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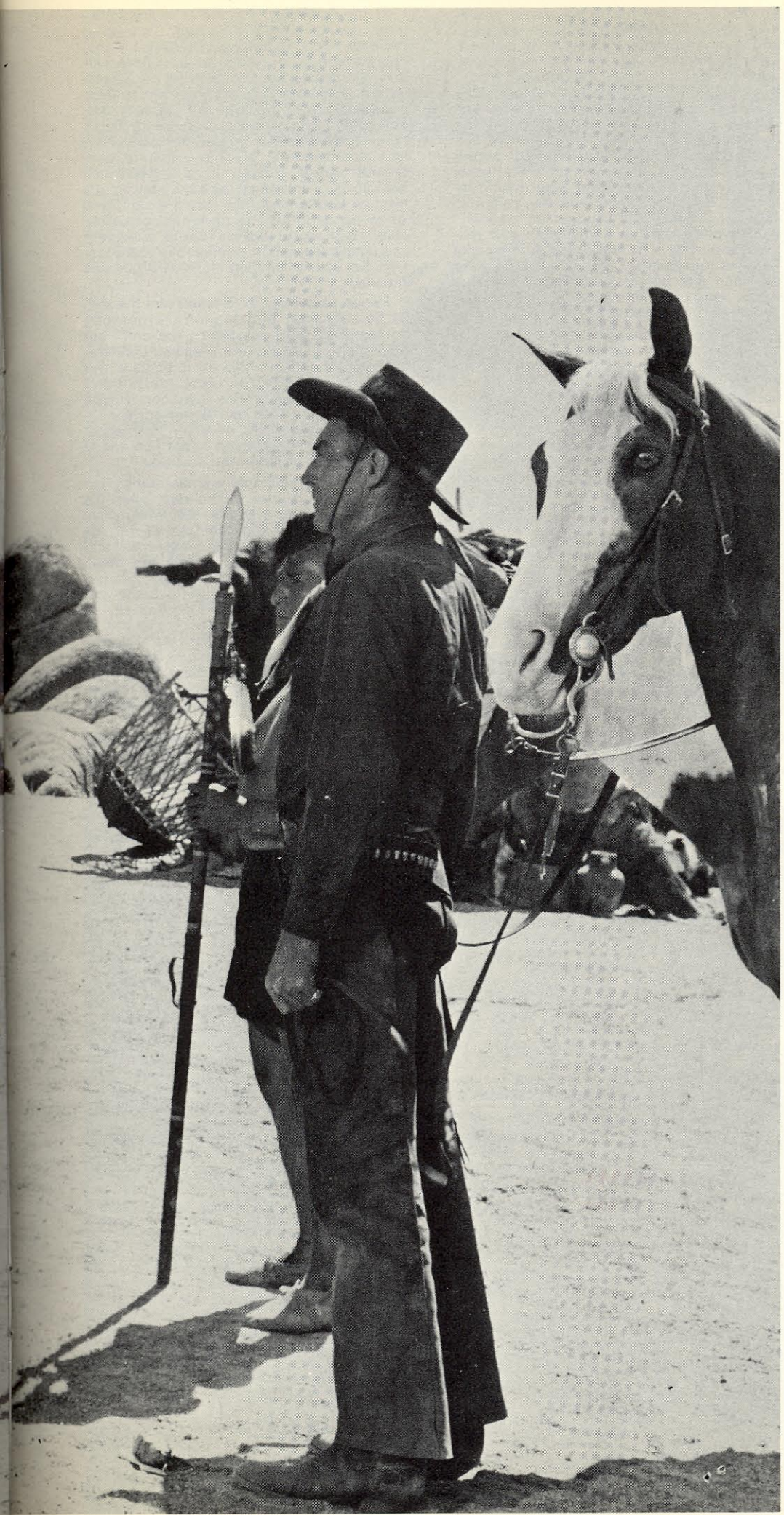


Budd Boetticher: A Case Study in Criticism

by Paul Schrader

Budd Boetticher is a "discovered" director. His films, like those of so many directors, were not lost by time but by the simple volume of motion picture production. A growing critical effort over the last decade, initiated by Andre Bazin in France and Andrew Sarris in America, has rescued him from the obscurity reserved for low-budget film-makers and brought him into a widening circle of critical attention.

But this rescue operation also situated Boetticher within a certain critical method, a method which became synonymous with the films themselves. There is a critical copyright which seems to govern newfound artists; for a certain period of time the discovering critics may exercise unhindered the critical rights over their discovery. Thus, Boetticher was an "auteur" director, and his films were "auteur" films.

But one must be careful not to confuse Boetticher's films with the critical method which brought them into the limelight. Critical methods have trends and histories of their own, and individual artists often get swept up in critical trends not ideally suited to them. Boetticher's films have substantial, universal qualities which surpass the limitations of his particular *auteur,* his personality. His films may, in fact, be better than even Boetticher or his best critics realize.

