

Mauro Giori

“A sensible magazine for intelligent film-goers”.
Notes for a History of Films and Filming (1954-1990)

Everything I learned about sex came from *Films and Filming*,
cinema and my girlfriend.

(Ron Peck, *Strip Jack Naked - Nighthawks II*, 1991)

Anyone who has held a 1970s issue of *Films and Filming* (*F&F*) must have questioned the actual intent of the magazine. Its covers alone would leave no doubts, even amongst the most naive, that the magazine's readers were not just cinema lovers. Although in ways not always striking, from its debut in the 1950s, the magazine displayed its hybrid nature. In the following pages we will try to reconstruct its history through a first formulation of data and hypothesis of an ongoing project.¹

“Special Interests”

F&F began in October 1954 as part of a broader project that Philip Dosse, owner of Hansom Books, had undertaken with magazines specialising in different forms of the arts: after *Dance and Dancers* (from 1950), *Music and Musicians* (from 1952) and *Plays and Players* (from 1953) it was to be the turn of *Books and Bookmen* (from 1955), *Records and Recording* (from 1958) and finally *Art and Artists* (from 1966). Based on the model of its other sister magazines, *F&F* was aimed at being a high profile popular publication, filling a gap in the publishing world. On its debut on the market, *Film* labelled it a magazine suitable for an audience «that finds *Pictuergoer* unsatisfying and *Sight and Sound* unintelligible».²

Dosse had also another goal: reaching a homosexual community which was still suppressed. A very ambitious and challenging project, considering that it began in the years in which the persecution of homosexuals in Great Britain saw a resurgence. Hundreds were arrested with the only possible outcomes being committed to hospitals or prisons. The 1885 Labouchere Amendment, which still prohibited gross indecency between males, allowed for the effective import of contemporary American paranoia that tied together homosexuality, communism and national safety. The little publicised

¹ This article has benefited from the testimonies of Michael Armstrong, David del Valle, Allen Eyles, Paul Hallam, David McGillivray, Ron Peck, John Russell Taylor and Michael Winner, which I collected between 2007 and 2008 through written interviews. They will be cited from now onwards simply as letters to the author.

² Quoted in James Morgan, “Books and Magazines”, *Sight and Sound*, 24:3, January-March 1955, p. 161.

arrest of Alan Turing, who was sentenced to a sort of chemical castration in 1952, is an emblematic example of the grim picture created by a renewed alliance among the political, medical and legal powers.³ Nonetheless, in the next two years, victims such as the actor John Gielgud and Lord Montagu, and above all the irregularities in the trials against the latter, stirred up public opinion and the press, forcing politicians to embark on a series of changes. The first significant step – the assignment of Lord Wolfenden to lead a committee that would later vote in favour of the liberalisation of the law against homosexuality – took place only two months before the first number of *F&F*, which then took advantage of the reformist wave that led, thirteen years later, to the first step in the decriminalisation of homosexuality.⁴

The first magazine editor, Peter Brinson, was the perfect candidate to undertake the cause. He was young and enterprising, progressive, he did not hide his homosexuality and he had been interested in cinema for some time.⁵ It was not an uncommon recruitment in the world of criticism, which has not «defined institutional boundaries»,⁶ and it was repeated a year later, when Brinson was replaced by Peter G. Baker.

With exuberant enterprise, Dosse tried to cope with the financial problems of his venture. He looked for cheap offices, paid his employees when he could⁷ and lived a frugal life sparing no energy in caring for his magazines.⁸ The result of such work was that already from February 1955 *F&F* could claim to be the most sold magazine in the world in its category.⁹ Thus, *F&F* offered its own cultural specificity (though paradoxically still unable to "dare speak its name") in comparison both with the numerous competing film magazines (some of which – such as the American *Films in Review* – were fighting diametrically opposed and vehement battles) and with the still limited gay publications available.¹⁰

Despite the lack of an explicit manifesto, a specificity emerges since the first issues, mostly thanks to the presence of marginal items such as personal ads and advertisements. Until the decriminalisation of homosexuality, these ads,¹¹ accompanied by a legend that allowed the reader to decode their meanings, gave the chance to those who wanted to share their «s.i.» (special interests) to get in touch with

³ See Andrew Hodges, *Alan Turing: The Enigma*, Simon and Schuster, New York 1983.

⁴ On this matter, and on the amendments that would follow the Sexual Offences Act of 1967, See Stephen Jeffery-Poulter, *Peers, Queers and Commons: The Struggle for Gay Law Reform from 1950 to the Present*, Routledge, London 1991.

⁵ See The special edition of *Dance Research* (15:1, Summer 1997) dedicated to him.

⁶ Claudio Bioni, *La critica cinematografica. Metodo, storia e scrittura*, archetipolibri, Bologna 2006, p. 9.

⁷ Allen Eyles, letter to the author.

⁸ «With a face like a fallen cherub and a wonderful air of mischief, he would pretend to be the receptionist when people came to the office and would say, "Mr Dosse isn't here"» (Sally Emerson, "Class Act", *Daily Telegraph*, 15 January 2005).

⁹ Also in the years to come it would remain the «most lucrative of the magazines» by Dosse, «almost to the point of supporting the others» (Michael Armstrong, letter to the author).

¹⁰ At that time Europe was dominated by the French *Arcadie* (also founded in 1954), which started to publish a column on cinema only from 1960.

¹¹ See also Haydon Bridge [David McGillivray], "Seeks Similar", *qx*, n. 490, 30 June 2004.

people with the "same requirements". The request for a picture or precise age limits was so direct that little doubts were left about the aim of these ads that challenged legality. Alongside the abundance of «bachelors»¹² looking for "similar" (coded words that were at the same time irreproachable and yet transparent),¹³ soon even less equivocal expressions made their appearance, such as «companionship» or «permanent friendship». The word "gay" first appeared in 1964, when the ads started to be more numerous and explicit in the search for exact matches in terms of practices, fetishes and roles. Such a word, not yet promoted to full political consciousness, still had a strong protective semantic ambiguity that even women did not disdain. Before long, private professionals, outfits¹⁴, and even producers of pornographic films had their own ads as well. In the early 60s, Dosse advocated the use of ads, boasting the ability to reach, through the whole of his magazines, a pool of 400,000 people.

As for advertising, already in the 50s those by Vince (aka Bill Green), were of particular relevance. Vince was a photographer specialising in pictures of bodybuilders, who had just opened a shop in Soho (near the Marshall Street baths frequented by gay Londoners). His work became a reference point of fashion that would mark the imagination of *swinging London* (fig. 1). Over the years there was an increase in ads which became more and more unequivocal in accord with the magazine's own trend toward becoming increasingly explicit. Thus, advertisements and announcements reflected a hidden community and at the same time made explicit an editorial policy that involved the entire ideological and cultural structure of the magazine, something one must keep in mind when dealing with its film reviews.

EXCLUSIVE Leisure Wear by VINCE

The New Vince 52/6
CAPRI SHIRT Plus 1 6 post.
Adapted from the colourful Please state
garb of the Capri Fisherman chest size

A new and comfortable shirt with broad shoulders, inset breast pocket, ZIPPED side opening and snug hip fitting in Black and White Striped DENIM as illustrated, or in BUTCHER BLUE, FRENCH GREY, NUTMEG, or WHITE.

