The criteria by which films can and should be analyzed as art are discussed in this paper. A triangular model of theme-form-content is presented with form given greater significance than is usually the case in film criticism. The form-content-theme synthesis is the process in which theme is made clear by means of form and content within an artistic framework. It is suggested that if the theme-form-content synthesis triangle occurs to any great extent in a film, it can be argued that the film is art. (TO)
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Film: The Art of Our Century

Toby Goldberg

Prof. Goldberg argues that art is a necessary ingredient of human activity, that the art of film has become an increasingly significant feature of our lives, and that film manifests the unity of man with his increasingly technological world.

Second Stage Symbolism

Wallace E. Buchholz

Mr. Buchholz explains the semantic nature and scope of the "second stage symbol" and discusses how development of the art of using second stage symbols is a way of preserving and manifesting our humanness.

Prohibition, A National Rite of Passage

William G. Kelley

Prof. Kelley examines the propaganda of the prohibition movement of the 1920's and discusses the role of propaganda in periods of social change. His article locates a place for propaganda in a cultural context.

Innovations and Observations

Speak Out

Harriet Borger

Mrs. Borger argues that "getting as many boys and girls as possible on the stage" is not "all there is" nor all there should be to a good high school theatre arts program. She urges teachers to strive for an accredited, first-rate theatre arts program in their high schools.
When critics discuss the visual media, film and television, criticism usually centers around the content and theme of the presentation, with only limited or no consideration of form. Characterization, acting, plot, story, dialogue, lasting impact, and importance are typical elements of the media which are examined, and all are undeniably important. The Godfather is analyzed in terms of how well Marlon Brando portrays the main character, or in terms of the analogy of Mafia as profit-oriented business as any other type of capitalistic enterprise. Critics recommend the film because of the message, acting, violence question, and impact on society, and no doubt these are valid criteria. But they should not be the only criteria examined when there is a consideration of cinema art.

This article will present a schema for such a determination. The concept of form will be of greater significance than is usually the case in film criticism. The form-content-theme synthesis is the process in which theme is made clear by means of form and content within an artistic framework.

Idea, Implementation and Theme

Before it is possible to explain the idea (content) and implementation (form) — theme synthesis — it is necessary to perhaps arbitrarily divide the two areas of form and content into two distinct categories for clarity's sake and briefly explain the elements in each category. The effect will be that of a pyramid structure with the theme category at the apex as diagrammed below.

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Idea (Content)       Implementation (Form)

Script
1. plot-story
2. dialogue
3. milieu
4. style

Picture Composition
1. lighting
2. color

Editing
Sound
Movement
Image
Style
Acting
1. characterization
2. style
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The content-idea of a film contains the major distinct areas of script with sub-categories of plot, dialogue, milieu, and style. Typical critical reaction to the film Patton involves discussion of these elements and their relationship to theme as well as the form element of acting. Normal critical praise for the film revolves around the fact that the script was "realistic" because of the earthy dialogue and continued something like this. The theme involving rugged
individualism and moral purpose and problems in time of war is one that is contemporary.

A discussion of milieu or environment then may follow and analogies may or may not be drawn to today's application of the moral principles which are left us by Patton the man. Style is unique in treatment compared to run-of-the-mill war movies.

Film criticism usually ends with a discussion of the previous points and little or no consideration for aesthetic values, those unique to a visual medium. Disregarding acting for discussion purposes because of its recognition as an important element and also because it is a characteristic not unique to a visual medium, implementation-form includes the following major sub-categories: Picture composition (to include color and lighting), editing, sound, movement, image, and style. A motion picture cannot exist without these elements, but may exist without acting if humans are not present. Exceptions to this rule might exist as in the case of silent films, but only very few silent films have been made since 1930 and even those made previous to that date usually had a sound accompaniment of some sort. 1

Picture composition is that element of film which all too often is ignored by critics of the film medium. Sub-categories for consideration in this area are the principles of dominant line and shape, tone, balance, proportion, size, illusory action, point-of-view or angle, color, and lighting. One of the best books on the subject was written by one of Einstein's students, Vladimir Nilsen 2 but others such as Andre Bazin 3 and Rudolph Arnheim 4 have much to offer on the subject. Nilsen says,

The achieving of pictorial image is the incarnation of the picture idea of the subject by means of the construction and conjunction of lines, columns, masses, perspectives, forming a unified composition. But in pictorial art we have the most individual and self-complete form of production of the art-image, inasmuch as all the means of creative construction and technical expression of the conceived image are concentrated in the hands of one artist. 5

Possible psychological implications inherent in picture composition are more far-reaching than that of other elements. A strong diagonal line in a picture may imply such moods and messages as instability and excitement, which might be only subliminally realized by the casual viewer but should be recognized as basic to the knowledgeable critic. In the same manner the use of angle may have strong implications. In Orson Welles' Citizen Kane when the character Kane is shot from extremely low angles, the message is clear. Present is importance, dominance, and a sense of awesome power.