Boetticher was part of the original American-auteur cache of directors. In the Spring, 1963 *Film Culture* Andrew Sarris thrust literally dozens of neglected film-makers onto a generally complacent critical establishment. Many of the directors Sarris classified already had their own following, and Sarris' own thinking derived from the *auteur* approach formulated by *Le Cahiers du Cinema* six years previously, but, for all practical purposes, it was Sarris who catalyzed American interest in these native directors. Sarris' original blurb on Boetticher was characteristically slight (as compared to Bazin's more substantial analysis of *Seven Men From Now* in 1957), but it did serve to midwife a succession of intelligent English-language criticism about Boetticher. The criticism which resulted from Boetticher's "discovery" was, naturally enough, auteur oriented.

I have no desire to rekindle the tired auteur debate, or even to pass judgment on the effect of auteurism (it's too premature); I simply want to use it as a comparative backdrop to another — and I think preferable — critical method with which to analyze Boetticher's films.

The auteur has meant many things in theory, but in practice it has usually meant a rather amiable combination of biographical and psychological criticism. Sarris constantly held up the test of "personality" to a director, and the criteria he applied to a film were designed to reveal the personality behind it. He often pinpointed the unique, individual or idiosyncratic aspects of *mise en scene* which betrayed the director's personality. Auteurism's biographical-psychological orientation is most obvious in its excesses—the discussions of Hawks' "masculinity," Lubitsch's "touches," Taslin's "vulgarity," Preminger's "cynicism," or of all forms of "hitchcockery" in general. But even

Opposite: Randolph Scott in the opening scene of *Comanche Station.*

in the best of auteur criticism (which, at present, is the best practicing "school" of critics, the BFI-Cambridge group, Peter Wollen, Jim Kitses, Paddy Wannel, Alan Lovell, Robin Wood, Peter Harcourt) the biographical-psychological bias is present. Although these critics attempt (and to varying degrees, succeed) to place auteurism within the formalist, "textual" critical camp, an important, invaluable task, their criticism is usually, for better or worse, a formalist approach to the psychology of a particular individual. It is simply "excellent" psychological-biographical criticism, as opposed to the "poor" biog-psych criticism many writers associate with auteurism.

The knowledgeable auteur criticism of Boetticher's films has emphasized a central conflict: that of the moral man in an amoral universe. This conflict may be represented by the struggle between hero and villain, man and environment, individual and community, or intent and desire. In each instance a decision for the Right must be made and upheld by determination, intelligence, wit, and, sometimes, force. Jim Kitses in *Horizons West* contends that the heroes and villains are mirror images and that the moral struggle is essentially psychological: true individualism vs. narcissism. To Peter Wollen in an article in *New Left Review* (No. 32) the conflict is primarily environmental: the individual trapped in hostile, conformity-inducing surroundings. Opposed to Kitses, Peter Coonradt in a less substantial work (*Cinema,* IV-4) finds the struggle morally unambiguous: the just man within a moral vacuum.

All this is sound criticism, good criticism. My complaint with the Boetticher biog-psych criticism is not one of accuracy: the personality approach is often completely accurate. Once he gets a director on his psycho-critical couch, Sarris is remarkably adept at extracting the personality from the periphery. And Kitses' work on Boetticher, in particular, is astute and textual.

Instead, my complaint is one of adequacy: is auteurism with its psychological and biographical underpinnings a sufficient critical perspective with which to evaluate Boetticher's films? The most enduring qualities of a work of art are often not locked into the creator's personality, and no amount of auteur probing can reveal them. On the contrary, personality idiosyncrasies may be the most transitory aspects of a work of art. I don't doubt that Boetticher's personality is apparent in his films, but I doubt that a psychoanalysis of that personality, no matter how thorough, will provide the secret to their true worth.

Boetticher's reputation has and will continue to grow, and in time, I think, American critics may come to recognize him as one of the country's best directors, surpassing such presently acclaimed directors as Von Sternberg, Hitchcock, Lubitsch, or Hawks. His films do possess "enduring" qualities, but to fully appreciate and assess them another set of critical principles will have to swing into motion.

2

The central conflict in Boetticher's films discussed by Kitses, Wollen, and Coonradt occurs not only on the individual level, but also on a more fundamental, archetypal level. The opposing force in his films is not only of this world, either psychological or environmental, but also of the other world: the autonomous force which, in Jungian terms, imposes itself on the human consciousness. All art is more or less archetypal (just as, I suppose, all art is more or less Marxistic), but in Boetticher's films the archetypes are overt and functional. Although his characters wear the familiar guise of individualism, in a moment of crisis they function not as individuals, but as archetypes.