JEANS SHORTS
Italian style with zip front and two front pockets. In WHITE DRILL, as illus., or in "Faded" Blue DENIM. (State waist size)

25/- Plus 9d. post
NEW 1956 24-page catalogue will be sent on request

Open Mon. Tues. Wed. Fri. 9 to 5.30 p.m. Thurs. 9 to 2 p.m. Sat. 9 to 3 p.m.
VINCE MAN'S SHOP (F & F)
5 Newburgh St., Foubert's Place, Regent St., London, W.1. GChord 3730

Come and see our NEW range of leisure wear

Fig.1 An unknown Sean Connery poses as a model for Vince in an ad that appeared in the April 1956 issue of *F&F*.

¹² Bachelor was such a traditional euphemism to label a gay man that one of the first American magazines dedicated to this audience, founded in 1937, had chosen this term as its title.

¹³ «It wasn't until some months after buying it regularly that I picked up on its subtexts [...]. They certainly indicated there was another world out there to the one I was familiar with in suburban London, an erotic world, but it felt shady and very indistinct. The small ads were the most intriguing, almost without ambiguity» (Ron Peck, letter to the author).

¹⁴ Like, in February 1965, the Savoy in Jermyn Street, one of the oldest Turkish baths in London (Rock Hudson was one of its most frequent visitors).

"Peter Baker is invited to join the Sodomites"

During Baker's editorship, articles varied quite a lot for purpose and value. Many of them were dedicated to young actors of various nationalities, which satisfied Dosse's plans, but Baker also aimed for a parallel increase in quality by commissioning a good number of articles from guest writers outside the editorial staff (directors, producers, writers, critics), who would pay constant attention to diverse areas of the film industry.

The plurality of voices, premised on an ideological unity, offered editors an overall clarity. There were a few mistakes (like the prolonged distrust of Orson Welles), although they were offset by competing views. The hostile reviews of the Pasolini's early works, written by Robin Bean, for example, were balanced out by the Italian correspondent John Francis Lane, one of the most fertile contributors. Lane's political faith was expressed in a clear anticlericalism that persuaded him to be suspicious of the works of his friend Fellini,¹⁵ who was, nonetheless, appreciated by other editors. His nostalgia for neorealism also meant that he would let himself go against anyone who would wander off it (including the so beloved Visconti, not to mention Rossellini and De Sica). Lane was as refined a pen as the magazine needed, but whose intent was also to fight his personal aesthetic and ideological battles.¹⁶

The same can be said for Raymond Durnat, whose articles in the 60s were influenced by different critical approaches without adhering to any in particular. When he started work for *F&F* he was not yet 30 but had been writing about films and the film industry for 10 years already. He was one of the first graduated on this subject and his knowledge of France proved to be essential in following the upheaval of the newborn *Nouvelle Vague*: in the October 1960 issue alone he published, amongst others, an article on Claude Autant-Lara, one on the new French cinema, a review on *Pickpocket* (1959) by Robert Bresson and an interview with François Truffaut. Besides that, he also followed the *Cahiers du cinéma* translating some texts for *F&F*. Durnat compensated for the lack of interest *F&F* had manifested towards the critical revolution the French magazine had launched with the *politique des auteurs*, which claimed the supremacy of the director not only over all the staff involved in the production of films, but also on the work itself.¹⁷

The fact that Durnat influenced the magazine beyond its main informative intent is clearly witnessed by the surprising reactions of his readers. For example, one of them wrote: «People who want this deeply analytical and ultra-serious writing about

¹⁵ For whom he edited the English dubbing of *La dolce vita* (1960), where he also acted a cameo.

¹⁶ For example, when he found himself in the position of having his say about new promising actors, Lane ("Italy's New Curves", *F&F*, 4:6; March 1958, p. 12) was ironic about the promotion of pneumatic women (the "old curves") to the rank of actresses, who were being replaced in their pin up status by the actors of the so called "pink neorealism".

¹⁷ Although hosting a few articles by Andrew Sarris, the main Anglophone supporter of the *politique*, *F&F* kept away from the model of *Cahiers du cinéma*, which found its staunch supporter in another "young" English magazine, *Movie* (founded in 1962).

films can find it elsewhere. I suggest that *F&F* remains a sensible magazine for intelligent film-goers». ¹⁸ Some others complained about the insistence in writing too much about stylistic interpretations and how sexuality was represented. ¹⁹ Durnat not only followed the editorial line, ²⁰ but he pursued it with an even more incisive style compared to the other contributors and above all the editor.

The latter, as if making a portrait of himself, enunciated his own principles in terms of political fairness, which was against any form of sensationalism or preconditions whatsoever. The critic's task was to influence public taste and to promote those films penalised by the market, but he must also be aware of the importance of dirtying his own hands with mainstream films. Baker justified his staunch activism with the fact that films reach «large audiences with ideas about life and how it is lived». The heart of the problem is the way «the message is put over», especially if the aim is to exploit «humanity's weaker instincts», as in the case of «the unhealthy sexuality of the recent flood of X-certificate melodramas from France», or «the sadistic excesses in the more realistic horror subjects». ²¹

Thus, one can understand the hostile review of *Peeping Tom* (1960, by Michael Powell). Baker could not accept the «sordid, unpleasant story», although he liked its style:

Now studies in perversion, being an aspect of life, are not to be denied the film-maker concerned with life... and art. But if we are going to have films about life's darker moments, then we must be very certain about the film-maker's motives. Whether he is genuinely trying to explain life, to interpret it for the benefit of humanity; or whether he is concerned, using whatever artifice at his command, merely to exploit life for what it is worth at the box-office. ²²

It is pretty clear, then, why the «fashionable excursion into lesbianism», alongside other amenities, makes *From Russia With Love* (1963, by Terence Young) «a nasty-minded TV series episode as might well fit an *Avengers* programme». ²³ Baker clearly said that he had «no objection to erotic films», ²⁴ unless they were «badly made» or they were the result of «the hypocrisy in British cinema today».

On such basis, Baker reviewed most of the films about homosexuality that were

¹⁸ Kevin Henriques, "What you think", *F&F*, 8:3, December 1961, p. 5

¹⁹ «I go to the cinema to be entertained, not to have worries about camera angles and philosophic interpretations of isolated scenes in the films shown», Roger L. Peters complained ("Letters", *F&F*, 11:4, January 1965, p. 3), whereas Bill Watts ("What you think", *F&F*, 8:8, May 1962, p. 7) observed: «The way Raymond Durnat writes, if he ever saw Cinderella he would say she had a shoe fetish».

²⁰ Durnat himself wrote ("Helga", *F&F*, 15:1, October 1968, p. 54) that it was «at the instigation of *F&F*» that he had devoted to this theme his first series of articles, which had started in October 1961.

²¹ Peter G. Baker, "Without Fear, Favour... or Pretension", *F&F*, 6:9, June 1960, p. 15

²² Peter G. Baker, "Peeping Tom", *F&F*, 6:8, May 1960, p. 26. It is worth noting that a quotation from *Corydon* by André Gide is used in the prologue.

