on the basis of a concern with 'Self Respect and Responsibility' or 'The Lure of Irresponsibility' could be discerned between *Rio Bravo* and *To Have and Have Not* or *Scarface* and *I Was a Male War Bride*. They are certainly not obvious on the surface.

Using the same assumption as Robin Wood that there is implicit in a director's work a view of the world (the starting point of the auteur principle) I would employ a different critical method. I should begin by noting the recurrent, overt features of a director's work. My own consideration of Hawks's work would begin with the notion of the group which seems to be a central feature of a large number of his films and go on to explore how Hawks defines the group, on what basis people are excluded from or included in it, the relationship of the woman to the group, the critique of the leader of the group, etc.

However, this approach is perhaps best considered in relation to Arthur Penn's films since they are few in number and therefore more amenable to discussion than Hawks's large output is in an article of this kind.

Any consideration of Penn's films in terms of recurring situations must begin by pairing *Bonnie and Clyde* with *The Left Handed Gun*. The central situations of both films are much the same. The heroes are young people who act in an impromptu, high-spirited way which tends towards violence. Their spontaneous acts of violence provoke a counter response from the society they have acted against and they themselves finally become victims of this counter violence which usually operates at a more intense pitch than the violence of the heroes. In both films the violent response to the heroes is a general social response – both films give the sense that society is easily provoked into violence. But in *The Left Handed Gun* the response is more particularized through the character, Pat Garrett, who leads the final hunt for Billy and eventually kills him.

Once the situation is put like this it becomes apparent that there is a Pat Garrett figure in *Bonnie and Clyde*. He is the Texas Ranger, Hamer. Like Pat Garrett, he leads the final hunt for the heroes and is responsible for their deaths. Hamer acts because of the way he has been humiliated by Bonnie and Clyde; Garrett acts because of the way he feels he has been humiliated by Billy's disruption of his wedding.

At this point a further consideration needs to be introduced. In *The Left Handed Gun*, Garrett is linked with the rancher, Tunstall. At the beginning of the film Tunstall is presented as playing the role of a father to Billy (who is an orphan), encouraging and guiding him, teaching him to read. When Tunstall is murdered Billy reacts as a son might to the murder of his father. But with the disappearance of Tunstall, Garrett takes over the father's role, encouraging and guiding him in turn. In the light of this I think it would be reasonable to see the subsequent relationship between Billy and Garrett in the Freudian terms suggested by the Billy/Tunstall relationship. Billy's disrupting of the wedding is a son's act of rebellion against his father and it provokes a father's retribution.

If Billy's relationship with Garrett is seen in this way, Hamer's response to Bonnie and Clyde is more comprehensible. Taking the film on its own terms, it is difficult to see why Hamer should come after Bonnie and Clyde in the first place and why he should pursue them with such determination and finally unleash such violence against them. If Hamer is seen in the same context as Garrett, e.g. he is a disguised father figure, his behaviour is more intelligible. In support of this it should be added that Bonnie has a mother in the film but no father, while Clyde seems to have no surviving parents. (I am not sure if we are given any explicit information about them in the film.)

If these similarities can be established between the central situations of *Bonnie and Clyde* and *The Left Handed Gun*, how can these films be related to other Penn films? *The Miracle Worker*, with its central situation of a deaf and dumb girl being taught to come to terms with world, seems to be built round a very different situation. But if our attention is shifted from Helen Keller's age and afflictions to her behaviour, I think we can see some important similarities become visible. Like Bonnie and Clyde, Helen behaves in an uncontrolled, impulsive way. Like them her behaviour disrupts the social situation of which she is a part (in this case the family). Indeed I think we could characterize Helen, Billy, Bonnie and Clyde as being unsocialized people – that is they have not learnt to adapt and control their behaviour to harmonize with their social situations.

These similarities can be made even clearer if they are explored by way of Robin Wood's comparison of *The Left Handed Gun* with the *Miracle Worker*. He suggests that Billy is very close to Annie Sullivan:

'The sense of someone driven on by intense personal needs he or she very imperfectly understands is as vivid in *The Miracle Worker* as it is in *The Left Handed Gun*. Along with their blindness (Wood suggests that Billy is symbolically blind), Billy and Annie share an obsessive single mindedness of purpose'. I think that the two central points of this comparison are open to challenge. It could just as easily be suggested that Annie does understand her own motives (the relating of Helen to her brother, and to her own struggle) and that this self knowledge gives her the strength to cope with Helen. And surely the plot of *The Left Handed Gun* suggests that Billy's initial single mindedness is dissipated; the deliberate killing of Brady is followed by the accidental or impulsive killings of Moon and Hill.

But if the two films are put in the perspective I have suggested less questionable comparisons can be made. Annie should be linked with Tunstall and Garrett. She makes actual for Helen Tunstall's potential gift to Billy, the ability to read (or more particularly in Helen's case, the essential basis for reading, language). She is able to do this because she also makes actual for Helen, Garrett's potential gift to Billy, which is that of discipline.

In doing this Annie takes on the role of the father. Two other features of the film will help support this suggestion. First, Annie's real antagonist is Helen's mother whose love for Helen becomes a smothering thing preventing the child from developing and faring. Second, the person who would normally counteract the mother's love, Helen's actual father, is presented in the film either as a buffoon or as somebody who will not accept his role as a father (believing that Helen cannot be improved and therefore being willing to consider putting her in an institution).