The archetypal quality of Boetticher's work places it outside of the exclusive domain of auteur criticism, and situates more within the realm of primitive and archetypal art. The primitive artist, as described by Wilhelm Worringer, is one who "is confused and alarmed by life and seeks refuge from its apparent arbitrariness in the intuitive creation of absolute values." In modern archetypal art the archetypes are less absolute, although nonetheless depersonalized and totemic. Jung's modern archetypes may be dopplegangers (both *anima* and *animus)* and convey moral ambiguity within their archetypal image. But all archetypal art, whether primitive or modern, Wilbur Scott wrote, reflects a "dissatisfaction with the scientific concept of man as, at his highest, rational." Archetypal art stems from magic and religion, and even in its most secular forms still adheres to a vestige of the notion that there are men and objects which can serve as icons, and onlookers can be edified and sanctified by contemplating them.

Boetticher's archetypes are primitive in origin and function and strive, with varying degrees of success, toward the modern and ambiguous. Boetticher's primitivism is most noticeable in his bullfighting films, in which the archetypes function through physical acts rather than moral decisions. Boetticher's westerns with Randolph Scott are more archetypal in modern terms, concentrating on the complexities and ambiguities of the moral decision. These modern qualities may not be exclusively Boetticher's but seem to result from the tension between Boetticher, the primitive director, and Burt Kennedy, the ironic, sophisticated screenwriter. Boetticher's westerns will probably be his more lasting achievement, but to truly appreciate the westerns one must go back to the bullfighting films, and a primitive view of life.

Boetticher has directed three films about bullfighting: *The Bullfighter and the Lady* (1951), *The Magnificent Matador* (1955), and the yet unreleased *Arruza.*

The bullfight has often been compared to the Mass; it is a comparison which separates bullfighting from the popular notions of "sport" and sets it in the tradition of ritual. The matador can be, like the priest, a depersonalized, faceless man who does what no other man can do -- mediate between this world and the next. It is possible for the priest to have a personality, it is even possible for others to be aware of that personality, but he must in the process of ritual function archetypally. It is not important to determine how a priest feels (or even who he is) during the Mass; similarly it may be not important to determine how a matador feels during the bullfight. At his purest each can be a totem to which spectators can respond collectively. As a priest becomes purified he becomes like an icon; as a matador becomes purified he becomes like the statues surrounding Plaza Mexico. It is not surprising that the Mass and the bullfight are often intertwined in Mexican life (and in Boetticher's films); they often are the reverse sides on the same archetypal coin.

The difference between sport and ritual in bullfighting is also the difference between individualistic and archetypal art. Sport is based on individual performance; we admire a "sports star" for his peculiar skills. Ritual is based on form; we respect the archetype because he can embody certain ideals greater than himself. In ritualistic bullfighting, like primitive religion, the spectator appreciates the symbolic form, the conventions of confrontation between man and bull, between human nature and the forces of mystery and death. Bullfighting can be considered as sport, but its oldest, most fundamental affinities are with ritual.

In all of Boetticher's films there is a continuing tension between sport and ritual, individual and icon. This tension, which turns out to be an ironic asset in the Ranown westerns, is an awkward liability in the bullfighting films. The contradiction between these two forms of characterization is at the surface of the bullfighting films, and the quicksilver transitions between individual and icon often strain credibility.

In *The Bullfighter and the Lady* the archetypal quality is called *stature.* The aging matador Manolo Estrada (Gilbert Roland) and his wife Ceilo (Katy Jurado) have stature; the young American producer Chuck Regan (Robert Stack), who aspires to be a bullfighter, does not. Regan is initially presented in human terms, Manolo in archetypal terms. Regan is aggressive, exhibitionistic, inconsiderate; Monolo is mature, contented, serene. Regan is a individualist; Manolo is a formalist. Manolo studies the form of bullfighting, not just the skill, and when he performs, he performs formalistically. He is aware that his task as *el numero uno* entails more than exhibition of individual skill, but also something more universal and ritualistic.

Regan asks Manolo to teach him the skill of bullfighting, and Manolo reluctantly agrees. Regan quickly learns the craft, but gains none of the stature. Regan's bullfighting is an extension of his exhibitionism, and rather than follow the slow, methodical course of an apprentice matador, Regan wants to leap ahead to the big *corrida.* In his first major bullfight, however, he is about to be gored when Manolo saves him and is himself fatally gored in the process.