²³ Peter G. Baker, "From Russia With Love", *F&F*, 10:3, December 1963, p. 27. The TV series *The Avengers* (1961-1969) was already becoming famous thanks to its erotic allusions. See Toby Miller, *The Avengers*, BFI, London 1998, pp. 65-91.

²⁴ Two months earlier, in the column *In bed* (*F&F*, 10:1, October 1963, pp. 7-8), written by the director in person, he had even expressed his curiosity for pornographic film industry.

released while he was editing *F&F*. His tone was often critical, as in the case of *These Special Friendships* (*Les amitiés particulières*, 1964, by Jean Delannoy):

There is, of course, nothing particularly exceptional about adolescents going through a period of homosexuality. What is exceptional is the way succeeding generations of adults react to what is natural. In this instance, the dogmatic, insensitive heavy-handedness of the Catholic Church is probably the most dreadful torture a young mind could endure [...]. But Delannoy seems quite oblivious to all this [...]. So that when the final sinful act is committed by the priest who forces the older boy to betray his friendship [...], we are expected to accept the suicide that results as just one of those professional hazards when a man devoted his life to the service of God. Well I don't accept it. I find this weepy, creaky melodrama as distasteful as though Dixon were suddenly to find himself involved in investigating buggery on Dock Green. And about as important.²⁵

Also significant is the harsh criticism of *Suddenly Last Summer* (1959, by Joseph L. Mankiewicz). «I hate this film», wrote Baker, underlying that, «Many great works of art have been created on the basis of an improbable story line; but no great work of art can ever spring from a deliberate distortion, a calculated perversion of life itself. [...] Mothers the world over may grow to accept a son's homosexuality, but I defy Mr. Williams to produce any mother who will sit on the beach as a decoy duck» for some snotty boys who «when money is forthcoming is certainly not likely to turn into a lynch mob over anything so commonplace as a queer American».²⁶ As in *From Russia With Love*, Baker focused his attention exclusively on the matter of homosexuality, but in this case he stressed with rhetoric the opportunity of his choice with an *excusatio non petita*:

I apologise for writing at length about this aspect of the story. I do so because it is fundamental to everything that happens in the clinic. [...] And it is fundamentally false. If Mr. Williams chooses to be sensational about homosexuality (and heavens knows, it's as old as Man himself), then at least he should find out more about his subject). Sebastian is no better, or no worse, than the men who "do" the European night haunts picking up any good-time girls that please the eye.

Baker used the same criterion to review *Tea and Sympathy* (1956, by Vincente Minelli). It was for him, an «honest drama» whose limit is the representation of the main character more as «slower than the other boys in laying his first girl than as an adolescent who may conceivably grow up to be "different" all his life», so that in the end we «are expected to believe that the adultery of a woman old enough to be his mother, is sufficient to convince the youth that he is not homosexual».²⁷

Such positions should be measured in relation to the opposite case influenced in

²⁵ Peter G. Baker, "Peter Baker at Venice", *F&F*, 11:2, November 1964, pp. 19-20. *Dixon of Dock Green* (1955-1976) was a very popular TV series thanks to the soppy implications of the deeds of the father figure inspector Dixon, whose investigations were limited to ordinary crimes.

²⁶ Peter G. Baker, "Suddenly Last Summer", *F&F*, 6:9, June 1960, p. 21.

²⁷ Peter G. Baker, "Tea and Sympathy", *F&F*, 3:11, August 1957, p. 23.

those years by a strong knowledge of psychiatry, psychoanalysis and the law. With their hegemonic role, these areas not only influenced most of the films regularly distributed, but also criticism itself. The reviewers of that time swung between resolute condemnation and smug pity not only towards films about homosexuality, but also towards homosexuality itself.²⁸ They behaved «like those alienated sociologists who unknowingly repeat the pronouncements of their society», according to the cutting words with which film scholar Christian Metz addressed critics, who had reduced their job to a practice inside the film industry, which only «extends the object, it *idealises* it instead of turning back on to it».²⁹

The difference with the moderate and eclectic (although left-wing oriented) *Sight and Sound* appears when reviewing *A Taste of Honey* (1961, by Tony Richardson). *Sight and Sound* only marked the clear presence of «slant-eyed queer».³⁰ Baker instead wrote that «Murray Melvin plays the homosexual, Geoffrey, with the most accurate observation we have yet seen in Cinema. In one scene he can do more for tolerance of homosexuality than *Victim* does in two hours».³¹

The case of *Victim* (1961, by Basil Dearden) is of particular significance, as it was meant specifically to endorse the reformist debate that was going on in Great Britain.³² If *Sight and Sound* found it too prudent, for example in avoiding «the actors' camp talk or behaviour which would repel or bewilder most audiences»,³³ according to Baker it «is perhaps expecting the Censor – and the public – to accept too much it these men were seen actually to embrace each other; but in its own way there are moments when the film reflect the homosexual's capacity to love and to be loved, with a Spartan intensity that should put many on-the-rocks "normal" marriage to shame».³⁴ Baker, then, elevated *Victim* to the status of «landmark in British Cinema»: «when, as inevitably will happen, the law is changed and a man is no longer penalised for expressing his senses and sensibility as he will, *Victim* will have made its contribution to that understanding. And we'll have to find a new name for

²⁸ For an initial survey see Chon Noriega, "“Something's Missing Here!": Homosexuality and Film Reviews During the Production Code Era, 1934-1962", *Cinema Journal*, 30:1, Autumn 1990, pp. 20-41.

²⁹ Christian Metz, *Le signifiant imaginaire. Psychanalyse et cinéma* (1977), eng. transl. *The Imaginary Signifier*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington 1982, p. 14.

³⁰ George Stonier, "A Taste of Honey", *Sight and Sound*, 30:4, Autumn 1961, p. 196.

³¹ Peter G. Baker, "A Taste of Honey", *F&F*, 8:2, November 1961, p. 22.

³² Presenting the photographic preview, *F&F* annotated: «Under British law an unknown number of homosexuals live in fear of blackmail. Several years ago the Wolfenden Committee recommended a change in the law; but nothing has been done. Now producer Michael Relph and director Basil Dearden have made a film about the "crime" of being different» ([Editorial], "A Plea for Minority...*Victim*", *F&F*, 7:12, September 1961, p. 25).

³³ Terence Kelly, "Victim", *Sight and Sound*, 30:4, Autumn 1961, pp. 198-99.

³⁴ Peter G. Baker, "Victim", *F&F*, 8:1, October 1961, pp. 26 and 28.