Color is an important factor in cinema implementation. The mood conveyed by a black and white film as compared to a color film is different, black and white portraying a starkness and sense of reality which is contrary to the surreal, romantic quality inherent in a color film.

It is difficult to imagine the same films' effects achieved in a color version of Hitchcock's Psycho or for that matter in a black and white Red Desert where color is used almost to the point of becoming a major character in the film. Would the cinema audience find a regal, romantic quality in a black and white...
version of William Wyler's *Ben Hur*? Would the heroes of Arthur Penn's *Bonnie and Clyde* seem less romantic and perhaps less matinee idol-like and more like criminals in a black and white version of the same film?

Lighting as an element of picture composition and form needs no lengthy discussion for clarification purposes. Mood can be expressed through various techniques as shown in *Psycho*. The mood portrayed may be unexpected, suspenseful, and eerie as the audience is taken on a journey through the proverbial haunted house, surrealistic shadows dominating the composition. The mood may also be that of a relaxed complacency as shown by very bright, harsh lighting when Janet Leigh prepares for the shower. Shock is obtained when a murder actually is committed in this unexpected well-lit environment.

If language is the syntax of literature, possibly editing is the syntax of the motion picture. Editing provides elongation or condensation of time and space, conflict between images, Eisenstein's notion of a screen Marxian dialectic, mood changes by means of the draw-curtain effect of fades and dissolves, a possible staccato frenzy by use of the ripple cut device as in *Easy Rider*, flashbacks and flash forwards as in literature, can change image size and importance at will, and by its very nature can psychologically manipulate the viewer from object to context to environment for effect. This occurs at the beginning of *Triumph of the Will* as the viewer is put into an airplane to witness majestic cloud formation, then shown the plane as a crucifix-shadow covering the city of Berlin, and then the god, Hitler, descends from his heaven as savior, all by means of editing various shots and contexts.

Sound is a more important element than is realized by the casual viewer. Adept utilization of the sound medium as incorporated in film occurs too rarely. The Russian theoreticians Eisenstein and Pudovkin early realized the potentiality of the use of sound in film to promote Marxian ideology. Eisenstein's silent classic *Potemkin* had an orchestrated score during its showings in major Russian cities. In *Film Sense* Eisenstein talks at length about his film *Alexander Nevsky* and the score by Prokofiev. Pictorial images and musical score were created simultaneously with each element clearly in mind. This was in contrast to the normal practice of adding the music after a film is shot.

Movement is basic to the motion picture. There are two common types of movement which are basic besides the kind of movement achieved by editing. These are subject movement and camera movement. The subject may move within the frame on its own accord or may move through, in, and out of the frame by means of camera movement. Simple camera movements are the pan, tilt, and track (truck). By its nature a pan or tilt is a weaker kind of movement than that whereby the whole camera moves, because it implies the presence of a camera and crew. In the latter case the camera often assumes the position of an active participant and at times may be completely subjective. This type of movement suggests a strong audience identification and presents a sense of excitement and rhythm which is impossible to achieve with the simple pan and tilt of a stationary camera.

Another type of movement in the cinema refers to film speed. Slow, fast, reverse, and freezing movements are possible for effect. In Richard Lester's *A Hard Day's Night* the Beatles in part deserve the Marx Brothers praise given to them by critics because of the speeded film action used for comic and "ola-
The image as an element has its roots in picture composition but deserves a place of its own in a discussion of elements of form. By means of factors such as manipulation through editing or camera angle the image element may be present. In Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* by means of a combination of music, angle, and picture, the audience is left with the image of the awesome monolith slab. A more powerful image appears at the end of the film in the guise of the embryonic Star-child as it surveys the earth.