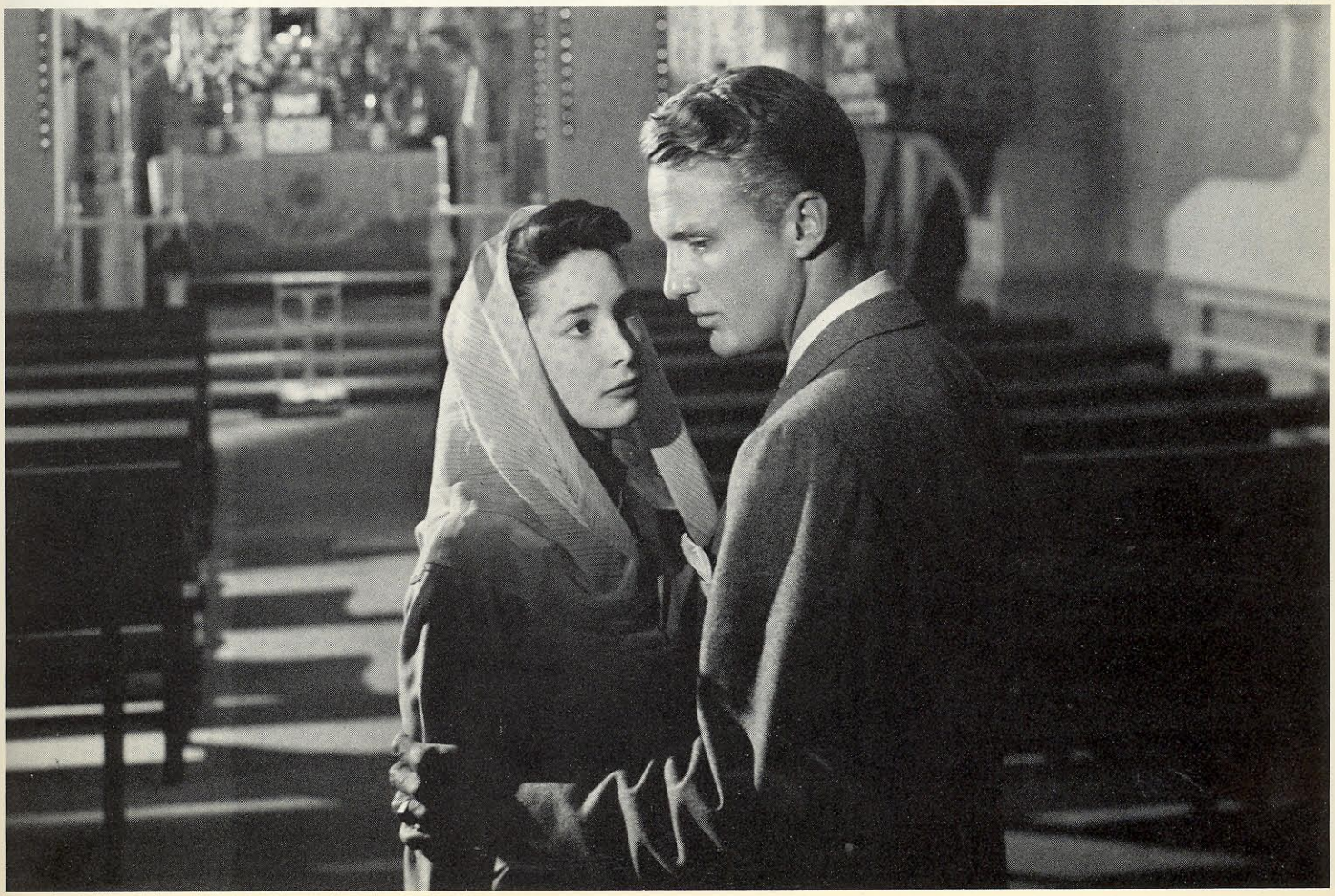
Then the predictable transformation occurs: Regan returns to the ring, wins the fight, and retires a sadder but wiser man. But this transformation occurs not only on the predictable level of melodrama; it also occurs on a more inexplicable level: Regan mysteriously gains stature. Not just maturity, skill, or wisdom, but a archetypal stature of the type Manolo possessed. He takes on Monolo's qualities: he prays to Manolo for strength and when he successfully completes the *pas de morte* he tells the crowd that it was Manolo's hand that guided the cape, not his. He becomes a surrogate for Manolo, who himself was a surrogate for the crowd.

