

Easy Rider - A Review

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superficial studies. *Easy Rider* is a recent important exception. *Easy Rider* smacks of reality; it focuses on the new American Dream and makes the quest seem neither romantic nor hopeful.

What is most significant about *Easy Rider* is that it is not content to deal with stereotypes, but with real people and real situations. There are no heroes in *Easy Rider*, but screwed up, confused people who are searching for something, something they are not sure exists. The film is, in essence, a modern existential tragedy and its characters, despite their put-on names, are not caricatures of cool, but lonely, desperate searchers.

The film begins with Captain America (Fonda) and Billy the Kid (Hopper) copping and dealing meth. Then, in true frontier fashion, Fonda and his sidekick ride off looking for America, not on horseback, but on motorcycles. Hopper's goal is to reach New Orleans and the Mardi Gras;

Fonda's search entails something deeper. Neither can ever articulate what it is they are looking for. And therein lies the basic concept of the film: a new American Dream must be sought. To want "freedom" is not enough, because freedom is too abstract a term. Although their exterior and their actions (long hair, riding the open road, smoking dope freely) may suggest freedom, Captain America and Billy are really trapped, isolated individuals.

Into the South, they are hassled by the law and local toughs, one incident resulting in the death of a drunken lawyer (played expertly by Jack Nicholson) they befriend. Once in New Orleans, they drop acid for the Mardi Gras and manage to survive an insane freak show. Having reached their destination, they take off again.

Near the end of the film, Fonda and Hopper sit by the roadside discussing their journey. Hopper is overjoyed, his thirst for thrills temporarily satisfied. Fonda, in the film's heaviest moment, tells Hopper that they blew it, that their search had been fruitless. The film's final scene is one of tragic irony and despair, a frustrating epitaph for Captain America and Billy - and for the American Dream. Serving as a bitter realization for the young people in this country, *Easy Rider* bears down confrontation between the establishment and the "new youth".

Easy Rider is a disturbing film, offering a view of life in the 1960's, one that will leave you isolated in your realization of what and who you are or are not in this society. It is a compelling and beautiful film, one that marks Hopper as an actor and director of considerable potential. Fonda, although he tends to underplay his role, nonetheless turns in his finest screen performance. It is a film to be seen and to ponder over, because it asks some very real questions. It is an indictment of the American way of life, not only of the establishment, but the "hip" society as well.

JULY 18 by Kathleen Fitzgerald

doldrums
without waves
even of nausea
exactly nothing
but grey
shapeless no
things slow-winding
through my mind
drowsy limpid
annoyances some
sufficient to
half-waken me.

HILL ASSUMES DUTIES

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examiner in the auditing department and as supervisor in the executive training program and administrative assistant in the loan administration department.

He taught mathematics at Hampden-Sydney College at Hampden-Sydney, Virginia and was in the actuarial research department at the Connecticut General Life Insurance Company at Hartford, Conn. He served in the U. S. Army as chief clerk in the field medical laboratory in Africa, Italy, France and Germany, from 1942 to 1945.

Hill received an accounting diploma from the Draughon School of Commerce at Atlanta, Ga. He received a B.A. degree in mathematics from Duke University at Durham and has done graduate work at Duke. He is a member of Phi Beta Kappa.

In Winston-Salem he has served on the executive committee of the Child Guidance Clinic of Forsyth County, treasurer of the Forsyth County Mental Health Association, chairman of the budget committee of the Winston-Salem Arts Council and financial advisor for the Children's Theater Board.

He is a member of the Rotary Club and a member of the board of ushers at Home Moravian Church. He and his wife and son live at 398 Plymouth Avenue in Winston-Salem.

FESTIVAL AT THE PARK

Twenty-five dancers, both modern and ballet, left early Sunday morning to perform in Charlotte at Freedom Park. This has been the second year that the school's dance department has participated in the festival.

The stage was outdoors and the surrounding atmosphere proved to be a kind of circus flavor, with lakes, ducks, balloons, and screaming kids with their tired parents. It was terribly hot and after a long afternoon of listening to bands, watching baton twirlers, and swinging in swings, the performance finally got underway.

Works presented were "Concertina," "Peasant Pas de Deux", "Ten and Two", and "Screenplay". Nolan T'Sani, a former student at N. C. S. A., now studying with The School of American Ballet in New York, performed in "Ten and Two" and in the Peasant Pas de Deux". Even though there was much balloon popping, babies crying, and music stopping in the middle of dances, it proved to be an enjoyable evening.

MIDNIGHT

COWBOY

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slicker con men and women. He gets taken and taken, and no one buys what he is selling. He is convinced by someone he meets at a bar that all performers need managers and so he hires the enterprising-looking native, unaffectionately called Rizzo by a young man in drag. But Rizzo (Hoffman) also betrays Buck and Joe Buck finds himself penniless in the street.

There follows a struggle for survival with his only ally Rizzo, who left the young hick nothing but his Paul Newman self-image.

Midnight Cowboy is a bleak look at many institutions of city life: illusion, disillusionment, homosexuality, hypersexuality, starvation, despair, disease, and death. Can a man be stripped of all of the symbols he depends upon to express his self-respect and still maintain that self respect.

Midnight Cowboy shows graphically and not prettily the systematic murder of a man's sense of values, yet the resolution of the movie is one of a curious triumph that suggest, perhaps, that we are more than the clothes we wear and the people we sleep with.