Image may not have to be a particular object or idea achieved from a picture. How many audiences can soon forget Anthony Perkins as Norman Bates, the psychopath in *Psycho*? We are confronted with a Doris Day and Julie Andrews image constantly. Pauline Kael refers to Miss Andrews as "super goody two shoes" in a review of *Sound of Music.* Even an example of cinema kitsch like *The Godfather* has inherent in its form the image-making process. An image of the world of the Mafia through the use of Warner Brothers-like red colors, exists as does a different world than the one the average viewer is used to. The sensationalism of a decapitated horse is an image which lingers, if unpleasantly.

Those of us who have never participated in World War II have an image of the war as presented by Warner Brothers, Pat O'Brien and James Cagney. For a long period the Old West was Republic Pictures and John Wayne.

The last consideration of form as implementation is that of style. The auteur plays an important role in this discussion as do elements of genre and studio style. Those who accept the auteur theory of film-making argue that many differences in style occur among auteur directors. Psychological consideration may be important in both the works of Hitchcock and Antonioni but the suspense style and the alienation mode of both are dissimilar. The images and starkness involved with Bergman's style is in sharp contrast to the romantic, lyrical quality of much of Truffant's work.

But style exists beyond just a director's hand. Historically in Hollywood there has been a studio stamp on most products. The lavishness of production and sentimental star-laden quality of an MGM epic contrasts the austerity and film noir nature of the early Warner Brothers films.

**Implementation-Theme Synthesis**

As previously mentioned, when we discuss the notion of content or idea relating to theme this occurs naturally in any visual media and is what is typically discussed. The content and form may synthesize, become one, and this process will occur with regularity if the film is well-crafted. This discussion will focus on the form-theme concurrence. If this latter process as described occurs with regular frequency with all the elements playing important if not equal roles in achieving the junction, film art occurs. The notion of one creator or auteur is necessary for the process to take place. Visual medium art does not occur by committee. Finally, whether or not the theme is considered to be universal in scope or trite in nature is of no consequence in determination of the art. The utilization of the formal implementation and the convergence with theme is the main criterion.
Once the audience or critic becomes knowledgeable with the cinema language he may be able to determine whether or not synthesis takes place given an understanding of the content, form, and theme. Welles' *Citizen Kane* is one of the best examples of the process as well as being critically judged by most to be one of the best examples of film art. Welles had complete control, a concept rather alien to Hollywood at the time, and functioned as director, actor, producer and writer as well as editor and sound technican.

Simply condensed, the film's central theme centers on the life of a powerful man, an enigma, the contradictions in his personality and in his life, and the knowledge that a complete understanding of another human being and the complexities of life will never fully be understood by a spectator. The script deals with Kane's life as told from five points of view, showing a complexity and mystery in itself. The stylized acting of the Mercury company, the dynamism of Welles the actor and even the Jewish stereotype of an Edward Everett Sloane all add to the excellence of the film. These considerations as well as that of Welles' directorial style should be discussed by the implementation–theme joining, and are too often not understood.

From the opening of *Citizen Kane* a fusion of form elements with theme occurs. The shot depicting the "No Trespassing" sign beyond which is an unearthly castle shrouded in shadow–mystery is a single example of the process (the film ends with the same shot and theme again appears pictorially). Movement becomes important as the camera moves up over the sign, past the fence designed to ward off intruders and moves close and into the house while at the same time passing Xanadu's menagerie, representational perhaps of Kane's search for animal involvement, relationships which he is unable to attain. The audience, by means of the subjective moving camera technique, is taken into Kane's life at the moment of his death as the dying word "Rosebud" is uttered. The death room scene, as is a great deal of the film, is encompassed by shadows which obscure and define objects and persons. Kane is shown as a silhouette at one point and as a partial personality with half of a revealed face at another. We see him as he lies in bed from an extremely low angle, a reminder that even as a prostrate death-figure he is an overpowering presence and personality. When he drops the glass bowl which symbolizes his childhood, a nurse rushes to his aid and the pictorial effect is that of the distortion present in a fish-eye lens and in a Christmas tree bulb. A further sense of unreality and mystery occurs here as the point of view shifts from that of the voyeur–audience to that of the dying man.

In this one scene by means of angle, movement, lighting, and composition we are shown pictorially themes to be developed in the film. From this eerie, mysterious environment with its many abstract clues we are thrust into a completely different context by means of shock effects and a blaring announcer's voice (a la Westbrook Van Voorhis) to a newsreel presentation of "News on the March." For the next ten minutes the audience is presented with a documentary version of the life of the man whose death we have just witnessed. The experience is that of a more realistic, readily identifiable form and format when this technique is employed. Welles shows us Kane in a variety of contexts throughout the man's life and uses the devices of hand–held camera (with focus problems), realistic sound (Kane is interviewed and unintelligible speech prevails as well as straight–forward camera angles), and use of stock.
footage. The audience is not sure if what they're seeing is part of a dramatic movie or another March of Time documentary, popular during the era. The forms are identical.