Armed with this extended perspective I think it possible to go on to discuss *The Chase*; though I think this must be done with caution since Penn has expressed unease about the film and because of the association in its making of three other people with distinctive artistic personalities, Sam Spiegel, the producer, Lillian Hellman, the writer, and Marlon Brando, the star. Indeed on the face of it *The Chase* seems to have quite a different central situation from any of Penn's other films, being mainly preoccupied with a description of the behaviour of social groups in an American town. But I think that if one examines it carefully, the film reveals another situation which it is, in fact, organized

around. The character of Bubber Reeves is very like that of Billy the Kid or Bonnie and Clyde. Like them he is anti-social, given to sudden irresponsible acts one of which landed him in jail; like them he is engaging and likeable; like them he unleashes a general social violence which eventually destroys him.

It is this situation which provides the dramatic shape of the film (as the title *The Chase* implies) though this shape is partly hidden by the large sections of the film that are given over to social description. An interesting clue to the contradictions this produces in the film is provided by Bubber's reaction to the appearance of his wife with Jake in the wrecked car dump. By the norms established in the rest of the film, Bubber should be suspicious of the appearance of his wife with another man but in fact he simply accepts the both of them and the three become a little group, all of whom are menaced by the violence that is unleashed. They can only become such a group because Bubber's attitudes are those of a pre-adolescent and do not include sexual jealousy.

Within this framework, Sheriff Calder can be seen as playing a role close to Pat Garrett's. He offers Bubber the sympathetic guidance and respect for order of the ideal father. Although the film is not a Western like *The Left Handed Gun*, he is like Garrett a sheriff. The fact that he is a sheriff leads on to another important consideration about Penn's work. As well as playing the role of the father in a personal psychological sense Calder and Garrett have a more general social function in that they stand for abstract conceptions of law and order. This function is important because it forces them not to *represent* society but to *mediate* between society and the heroes. This mediation is necessary because society has been identified critically and seen as easily erupting into violence – as much a threat to law and order, if not more, than the heroes. So in *The Chase* Sheriff Calder is defeated because he is not in a position to mediate effectively and is therefore simply forced by the end of the film to retire from the scene.

In *Bonnie and Clyde* there is a logical progression from Calder's situation. Hamer, whose position as a Texas Ranger puts him in a similar relation to the law as Calder, does not play a mediating function but identifies himself, and in fact leads society's violent response to the Barrow Gang. Paralleling this shift he loses the essential characteristic of the father on the personal psychological level, which both

Garrett and Calder have, that is personal sympathetic concern, and simply becomes the vengeful father.

There is another contradiction that emerges out of this general consideration. I have said that Penn's heroes are unsocialized and that this leads to their ultimate downfall. But this obvious context into which they could be socialized, the established society of Penn's films, is seen critically and might in fact be regarded as no more than a collection of individuals very like the heroes but whose social situation sours them and gives their violence its extravagance and hysteria. So there is no real possibility for the heroes to become socialized. The only social groups Penn's heroes ever feel at home in are essentially marginal ones like Mexicans or gypsies in *The Left Handed Gun* or unemployed migrant communities in *Bonnie and Clyde*. The impossibility of the heroes becoming socialized because their natural social context is viewed critically is surely the source of the pessimistic nature of Penn's work.

I hope this account of Penn's films makes clear the nature of the critical method I am advocating (I should say that I have left *Mickey One* out of account because I am not sufficiently familiar with it and its dense symbolic quality demands great familiarity if one is to discuss it at all adequately). The method leads me to very different conclusions about Penn's work than Robin Wood's and readers might estimate the worth of the two methods by comparing our accounts of Penn and seeing which they find the more satisfactory.

In general I have been trying to argue that if criticism is to confront the problems raised by Robin Wood's critical method it needs to:

(a) *develop an analytic apparatus*. In my account of Penn's films I have tried to show how part of this apparatus might be developed on the basis of the auteur principle conceived as a search for the basic structure of an artist's work through examination of its recurrent features. We need, of course, a much more highly developed critical apparatus than this. At present, the area of film language seems a profitable one to explore.

(b) *be descriptive in intent*. In my account of Penn's films I have tried to describe how they work rather than to evaluate them. This description might lead at a later date to an evaluation of Penn's work - a case could be made that

Bonnie and Clyde is one of Penn's less successful films on the grounds that the shift in Hamer's position in the drama makes the film simpler than the previous films and less coherent – but it will have more force if we can first agree on a description of his work.

(c) *become a collaborative venture*. There are still many areas of critical discussion that need to be opened up and this obviously cannot be done by any one critic and must be a collective operation. Even the critical tool I have tried to demonstrate depends for its success on the support of other critics. The enthusiasm generated by the search for an underlying structure can easily lead the critic astray and encourage him to dragoon aspects of the film in support of his thesis. The only real check on this will be a challenge from other critics which forces him to reconsider and reconceive his position.

(d) *be provisional in nature*. It follows from (a), (b) and (c) that criticism at present should proceed cautiously. Critics should always be aware that for the moment all they can hope to do is clear the ground. Dogmatic interpretations and assertions of value can only hinder this work.

REFERENCES

1. *Arthur Penn*, p. 86.
2. Components of the National Culture, N.L.R.
3. This is not an uncharacteristic outburst. The same technique is used whenever Wood seeks to demonstrate one film is inferior to another. See the discussion of *Goldfinger* – *Hitchcock's Films*, p. 100 – or the comparison between *From Russia with Love* and *North by Northwest* – *Hitchcock's Films*, p. 22.