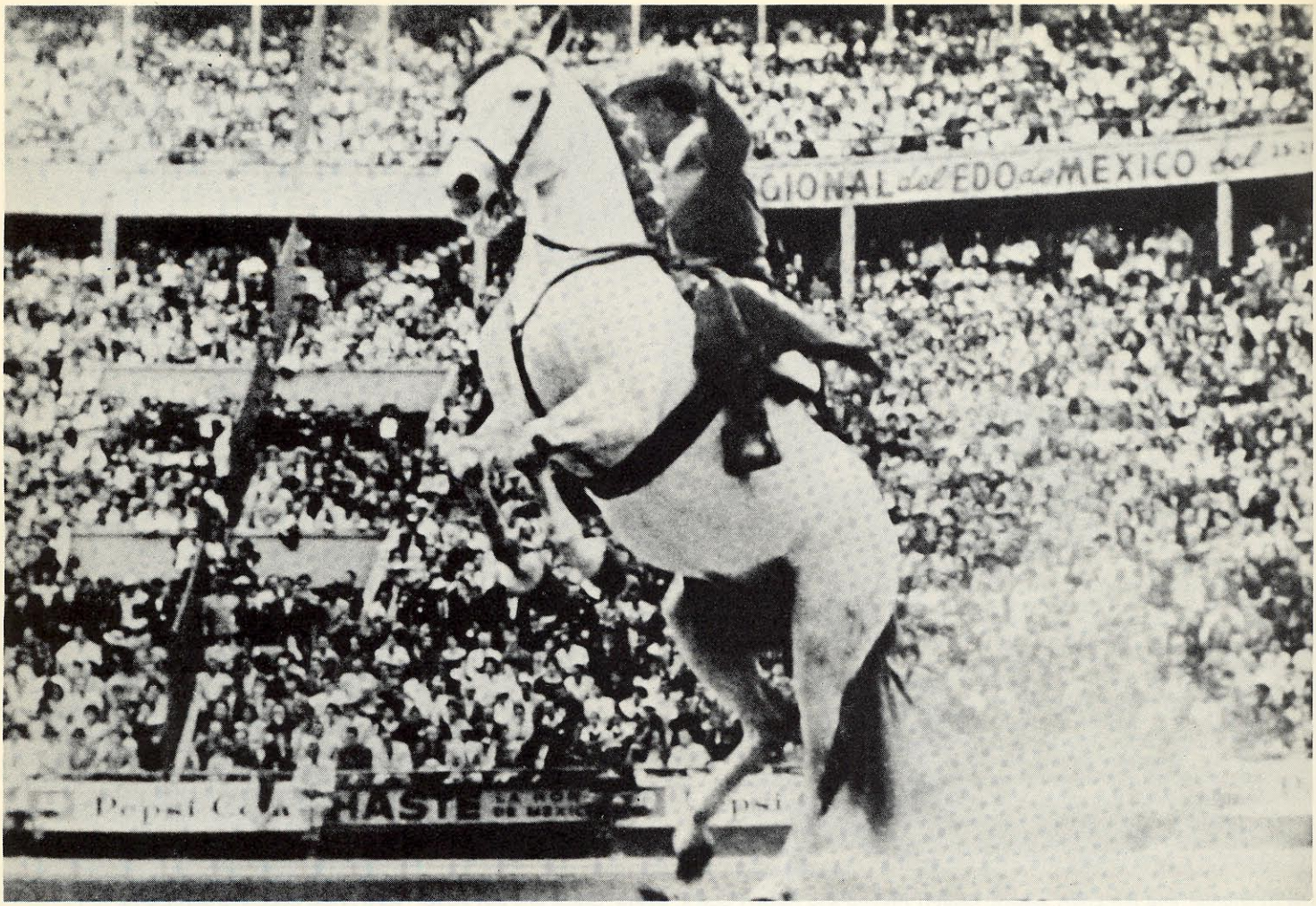
The surprising thing about Regan's transformation is that he accomplishes it in the same manner he caused his downfall: through exhibitionism. Regan caused Manolo's death because he sought to show off, because he had mistaken the skill for the essence of bullfighting and tried to aggrandize himself as a matador. Yet it is through exhibitionism that he also gains stature. He re-enters the ring with a suicidal bent (having been warned by two authorities that this bullfight would mean his death); he seeks to hide from his disgrace in victory or death. Yet once Regan is in the ring, Boetticher justifies his exhibitionism. His exhibitionism becomes the exhibitionism of an archetype: he is permitted to show off because he presents more than himself, because he is Manola come back to life. Exhibitionism is a fault in the individual, but a virtue in the archetype; and Boetticher makes no attempt to unravel this contradiction.

Boetticher's dilemma seems to be this: (1) he sees the matador as a person through the conventional perspective of psychology and individual achievement, (2) he sees the bullfight itself as a ritual, a mysterious primitive act, (3) but he has no convenient mechanism for putting the matador in the bullring, for transforming the individual into an archetype. It is natural that Regan's character flip-flops when he enters the bullring for the final time because it probably flip-flops in Boetticher's mind. Once Regan forgoes his safety and pride, mystically commits himself to the spirit of Manolo, and makes the Pass of Death, he is no longer the old Chuck Regan, but has been transformed into an enduring type, the Matador performing a timeless ritual. It is fitting that *Bullfighter and the Lady* closes with a shot of the bullfighter's icon: one of the statues of Plaza Mexico.