This mini-documentary reveals to the audience as well as to the newsmen in the screening room the public Kane from a public perspective. His life's history is flashed on the screen for ten minutes and the casual viewer is left with the impression that all the secrets of the man which are important are revealed on the screen. Welles uses the documentary style to show us one point-of-view of the man, that of the objective newsreel camera. The newsreel technique and the use of form becomes a sixth character to provide insight into Kane's life.

The next scene involves a projector stopping (the man, afterall, has expired in the same way) in a projection booth. The sound and picture audibly and visually slow and become distorted, finally expiring completely. The room itself is a maze of distinct shadows formed by a single intense light from the projection booth. As the newsmen discuss what they have seen, their faces are never distinct. They are anonymous men who are striving to lay open completely the life of a man who for for his anonymity in his later years. They talk at the same time, their own messages unclear until finally one leader dominates the conversation. Once again we have an example of how sound utilization yields mystery and confusion to the viewer. Throughout the remainder of the film the viewer never really leaves the factor of contradiction, clash, confusion, and mystery, all of which are present in this initial briefing session, thematically provided by form.

A short film by Robert Enrico, An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge, based on the Ambrose Bierce short story provides the same kind of thematic linking present in Citizen Kane. As a man is to be hanged for a crime committed in the Civil War, once again the camera as subjective viewer slowly moves toward the scene of the action, a bridge guarded by Northern soldiers. The film tricks the audience into believing that when the Southerner is hanged, the rope breaks, plunging him to the depths of the river below. What then ensues during the next fifteen minutes is the man's frantic escape from the bottom of the river, and the swim to freedom amidst the rifle fire of the army. The audience is involved in the man's plight and empathizes psychologically without having had any previous knowledge of the person or even his crime. We follow him down the river, through a wooded area consisting of an abstract long road providing a symmetrical design for the trees flashing by him. As a brass gate swings open at the road's end the man sees his wife and they run toward each other. When they touch he grasps his neck and the scene, by means of a violent editing shift, changes back to the bridge as the man is hanged. Cinematically, we have been victim of an elongated example of trickery, but the theme remains clear.

Enrico forces us to consider the last moment of a man's life, not simply in terms of the cliched notion of "life passing before his eyes" but rather in a transcendent appreciation of every moment, every person, and nature in particular. When the camera angle is subjective and we see the bound feet standing on the plank, the man looking down to the river, we expect an imminent death. Point of view and camera angle prepare us for the fate. When the rope breaks and the man plunges to the bottom of the river still
bound and gagged, sound is an important element. We hear bubble sounds when the struggle to flee his bonds takes place. After what seems an eternity, with the possibility of drowning always present (actual screen time elapsed is about two minutes), he makes it to the surface. As he bursts through into the life-providing environment of oxygen the screen sound is a large gasp. Metaphorically, he is given a second chance at living and appreciation. A song follows as the man looks around him with new insight as to what living means to him. The song, "A Living Man, I Want to be a Living Man," complements close-ups of leaves and insects as time momentarily stands still. The Southerner is brought back to realize his predicament as we hear the Northern commander barking orders, but sound and picture are in slow motion. Gradually his garbled language achieves realistic speed and clarity, and the flight begins. Form becomes the theme.

The elements of picture composition are also significant. We see a road which never ends and has only fantasy at either end. We participate in movement when the camera moves constantly in, around, and with the protagonist. All are important to the notion of fleeing, living, and finally expiring. Image becomes thematically important as the man is thrust into a "new-life" environment where the presence and sounds of insects and nature in general, all of which were previously alien to him are now a part of him. Water and his ritualistic bathing provides the baptismal effect necessary for this new life. The camera must also take the plunge in order to provide the image. The image of the man's wife, the southern plantation, and the way life was (and still could be) are all shown the viewer by means of flashback. The river and road as journey metaphor are other considerations.

But the technique of editing dominates. By editing we have expanded a half-second of real time to fifteen minutes or so of screen time. Subject movement is slowed down as is time, all to achieve the desired thematic effect. Opening shots showing a moving camera and tree branches obscuring the bridge and the action are edited together to provide a fluid movement and a sense of serenity. As the environment is made clear, shots are painstakingly placed together to provide a graphic sense of the agonizingly slow moments before death. The taking of the prisoner's watch prior to the hanging provides the impetus for a flashback in the prisoner's mind showing his wife and family. Values are forced upon the audience as its own existence is questioned along with the plight of this tragic figure, all made possible through various utilization of form.