“queer”».³⁵

This did not prevent Baker from stressing the aesthetic limits of the film, which today a former reader of the magazine finds strange, «given that in the 1960s and 1970s *F&F* was a “closet” gay magazine».³⁶ But the fact that militant critics separate the aesthetic critical opinion from the “ethical” one (measured on the basis of a precise set of values) is not peculiar: a different emphasis can be given to the two elements. If ethical disapproval can’t be redeemed by aesthetic merits, the contrary is possible. Once the struggle is over, the work maintains its documental value. Thus one of the reviewers of *F&F*, while discussing the merits of *The Killing of Sister George* (1969, Robert Aldrich) a few years later, noted: «It is only surprising that the law, having permitted lesbianism, and yet frowning on male homosexuality, should have allowed *Victim* to have become the major test case in this country. Bold as it was in its time, it now seems surprisingly boring and extremely timid in its tentative approaches to its subject».³⁷

Discrepancies caused by the time between previews and the appearance of reviewers’ appraisals were frequent. For example, a few months after the decriminalisation of homosexuality, *F&F* announced the release of some films that would promise «a much more objective view of life, accepting that homosexuality is no more of a disease than greed or generosity and maybe far less socially disruptive than adultery» and which would create expectations for a «genuine adult treatment in the cinema»:

A generation ago it could never be hinted at. Then we had the *Tea and Sympathy* era, in which it was a problem to be avoided, and the *Advise and Consent* era, in which only the bad man was queer, and the *Victim* era, in which the good guy had been a homo once, was sorry about it, and hoped he never would be again.³⁸

But later on, Allen Eyles registered the failure of *Reflections in a Golden Eye* (1968, by John Huston),³⁹ the only film among those that had been announced that was actually released.

Likewise, the support of the magazine towards homosexual artists (though not out)

³⁵ A few lines earlier, anticipating a decade of debates on the topic, Baker seemed to make a plea: «anyone who has ever come close to queer society must surely admit it, whatever his or her prejudices, that they are not lacking in a sense of humor (“Gay” is perhaps the most apposite word in the queer’s vocabulary)». He then stressed: «There are, of course, far more homosexuals (and lesbians!) than most people would think, not to count bisexual behaviour and the diseased state of perversion created by frustrations and pressures of society». Baker seemed to anticipate the comments of the reviewer who, in the February 1962 issue of *Films in Review*, defined *Victim* an «undisguised propaganda of homosexuality» coming from a country «where sexual perversion is said to now infect 4 per cent of the population», accusing it to be reticent about the «biological, social and psychological evils resulting from homosexuality».

³⁶ Don Minifie, in Stephen Bourne, *Brief Encounters: Lesbian and Gays in British Cinema 1930-1971*, Cassell, London 1996, p. 247.

³⁷ Chris Jones, “The Killing of Sister George”, *F&F*, 15:9, June 1969, p. 45.

³⁸ [Editorial] “In Bed”, *F&F*, 14:2, November 1967, p. 38

³⁹ See Allen Eyles, “Reflections in a Golden Eye”, *F&F*, 16:8, May 1968, p. 24

didn't mean better reviews, as shown by the harsh criticism of *Suddenly Last Summer*, despite a supportive campaign in favour of Tennessee Williams, to whose films were devoted five articles, several previews and an extract from one of his scripts over just a couple years.

At the same time the magazine paid attention to the audience's reaction too. When reviewing *Tea and Sympathy* Baker doubted «if English audiences (particularly in the non-specialised cinema) have sufficiently shaken off the pall of post-Victorian hypocrisy to be able to accept the homosexual as nature's four-leaf clover».⁴⁰ Ten years later, on the release of *The Detective*, (1968, Gordon Douglas), he noted:

The response of a lot of the people, at least at the local cinema where I saw the film, to many of the more realistic scenes was embarrassed laughter and elbow-nudging giggles. If this is the way that screen's new freedom is going to be greeted then perhaps the audience just isn't ready for it.⁴¹

Censorship remained the most controversial objective of the magazine, especially concerned with the its ability to manipulate screenplays⁴² and to indulge in gender stereotypes,⁴³ influencing the distribution by acting «like a castration clinic».⁴⁴ Baker also stressed this when he spoke out against the cuts imposed on *Sodom and Gomorrah* (1962, Robert Aldrich) in Great Britain, where the «“unspeakable vice” has been taken literally».⁴⁵ The tone was ironic, as one can detect from the subheading: «Peter Baker is invited to join the Sodomites...».

The link between the hostility towards censorship and the interests of the magazine was clearly stated by the publication of an article as early as 1958, with the foreign correspondents' favourable review of *Bundfald* (1957, by Palle Kjærulff-Schmidt, Robert Saaskin) and of *Anders als du und ich §175* (1957, by Veit Harlan):

The British Censor may shortly be asked to make an important decision – whether or not to approve the showing in Britain of films making honest drama of homosexuality, a subject which the British Board of Film Censors has always regarded as taboo unless it has been cloaked with the delicacy of Minnelli's *Tea and Sympathy*, or the obscurity of Hitchcock's *Rope* or Ray's *Rebel Without a Cause*.⁴⁶

⁴⁰ Peter G. Baker, "Tea and Sympathy", p. 23

⁴¹ [Editorial], "In Bed", *F&F*, 15:2, November 1968, p. 33.

⁴² Just like for *Lawrence of Arabia* (1962, by David Lean) where – Baker noted ("Lawrence of Arabia", *F&F*, 9:5, February 1963, p. 32) – an episode is invested with a homophobic meaning that was not present in the autobiography he had taken as his main source.

⁴³ *The Americanisation of Emily* (1964, by Arthur Hiller), vexed Baker (*F&F*, 11:8, May 1965, p. 24) for the way the undressed recruits represented «an essential part of the story, of course, because it shows that Yankee sailors are virile to the man, not a degenerate amongst them, and balances any suspicion of the way the Lt Commander massages his Admiral before bedtime».

⁴⁴ These are the disconsolate words by Chris Jones ("I am Curious-Yellow", *F&F*, 16:1, October 1969, p.43), that stated he could not review *Jag är nyfiken - gul* (1967, by Vilgot Sjöman) as it had been too heavily abridged.

⁴⁵ Peter G. Baker, "Sodom and Gomorrah", *F&F*, 9:3, December 1962, p. 39.

⁴⁶ Denis Duperley, Geoff Donaldson, "Will Britain See These Films?", *F&F*, 4:8, May 1958, p. 31.

Of these films only *Anders als du und ich* was finally released, but only in London by special permit. Baker took this opportunity for a new attack against censorship: «*Anders als du und ich* may be quickly forgotten as a film; but it will for long be remembered as a classic piece of British censorship bigotry».47 Apart from the unfortunate mistake of identifying Germany as the model of a "civilised country",48 his review underlined the limits of a critique based only on content, which could complain about the «generalisation» of the characters, but does not reach the grimmest details of the ideology expressed by the film – influenced by the director's previous experience with Nazi propaganda – through a strongly connotative style, which should also make the viewer reconsider the values that were attributed to simple referential facts.

"Queers and Queering"

In order to reach the readers Dosse was aiming at, *F&F* relied from the start not only on texts but also on suggestive pictures, especially stills or photos from the set. The magazine was very discreet with regard to the private lives of cinema professionals. The picture which, in June 1957, portrayed Dirk Bogarde and Rock Hudson (described as «location companions», in the caption) skimming the pages of a *F&F* issue (fig. 2) was the climax of a (self-)ironic attitude in the magazine: only those who could understand the rumours about the double lives of the two actors could identify them as "the ideal *F&F* readers".