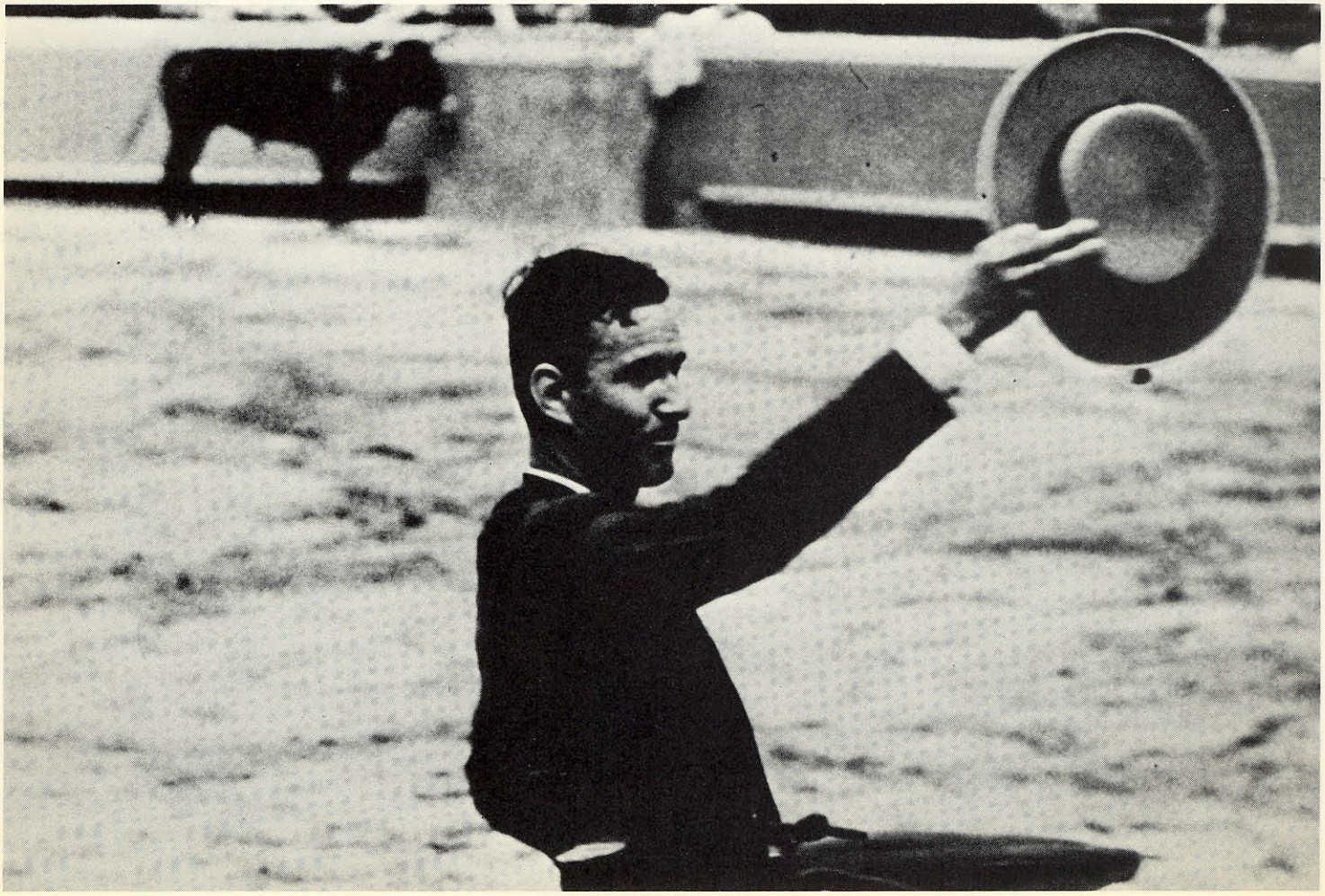
Boetticher's next film about bullfighting, *The Magnificent Matador,* never confronted the latent contradiction in *Bullfighter*: the paradoxical combination of individual and icon in one man. *The Magnificent Matador* centers around a human, psychological

The Bullfighter and the Lady. Above: Gilbert Roland and Robert Stack; below: Stack and Joy Page: "As a priest becomes purified he becomes like an icon; as a matador becomes purified he becomes like the statues surrounding Plaza Mexico. It is not surprising that the Mass and the bullfight are often intertwined in Mexican life (and in Boetticher's films); they often are the reverse sides of the same archetypal coin."





Carlos Arruza in *Arruza:* " '*Arruza* was made,' says Boetticher, 'because my best friend happened to be the best bullfighter in the world.' This contradiction permeates *Arruza:* best friend or best bullfighter."



struggle, the fear of a bullfighter who does not want his son to follow in his steps. It concentrates on the human side of the matador and never seems to catch that magic Boetticher feels about the bullring. Boetticher's dilemma, however, becomes very obvious again in his latest film and magnum opus, *Arruza.*

Arruza is unique in film history; it is a documentary about Boetticher's matador friend, Carlos Arruza, made over a ten-year period from 1956 to Arruza's death in 1966. Not only does the film offer dazzling footage of one of the world's top bullfighters at work, but it also offers the perspective of one artist upon another.

Arruza intermittently follows Arruza's family and friends, but for the most part traces his career from voluntary retirement to comeback success as a *rejoneador* (bullfighter on horseback). As a director, Boetticher does not have any *cinema-verite* scruples; he brazenly intercuts between staged and "live" scenes. In fact, *Arruza* is more the product of its director than most documentaries. On several occasions Arruza complained that Boetticher was forcing him to undertake risks for the sake of the film that he would have ordinarily refused. Before the final triumphant fight at Plaza Mexico, Arruza reportedly told Boetticher that "You're going to get me killed for the sake of your damn film." Throughout the film the viewer is never sure if he is being treated to the "true" Arruza or not.