By their nature, the auteurs seem more familiar with the uses of film form to enhance the story and become the theme. Bergman in The Seventh Seal provides stunning visual metaphors symbolizing the power of death over man and its omnipresence. Bergman's mastery of filmic image by means of pictorial composition is mastered by none. The death-struggle in The Seventh Seal is shown at the end by the famous stunning picture of the Knight and his entourage being led to their final destiny. The scene is described by a character, Joseph, to his wife, Maria. The picture and dialogue, as well as expressive use of sound, portray the theme involving man's struggle.

Jof points to the dark, retreating sky where summer lightning glitters like silver needles over the horizon.
Jof: I see them, Mia! I see them! Over there against the dark, stormy sky. They are all there. The Smith and Lisor and the Knight and Raval and Jons and Shat. And Death, the severe master, invites them to dance. He tells them to hold each other's hands and then they must tread the device in a long row. And first goes the master with his scythe and hourglass, but Shat dangles at the end with his lyre. They dance away from the dawn and it's a solemn dance toward the dark lands, while the rain washes their faces and cleans the salt of the tears from their cheeks.

He is silent; he lowers his hand.

His son, Mikael, has listened to his words. Now he crawls up to Mia and sits down in her lap.

Mia (smiling): You with your visions and dreams.

The stage convention of dialogue is made real in this scene by means of the image Bergman, the magician, has conjured for Joseph and the audience. The two become inseparable, even though the picture image is the most dominant. All elements lead to Bergman's basic theme of supranatural struggle between man, earthly elements, God, and death.

At another point in the film during the chess game between Death and the Knight, the Knight confesses his game strategy to a priest who has his back turned away from the confessor. Pictorially and metaphorically, the confessional has the appearance of a cell block. When the priest reveals himself to the Knight, we are again confronted with the image of Death and indeed, the confessional does literally turn into a place of imprisonment. The Knight is shown staring in horror at the priest, the shadows of a metal patchwork imprisonment emblazoned across his face.

The French new wave directors as typified by Truffaut, Godard, and Resnais are constantly striving for unique means of achieving form to stress their thematic ideas. Godard's Breathless, with its use of jump-cuts and little human involvement as depicted by extremely long takes and endless tracking shots, takes a seemingly schizophrenic approach to film form. And, of course, it has been argued that this style fits perfectly the existential character which Belmondo portrays. If confusion reigns with regard to film form, what better way to depict today's confusing world? So argue the auteur critics.

When Francois Truffaut uses a freeze frame device at the end of 400 Blows so that the audience is left with a close-up of the young delinquent, he also leaves us with an ambiguous conclusion to his story. Will the boy commit suicide or not? When the moving picture stops, although the still stays with us for a few moments, we are forced once again to consider the boy's life, his dilemma, his slum-Parisian environment, and the meaning of his existence. By means of the compositional device, Truffaut hurries the themes at the audience for one final unforgettable moment as it ponders the tension, confusion, and ambivalence which are portrayed in the final film.

In Alain Resnais' Hiroshima Mon Amour the beginning sequence of abstract designs and textures is not distinguishable as a series of defined objects and
we can only appreciate the design artistry. As the camera pulls back we recognize that we have been looking at the nude bodies of two lovers, one French, the other Japanese. As their true feelings about each other and knowledge of their pasts are thematically obscure as well as kept secret from each other, so are the actual identities of the subjects kept from the audience. Editing becomes a primary creative device as Resnais jumps from the present to the past destruction of World War II in both Nevers, France and Japan. Editing also provides a non-existent relationship between the two main characters, one that remains possibly only in their minds. Thus, as Resnais searches for meaning in relationships and for a reality, the cinema illusion portrays an ambiguity which makes final resolution impossible. Relationships and reality are both confused and obscured through character action as well as through cinema form, providing the final themes.