Fig. 2. Dirk Bogarde and Rock Hudson 'Ideal *F&F* readers'

47 P[eter] G. B[aker], "The Third Sex", *F&F*, 5:8, May 1959, p. 23.

48 Baker ignored that the German censorship had not been more indulgent than the English one and that Germany not only still considered homosexuality a crime, but it also had just strengthened the law against it that had taken hundreds of homosexuals to concentration camps. According to this law, then, the survivors could not even ask for compensation: *Anders als du und ich* had been produced in order to exploit the debates surrounding these current events.

More explicit, for obvious reasons, were the pictures chosen for the magazine covers, which somehow dared more than the articles. The cover dedicated to *Becket* (1964, by Peter Glenville), for example, was the perfect compensation for the reviewer's silence about the implied psychoanalytic interpretation of the relationship between Becket and Henry suggested by Jean Anouilh's drama (fig. 3).



Pic 3. The cover dedicated to *Becket* (April 1964)

The photographic apparatus became even more important as *F&F* found itself in the position to take advantage of the relaxation of censorship towards the press which «[b]y the mid 1960s [...] was almost dead in England».⁴⁹ The director Ron Peck remembers that if «the issue with a picture from Sidney Furie's *The Leather Boys* on the cover that had my mother questioning what sort of magazine this was», the cover of the October 1970 issue (fig. 4) dedicated to *Myra Breckinridge* (1970, by Michael Sarne) made him «uncomfortable about going around with the magazine».⁵⁰ This embarrassment could lead to forms of consumption usually associated to other kinds of publications.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Neil Miller, *Out of the Past: Gay and Lesbian History from 1869 to the Present*, Vintage, London 1995, p. 285.

⁵⁰ Ron Peck, letter to the author.

⁵¹ «It was one of the sister magazines of *F&F* that first caught my attention in the 1960s. My school subscribed to *Plays and Players*. [...] I waited [...] for a few days, allowing others to see the magazine, and then I would steal it [...]. *F&F* was harder to find. I would have to take a bus to the city, to Nottingham, about an hour away. I would find it on the shelves; I knew precisely which day of the month it would arrive. But I didn't always buy the first copy I saw. I was too embarrassed; the covers seemed to get more explicit by the month. I would wait till the shop was near empty, look for the friendliest looking assistant, and have the exact change ready to quicken the transaction. I would sigh with relief as I left, hiding the cover. I rushed to find somewhere to pore through its pages, or hid the cover in a newspaper and enjoyed its pages on the bus journey home» (Paul Hallam, letter to the author).

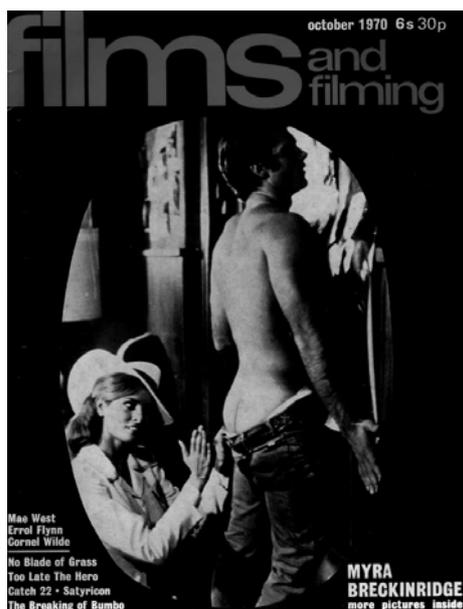


Fig. 4. The cover dedicated to *Myra Breckinridge* (October 1970)

In the past, some readers had already expressed their doubts about the new editorial choices of the magazine. Comparing the attention dedicated to the American underground movement (which was revolutionising the representation of Eros in the film industry) with the harsh criticism towards the films starring Doris Day, one reader commented: «Your magazine gives the impression at present that were she to make Lesbian reels [...] you would place her on a level with Garbo. You have already expressed resentment in an editorial about the choice of *Move Over Darling* as Royal Film Performance this year. Perhaps your choice would have been *Flaming Creatures?*».⁵²

Some readers accused that *F&F* had fallen to the level of the «more sordid sex magazines».⁵³ Bean's reply (he had substituted Baker in October 1968) was surprising for his acrimony, but also for his explicit admission of «depriving the readers of *F&F* of the film industry's historic attraction of titillation – that of using women as a vehicle for frustrated fans».⁵⁴ When another reader asked him to recognise the real intentions of the magazine, Bean was even more explicit: «The history of film has centred on love (i.e. Sex), humour, crime and violence – because like books mirror real life. We admit to missing out on female nakedness (semi or otherwise) but to competition from other film magazines in that genre makes it pointless to us to imitate».⁵⁵ The veiled reference to the *Continental Film Review*, which used to titillate its heterosexual readers just as *F&F* had its homosexual ones, seemed to be a rather spurious excuse in a market no longer inhibited by censorship and where the

⁵² Ian Harries, "Letters", *F&F*, 10:7, April 1964, p. 5

⁵³ P.M. Eavis, "Letters", *F&F*, 17:10, July 1971, p. 4.

⁵⁴ Ed. [Robin Bean], "Letters", *F&F*, 17:10, July 1971, p. 4.

⁵⁵ Ed. [Robin Bean], "Letters", *F&F*, 17:11, August 1971, p. 4.

competition of gay oriented magazines was growing in number.⁵⁶

Bean stopped publishing letters of complaint, but he was not hiding the fact that he had received a lot of them,⁵⁷ even as he hid friction with the complaint⁵⁸ and the ironic appraisals published by other magazines. McGillivray remembers: «Colleagues joked (?) that they travelled on public transport with *F&F* hidden inside *The Guardian*. "I don't know why they don't call it *Queers and Queering* and have done with it," grumbled the editor of a smaller circulation magazine».⁵⁹

Besides its obvious commercial appeal, such a photographic revolution is the perfect example of the "return of the repressed" which, according to Andrew Ross, represented the specificity of camp after Stonewall.⁶⁰ Even as camp distorted the text, it also acted as the interpreter of the words, as if were a legitimate form of 'aberrant decoding', for its «free, [...] mischievous and delirious use of texts» which could «discover hidden possibilities and values».⁶¹

In this way, *F&F* let "desire" flow again through a photographic apparatus that exploited the same rhetoric of the film market: the awkward hyperbole (fig. 5); the prurient nude (fig. 4); the allusive slogan (fig. 6); even evoking hot issues (fig. 7). But since these commercial choices were conceived in a marginal subculture, their meaning was also subversive. First of all, they reaffirmed the existence of a neglected audience and of a 'desiring' look that had been removed by the establishment (critics included). Being outcast both from the mainstream cinematic distribution chain and from society, these spectators can only 'use' these texts to reaffirm they very existence

⁵⁶ Ron Peck remembers (letter to the author): «After 1970 I shifted to the smaller magazines like *Movie*, *Monogram* & *Cinema*. *F&F* seemed less substantial after 1970 and if you wanted to look at pictures of men there were the American imported muscle and physique magazines». From 1966 another magazine, similar to *F&F* although dedicated to several forms of arts, was on the market, whereas new movements for the legal recognition of gay rights came into being and would influence magazines that later on would face mass culture with a new criticism.

⁵⁷ The disappearance of *F&F* archives cannot allow us to recuperate what was not published.

⁵⁸ The June 1971 issue, whose cover presented a very allusive montage, was risking the magazine not to be distributed across Ireland and Australia.