Arruza was made, says Boetticher, "because my best friend happened to be the best bullfighter in the world." This contradiction permeates *Arruza:* best friend or best bullfighter. The tension between the bullfighter-friend and the bullfighter-archetype is as obvious in *Arruza* as in *The Bullfighter and the Lady.*

On one hand Boetticher sees Arruza as a pal and a longtime companion. He is interested in Carlos' emotions, his personality quirks, his relationship to his family and friends. There are many scenes designed to show the human side of Arruza, scenes with his wife, his children, and his bulls at Pasteje. For the most part these are the "staged" scenes, contrived to demonstrate Arruza's humanity as if it were evidence to be presented in a courtroom. For example, Arruza in close-up looks wistfully over his farmland as the narrator (Anthony Quinn) states, "Arruza was bored." Such a scene fails first of all on the level of audience psychology: Boetticher cannot force audiences to read emotions into inexpressive faces, and the audience in turn reacts hostilely at being asked to. But, more importantly, the scene fails because it misdirects Boetticher's own interest in Arruza. Arruza's most interesting and worthwhile characteristic is not his emotions, and Boetticher seems to know it. These commonplace emotions are too petty and mundane for a character of the size Boetticher has made Arruza. Boetticher's heart does not seem to be in this textbook psychology.

On the other hand, Boetticher sees Arruza as an icon, an archetype in the longstanding ritual of the bullfight. It is in this that Arruza is truly unique, and it is for this, one expects, that Boetticher admires him. The "live" bullfighting scenes are structured formalistically; they are based on the principles of return and repetition. Once in the ring, Arruza is an Everyman in an unchanging morality play. Arruza, whenever he performs, does essentially the same things, makes the same moves and passes, and the viewer assumes the same attitude, that of distant and attentive spectator. The viewer now sees Arruza two-dimensionally; any pretense of a psychological study vanishes. *Arruza* ends the same way it began, and the same way *Bullfighter and the Lady* ends, with a shot of one of the statues surrounding the Plaza Mexico — but this time the statue is of Arruza himself. The film concludes with a freeze-frame of Arruza in action, and the narrator after briefly telling of his senseless death (he was killed in a car crash), states that no man is dead as long as he is remembered. The film then cuts to a concluding, long-angle shot of Arruza's statue. The mood and intent are consciously idolatrous; Arruza has been transformed into an icon, and now stands permanently, heiratically, at the gate of the bullfighter's temple. The shot is in direct contradiction to another of the final scenes, that of Senora Arruza and her children watching Carlos on TV. Arruza, now cast in iron before the Plaza Mexico, has no distinctive personality, no wife or children, and it seems unimportant whether or not he ever did. Nothing becomes Arruza's personality like the losing of it.

Again Boetticher's dilemma is painfully apparent. Boetticher-the-friend sees Carlos as a skillful, talented man with problems and neuroses much like anyone else's. Boetticher-the-spectator sees Arruza as many Mexicans have always intuitively seen the matador, as a primitive symbol of their collective unconscious. As in *Bullfighter* Boetticher can shift his attitude quickly and without warning. Before the final bullfight there is a striking shot taken from within Arruza's car as it enters the Plaza. The point-of-view is Arruza's, and the viewer senses his fear and trepidation. But once inside the bullding the point-of-view becomes that of the spectator, and Arruza himself is part of a larger drama.

3

Budd Boetticher is probably the most Primitive film-maker in American history. Movies were born of the twentieth century, a by-product of capitalism and technology, and although they were often naive, simple-minded and sentimental, they were seldom Primitive. Many films presently considered Primitive are only terse or simplistic. Films have often studied the individual plight, seldom the collective one.

Boetticher is intuitively obsessed with the Primitive dilemma: at what point does the individual become archetypal? It is a theme of considerable intellectual depth (although Boetticher himself may not be a man of intellectual depth) and goes to the origins of art. It is Primitive in the best sense of the word, neither vulgar nor jejune, but heiratic and archetypal.

The remarkable achievement of Boetticher's westerns is that they can make the transition from individual to icon, becoming more modern and ambiguous in the process. Burt Kennedy's screenplays seemed to have provided Boetticher with the bridge he needed. Kennedy's scripts "sophisticate" Boetticher's archetype; they force him into a world filled with irony, dark humor, pessimism and moral ambiguity. The intense pressure of adapting Kennedy's scripts (some of the westerns were made on twelve-day shooting schedules) temporarily forced Boetticher out of his dilemma: Scott became a modern archetype, a man who sensed the difference between individual and icon and could vacillate between them.