Of the Italians, Michelangelo Antonioni and Federico Fellini have in many of their films achieved the content-form synthesis. In Antonioni's Red Desert, the main protagonist is not Monica Vitta, the main character, but rather the industrialized society in which she is present, her environment. The red desert appears in her all-pink bedroom as well as with smokestacks and their red poison. Color is of utmost importance to an understanding of the theme, and its use provides clues to the psychological complexities of the heroine.11

The ending of Antonioni's Zabriskie Point is a good example of the theme-form synthesis. However, to say that the process is evident does not in itself ensure positive critical reaction. The final scene is analyzed by critics Ian Cameron and Robin Wood:

Daris becomes a committed revolutionary, and her commitment expresses itself in her mental exploding of the house she sees as inseparably a part of the capitalist-materialist society that has destroyed Mark. The images of explosions are prolonged and reiterated almost beyond endurance, inevitably culminating in slow motion, accompanied by the soothing, languid tinklings of the Pink Floyd as refrigerators burst open and dresses and cereal packets describe graceful parabolas. The point, itself trite, is made many times over so that we forget what it originally was; instead, the images' raison d'etre becomes precisely the kind of empty aesthetic beauty the film makes a show of repudiating. The film itself is, in the last resort, not unlike Rod Taylor's house: as beautiful, superfluous, and dehumanized.12

Critics may disagree as to the merits of the final scene, but the process described is an important one, one that only a few directors pay attention to. I would argue that even if the theme is trite, as suggested here, the film may still be a work of art.

In the United States few directors follow the formula: Stanley Kubrick, Alfred Hitchcock, Orson Welles, and John Ford are among the best examples. When Kubrick deals with technological takeover, whether in Dr. Strangelove or in 2001: A Space Odyssey, a great deal of picture composition is involved with showing abstract designs formed by machines, computers, and H-bomb explosions. In Strangelove, the effect is black comedy (in black and white), Angles shift and sounds bombard the senses to show rifles, soldiers tanks,
coke machines, wheelchairs, and ultimately annihilation. Music at the
film's conclusion is a grim contrapuntal joke as the explosions transpire on
screen. "We will meet again, don't know where, don't know when, but I
know we'll meet again some sunny day."

Music is important also in 2001. Richard Strauss's tone poem dedicated
to the concept of the Nietzschean superman imposes importance on the
film's opening as pictorially we are treated to a shot showing the moon,
earth, and sun. The "Dawn of Man" sequence in which we find apes par-
ticipating in senseless violent acts is interrupted by an unearthly squeeling
pitch as a monolith-slab is revealed and Thus Sprak Zarathustra is repeated.
Another Strauss provides a plausible waltz-like mood when we first see man
many centuries later. The Blue Danube provides poetry to the empty sterility
of the space environment. Sound is important regardless of music. Dialogue
is almost non-existent in the film. Because of this, characterization and the
impact importance of machinery through the use of form, HAL, the computer,
emerges as the most human of all the characters. In an environment which
is antiseptic and vapid, where dehumanization has occurred and mechaniza-
tion prevails, HAL emerges as the central character. By means of the majesty
and emptiness of space and picture composition as well as ballet-like move-
ment of space ships and by the use of powerful images, Kubrick does not
allow us to forget his point. A Howard Johnson environment where waitresses
smile and nod and say nothing of importance has not only invaded the skies
but prevails everywhere. Picture phones enable man to see and talk but not
to communicate. In many ways man is ape-like once again and, having come
full-circle, needs the rebirth which confronts the earth at the film's end.
Kubrick's embryonic image, as it peacefully gazes over mankind and decides
its fate, is soon forgotten, even if not understood by the film audience.

Conclusion

Obviously form integration is not going to occur at every moment in an
example of cinema art; but the form-theme conjunction process should occur
with regularity. When we apply this pseudo-scientific method to an analysis
of a film there are a lot of factors present with the various elements that have
not been discussed. The assumption is that a capable critic will be able to
determine which themes are worthy of consideration, what plot considera-
tions should be made, and what is the nature of picture composition. Obviously
differences in opinion will occur as with all criticism. Thus, even though an
agreement about the mating of form and theme in Zabriskie Point may be achieved,
the question of whether the whole idea is worth it or not is one which will
vary from critic to critic. Consideration such as taste, preference, background,
political beliefs, and stamina must be taken into account.

Critics may argue for generations to come about what film art is, but if
current and past trends continue more consideration to sociological, histori-
cal, and moral impact will be given to film than the question of whether or not
a film exists as an art form.

If the theme-form-content synthesis triangle occurs to any great extent,
I would argue that the film is art, triteness of theme notwithstanding. Worth
cannot be measured on the basis of theme alone when an analysis of cinema
art is made.
FOOTNOTES


5. Nilsen, p. 15.