⁵⁹ David McGillivray, letter from the author.

⁶⁰ Andrew Ross, "Uses of Camp", *Yale Journal of Criticism*, 2, Autumn 1988. On Camp and its intersection with homosexuality before and after Stonewall, see Fabio Cleto (ed.), *Camp: Queer Aesthetics and the Performing Subject*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999. A very sophisticated form of camp film criticism had already been practiced by Parker Tyler in the 40s (See Greg Taylor, *Artists in the Audience: Cults, Camp, and American Film Criticism*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1999, pp. 49-72). Until then, *F&F* had only alluded to a shared jargon which can be associated to Camp, for example when Baker, in his already mentioned review of *Sodom and Gomorrah*, underlined «that Sodom was ruled by a queen (the female variety)», or when from Cannes he stressed the fact that «Rock Hudson conducted a press conference just as I would have expected Doris Day to have done» (Peter G. Baker, "Cannes '66", *F&F*, 12:11, August 1966, p. 23). This was an even more poisonous joke considering the actor was there to present *Seconds* (1966, by John Frankenheimer), the film he hoped could change his career and turn him into a more "committed" actor after a few comedies with Doris Day. There had been a few references to Camp even before Susan Sontag made it popular in 1964. On the set of *La ricotta* (1963), for example, in front of some «outrageous» apostles «played by four obvious queers», Lane ("Pasolini's Road to Clavity", *F&F*, 9:6, March 1963, p. 68) wondered if «such a brazen casting» could be understood as an example of «high camp» instead of «bad taste».

⁶¹ Umberto Eco, *Lector in fabula* (1979), Bompiani, Milan 1994, p. 59. On camp as "aberrant decoding" see Fabio Cleto, "Queering the Camp", in *Camp*, pp. 1-42.

instead of endorsing the role of a model viewer, because in conceiving it the establishment did not take them in consideration.



Fig. 5. The cover dedicated to *The Beloved* (January 1976)

Fig. 6. The cover of January 1971 *F&F* issue

Fig. 7. *F&F* cover dedicated to *Histoire d'O* (1975)

Secondly, these commercial choices broke through the traditional limitations of one of the most important mechanism of the whole film industry, the star system. Since the star system had been designed to represent a «compulsory heterosexual monogamy»,⁶² these choices sought to unhinge the *gender* stereotypes on which it had been built using female 'icons' and male stars in uninhibited previously unimagined or refused by the establishment. This *modus operandi* was even more incisive when it came to homosexual actors whose "image"⁶³ had been conceived within mainstream concepts of traditional virility for a feminine audience (see Anthony Perkins, Bogarde or Udo Kier), echoing wider social constructions of gender roles. As typical examples we can take into consideration the pictures of Marlon Brando or Alain Delon chosen, with different purposes, by *Sight and Sound* and *F&F* for their covers. The first used sober pictures, whereas the latter chose images that were erotic according to the traditional pin-up, but for a desiring viewer anything but traditional (figs. 8-9).



Fig. 8. Alain Delon on the cover of *Sight & Sound* (Summer 1968)

Fig. 9. Alain Delon on the cover of *F&F* (February 1967)

⁶² Richard Dyer, *Stars*, BFI, London 1998, p. 52.

⁶³ Meant as «a complex configuration of visual, verbal and aural signs» (Richard Dyer, *Stars*, p. 38)

Thirdly, the fact that the magazine could print pictures like these in order to illustrate any topic it was covering proved that, although perhaps secondary in the films that were under review, such treatments of sexuality followed a crucial procedure in the film industry. It would seem to demonstrate Bazin's opinion, that «eroticism appears to be a project and a fundamental content»⁶⁴ of cinema itself.

Despite the fact that the picture used by *F&F* on its cover to present *A Clockwork Orange* (1971, by Stanley Kubrick) appears to be less pregnant than the one chosen by *Sight and Sound* (figs. 10-11), it has to be considered as part of a wider project. This is true even when the picture chosen was almost off the subject, because it nonetheless simultaneously unmasked and exploited those mechanisms that the film industry made use of. The cover of *F&F* dedicated to *Two Gentlemen Sharing* (1968, by Ted Kotcheff) and the poster of *The Brotherhood* (1968, by Martin Ritt) (figs. 12-13) both decontextualized a kiss that suggested urges that could not be found in the films, as the first one's theme was racism, and the latter's was mafia. In the first picture, however, one can discern a mutual understanding between the editor and the readers; the second one had no reason for such a choice but commercial incentives. It is similarly undeniable that the preview pictures of the film *Le mille e una notte* (*Arabian nights*, 1974, by Pier Paolo Pasolini) represented the film accurately compared to the castigated images chosen by *Film Quarterly*.⁶⁵

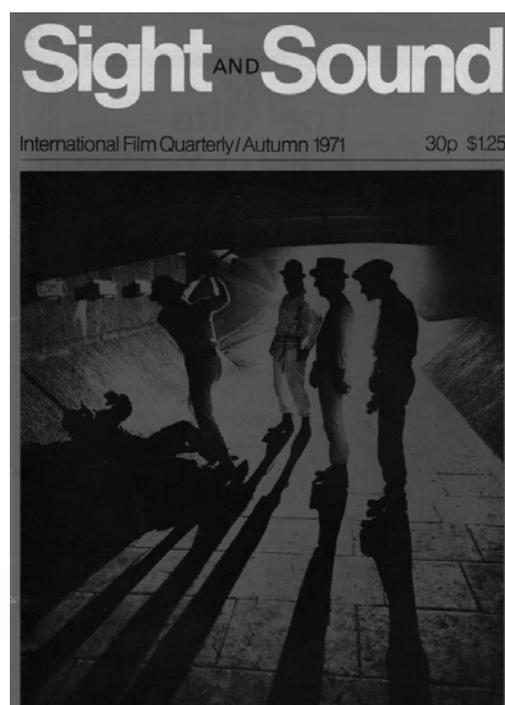
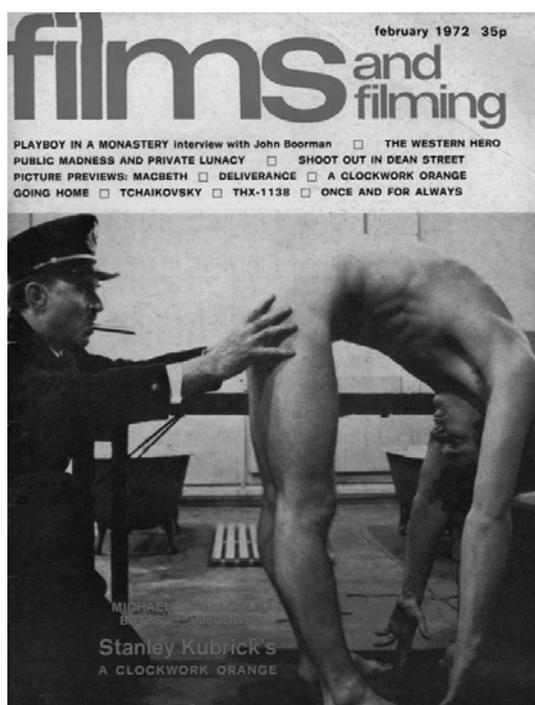


Fig. 10. *F&F* cover (February 1972) dedicated to *A clockwork Orange*

Fig. 11. *Sight & Sound* cover (Autumn 1971) dedicated to *A Clockwork Orange*

⁶⁴ André Bazin, "En marge de l'erotisme au cinéma", *Cahiers du cinéma*, n. 70, April 1957, p. 27.

⁶⁵ See Gideon Bachmann, "Pasolini in Persia: The Shooting of *1001 Nights*", *Film Quarterly*, 17:2, Winter 1973-1974, pp. 25-28.

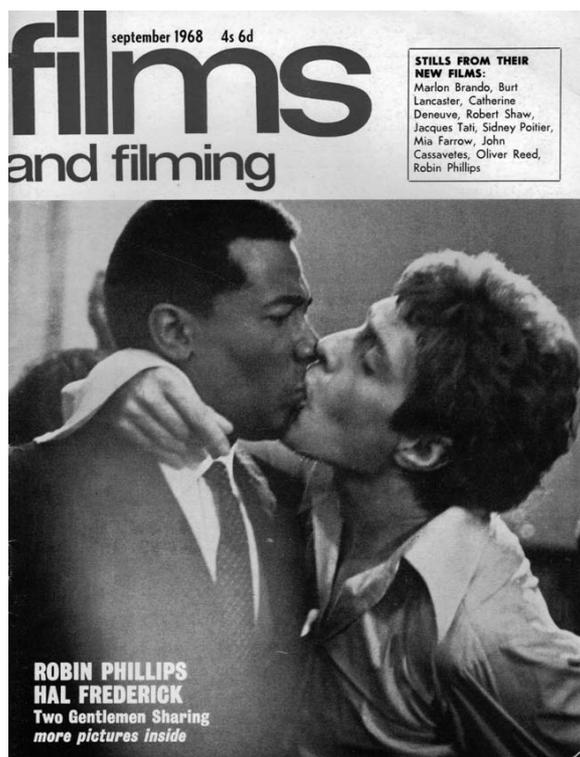


Fig. 12. *F&F* cover (September 1968) dedicated to *Two Gentlemen Sharing*

Fig. 13: The poster of the film *The Brotherhood*

The iconography of *F&F*, far from having a mere ornamental function, represented a sort of a transversal essay which explicated the ideology of the magazine in years when the film industries offered more and more opportunities. The changes in society's habits and new laws allowed the magazine to explore the whole aesthetic and political spectrum of Eros, from pornography to Godard, from the merchandise to the subversion.⁶⁶ The very moment the preferred object of *F&F* became the centre of an aesthetic, cultural and political revolution of society, the magazine started to deal with every kind of new product. It also explained to its readers new reforms, and it kept track of the new student activism, whenever a film proved to be cue for discussion on these topics.

The link between aesthetic liberation and ideological opposition is very clear in an article about the pornography industry that *F&F* reprinted from the *Los Angeles Free Press*, and which was supported by an editorial addressed to the chief of censorship. The author, who left nothing to the imagination while describing the films that were emerging from the underground market, was sure that «all teenagers and many adults, too, would be better human beings and better able to relate to other people if they had access to some of the material in these "erotic" films». The article concluded with a cutting remark, supported by Wilhelm Reich, against the Republicans: «The developing permissiveness toward erotic material is a trend that is feared by the police mentality of the Reagan's, Yorty's and Nixon's precisely because it is one of those

⁶⁶ These were common terms used at that time. See also Mauro Giori, "Quadri piccanti e spettacoli indecentissimi: La ricezione dell'osceno come attrazione", in Maddalena Mazzocut-Mis (ed.), *Estetica della fruizione. Sentimento, giudizio e piacere estetico*, Lupetti, Milano 2008, pp. 267-91.

molecular social changes that makes it impossible for the establishment to maintain political control. Political power by authoritarian figures and sexual repression of the citizen are two phenomena that go hand in hand». ⁶⁷ It all seems like the self-defence of the magazine itself.

The case of Robin Bean

The photographic apparatus was still the strong point of the magazine in the years when Bean was the editor of *F&F*. He was, as a matter of fact, a «avid photographer», ⁶⁸ who could provide the magazine with pictures that had never been published before, as well as personal shoots and rare images. ⁶⁹ Under Bean, *F&F* continued giving voice to underground films that were being ignored by other magazines, which never published any cover either of *Pink Narcissus* (1971, by James Bidgood) or *Sebastiane* (1976, by Derek Jarman), not to mention pictures from the 'porno chic' film *Adam & Yves* (1974, by Peter De Rome).

But Bean was not responsible for the transformation of the *F&F* into *Queers and Queering*. It was more Dosse's choice that Bean supported unwillingly. The two journalists «often had arguments» over magazine covers, because Bean «wanted ones which would simply be striking photographically whereas Phillip [...] was very specifically targeting the gay market». ⁷⁰ It is likely that Bean, who wouldn't admit his being gay, ⁷¹ wanted a more discreet facade. At the same time, it all did little to make him an adequate substitute for Baker. Further, Bean's «extremely complex and secretive person» ⁷² and idiosyncratic behaviour made life difficult for his employees ⁷³ and affected the magazine so much that its decline seemed to be inevitable from the mid-70s.

Nonetheless, *F&F*'s decline was not immediate. On the contrary, the change in the editorship was at first rather smooth, as Bean's role in the magazine had always been very important since 1961, when, despite being just over 20 years of age, he had been

⁶⁷ Art Kunkin, "Pornography Wins in Los Angeles", *F&F*, 16:10, July 1970, p. 61.

⁶⁸ «He also did a large number of private photographic sessions with industry figures including many stars» (Michael Armstrong, letter to the author).

⁶⁹ For example, the preview dedicated to *Fortune and Men's Eye* (1971) in September 1971 was composed with set pictures of Jules Schwerin's version, which had never been released. The film was actually later re-shot by Harvey Hart. Also for a leading work such as *Death in Venice* (1971), there were three previews. For the June 1971 preview, Bean managed to get hold of the set picture of the scene in Munich cemetery that was rejected by Visconti.

⁷⁰ Michael Armstrong, letter to the author.

⁷¹ Michael Winner and Michael Armstrong, letter to the author

⁷² Michael Armstrong, letter to the author.

⁷³ *F&F* «was written and designed entirely by Robin from his flat. He would mainly sleep throughout the day, wake around 5.00 p.m. and work through the night until daylight. The occasions when he would venture out would be to attend a screenings or go to the theatre or cinema, dine, latterly go clubbing and then work. The only time he ever ventured into the office was late at night when it was deserted or for a very occasional and brief meeting with Phillip Dosse» (Michael Armstrong, letter to the author); «Robin was almost never seen at press shows or parties. Very few people were ever allowed into his flat [...]. if the "wrong" people got hold of his number, he changed it. He did this regularly. It was infuriating» (David McGillivray, letter to the author).

appointed assistant editor.⁷⁴ The continuity was guaranteed by a new series by Durgnat on Hitchcock and the usual reportages by Lane. Several articles of some relevance, which were sometimes close to the gender studies that were soon to emerge, further contributed to the magazine's stability as did the psychoanalytic interpretations⁷⁵ that led to lively letters from its readers. The first issues assembled under Bean's editorship seemed to be growing in pages and in readers.

But this was a flash in the pan. On the one hand, it seems as a result of the risks of censorship around mid-1971, *F&F* got back on its feet, at least in part. For a few months even the pictures were soberer, despite a few more explicit issues. The release of *Soldier Blue* (1970, by Ralph Nelson), *Straw Dog* (1970, by Sam Peckinpah), *The Devils* (1971, by Ken Russell) and above all *A Clockwork Orange* – whose discussions among readers lasted more than two years – temporarily diverted attention to violence.

On the other hand, the weak point in the new editorship gradually came to light: Bean was «only interested in visuals»,⁷⁶ and less in the articles, to which he did not commit himself.⁷⁷ They were simply left to be determined by the requirements of the magazine layout⁷⁸. He also commissioned anybody lightly and «would literally print anything, especially if it was by a boy he fancied everything, especially if it came from a guy he liked».⁷⁹ No one could otherwise explain why the reviews (and even the poems) by Clifton Snoding, that many considered flimsy, were published. According to McGillivray, Snoding's review of *Five Easy Peases* (1970, by Bob Rafelson) was «legendary among *F&F* contributors».⁸⁰ Nevertheless, Bean wanted him as assistant editor.

The fact that the magazine gave preference to *Orca* (1977, by Michael Anderson) or *Superman* (1978, by Richard Donner) instead of *Sebastiane* or *Nighthawks* (1978, by Ron Peck, Paul Hallam), and the fact that more attention was given to Sylvester Stallone than to Reiner Werner Fassbinder, are the main evidence of the changes in the agenda of the magazine. Even so, the habitual promotion of homosexual artists (like John Schlesinger) appeared more gratuitous than in the past, not to mention the interest in promoting Bean's close friends.

The magazine became more and more dull (the number of pages was also halved between 1972 and 1974), especially after Durgant left the magazine. The main contributor became Gordon Gow, a prolific journalist who was so well-connected in the film industry that he could provide the magazine with monthly interviews, but was never fully interested in *F&F*'s agenda. When in 1980 Dosse took his life, the

⁷⁴ «Although Peter Baker was the editor of the magazine when I started writing for it, I never met him. Robin Bean seemed to do all the work» (Allen Eyles, letter to the author).

⁷⁵ See Margaret Tarratt, "Monsters from the ID", *F&F*, 17:3, December 1970, pp. 39-42 and 17:4, January 1971, pp. 40-42.

⁷⁶ David McGillivray, letter to the author.

⁷⁷ In the 70s, Bean wrote a few reviews only to promote films directed by close friends of his, like Michael Winner and George P. Cosmatos.

⁷⁸ Allen Eyles (letter to the author) remembers that «he never altered anything» in the articles, «although very occasionally a paragraph of suitable length would disappear to make the text fit the page regardless of what it did to the meaning of what I had written».

⁷⁹ David McGillivray, letter to the author.

⁸⁰ David McGillivray, letter to the author.

magazine, overwhelmed with debts,⁸¹ had to close. Bean, and some contributors, gave life to a new magazine, *Films*, which emulated *F&F* in its contents and even in its design layout, although it used soberer pictures.⁸²

As a consequence, when the following year *F&F* rose from its ashes, most of the editorial staff had already changed (even if Eyles was appointed editor),⁸³ just like its format and its ambitions. Today Eyles remembers: «My priority was to produce a readable middlebrow film magazine of wide appeal. This included some contributions from gay critic friends about gay subjects. However, I made no point of appealing to gay readers especially».⁸⁴

Nonetheless, his choices guaranteed a continuum in the editorial policy (with a new and inoffensive layout) and gave new life to sparkling and incisive reviews, as proven by the harsh criticism towards *Zorro, the Gay Blade* (1981, by Peter Medak) or *Partners* (1982, James Burrows) for the way they focused their attention on outdated stereotypes, or by the unreserved appreciation for *Taxi zum Klo* (1980, by Frank Ripploh) or even *Making Love* (1982, by Arthur Hiller). The contents of the magazine were more substantial, like, for example, the article dedicated to Cronenberg in whose films Martin Sutton acknowledged a new ideological concept of Eros.⁸⁵ Although he could not fully catch the director's radicalism, his article shows analytical skills that were lacking in the last years of Bean's editing.⁸⁶

A new transfer of property was followed by a new change in the editorship of the magazine in 1983. It was now John Russell Taylor's turn, who, although boasting an unequalled curriculum vitae compared to the previous editors chosen by Dosse, and despite being well aware of the economic impact of the gay readers,⁸⁷ reorganised the magazine. He transformed *F&F* into a newsletter whose primitive cultural specificity was by then blurred by. With this new reorganisation the magazine survived only until March 1990, when Richard James, who had been editor for only seven months, put an end to the magazine and announced the merging of *F&F* with *Film Review*.

(Originally published as "Una rivista equilibrata per spettatori intelligenti". *Appunti per una storia di Films and Filming (1954-1990)*", *Paragrafo*, V, 2009, pp. 57-88: see

⁸¹ See David McGillvray, "Goodbye to All That", *F&F*, n. 425, March 1990, p. 5.

⁸² In confirmation of the clashes between Bean and Dosse. It was also clear at this stage how Dosse had tried to protect Bean from himself: his idiosyncrasies were actually «at odds with the expectations placed on him by other publishing houses» (Michael Armstrong, letter to the author). In 1985 *Films* was then absorbed by a revived *F&F*. Left «with no option but to try it on his own», Bean founded *Movie Scene*, of which he was also the owner, but he showed himself to be so «disastrously inadequate» (Michael Armstrong, letter to the author) that the magazine survived only a few months.

⁸³ He had been collaborating with *F&F* for nearly 20 years, and at that time was also editor of *Focus on Film*. Eyles founded the two magazines in order to face the financial limits imposed by the new owner and the consequent lack of commercials, distribution and organisation of the magazine (Allen Eyles, letter to the author).

⁸⁴ Allen Eyles, letter to the author.

⁸⁵ Martin Sutton, "Schlock! Horror! The Films of David Cronenberg", *F&F*, 337, October 1982, pp. 15-21. Sutton also had his say in the critical debate over the director, as per which see Mauro Giori, "Polimorfi ma non perversi. Aspetti euristici del mostruoso nel cinema di David Cronenberg" (2007), in Manuele Bellini (ed.), *L'orrore nelle arti. Prospettive estetiche sull'immaginazione del limite*, Lucisano, Milano 2008, pp. 285-307.

⁸⁶ The same time when Cronenberg was blasted unreservedly: see for example Eric Braun, "The Brood", *F&F*, 26:6, March 1980, pp. 34-35.

⁸⁷ John Russell Taylor, letter to the author.

Mauro Giori, "A sensible magazine for intelligent film-goers", *Paragrafo*, V, 2009

it on the website of Università degli Studi di Bergamo, http://dinamico2.unibg.it/paragrafo/docs/arts/5/Paragrafo%2005_03%20Giori.pdf

English translation by Manuel Belotti, revised by the author. The quotations and the testimonies are in their original version)