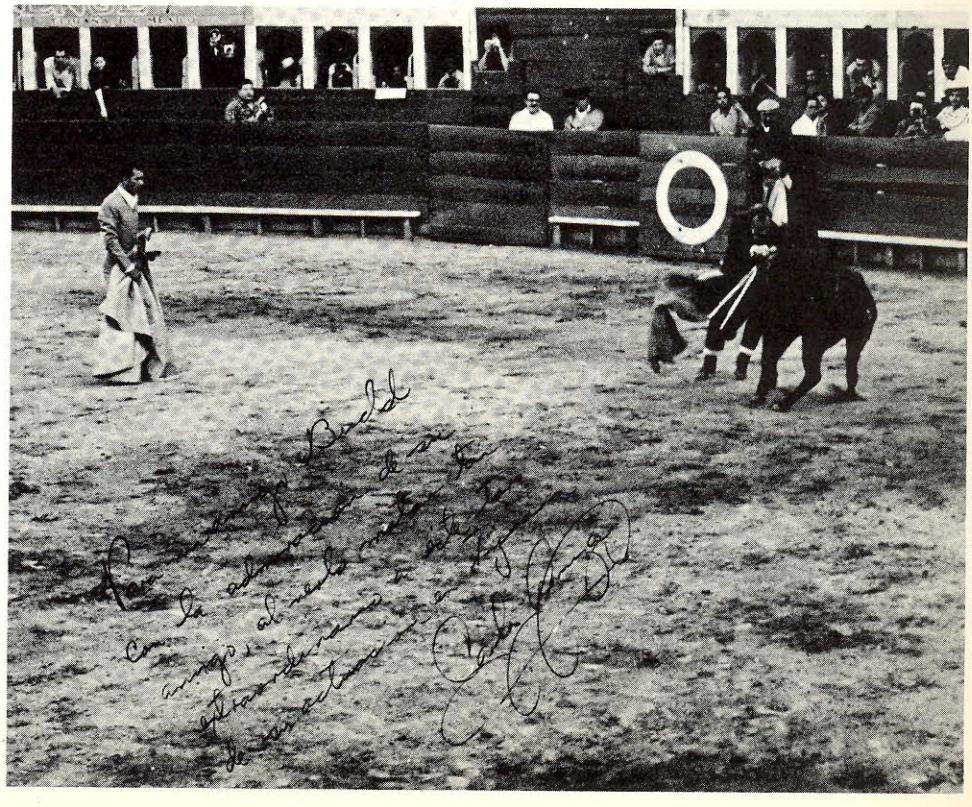
The difference between Arruza and Scott is the difference between a morality based on action (good works) and decision (Grace). In an article on morality plays (to which Boetticher's films have many affinities) Marvin Halverson makes a contrast between Medievel and modern Moralities, and it is a contrast very applicable to Boetticher's bullfighting films and westerns.

"The medieval morality play is based on the belief that man justifies himself before God by his good deeds. Man proves himself worthy of God's acceptance by the multitude of his good works. Thus *Everyman* sets forth the medieval notion that man, assisted by the various instrumentalities of the church, saves himself. However, the experience of twentieth-century man does not substantiate such a view, for he has found the sign NO EXIT posted at the dead-end road of autonomy.

"Thus the difference between modern plays symbolize not only the changes in drama during the intervening centuries but they also embody a contemporary way of understanding life and a different comprehension of Christianity. *Therefore one might properly assert that there are two types of moralities: a morality of works and a morality of grace."*

The concept of Grace is crucial in modern morality films (such as Robert Bresson's *A Condemned Man Escaped)* and it thrusts Boetticher's Primitive archetype into a modern context. In the Ranown westerns Randolph Scott does not save himself by his

Carlos Arruza (left) and Budd Boetticher (right) in a 1955 charity Tijuana bullfight. Boetticher was among the few Americans to bullfight professionally in Mexico. The caption reads: "To my friend Budd with the admiration of your friend in the extraordinary manner in which you killed your bull in our action in Tijuana, Carlos Arruza."



skill as the Primitive, Arruza, had to. Instead, his weapons are intelligence, wit, and, most of all, a thoroughgoing sense of morality. With the exception of *Seven Men from Now,* Scott is not a particularly skillful gunfighter; he often finds himself at the mercy of others. In each western his life is saved by his enemy at least once, and in *Buchanan Rides Alone* he is spared five times. He survives simply because he is Right, just as his foes fail because they are Wrong. There is no earthly reason why Scott should be victorious; in any "normal" course of events he would be dead by the second reel. Time after time he recklessly lays his life on the line for his moral sense of Right, and time after time he is exonerated. He seems sustained and guided by an external source he knows will justify him. Boetticher's Scott is, in a strange way, like Bresson's Joan of Arc, a person who lives by a special call and is not rationally responsive to the dangers of earthly existence.

It is through this mysterious Grace that Scott exists, and it is his decision for Grace that allows him to function archetypally, like a horseback Everyman. Grace, even in its secular form, is not something a man does like good works, but it is something that is both given to him and something he must choose. The dilemma of the Ranown westerns, like modern morality plays, is not one of works but of grace, not of action but a decision. But the decisions are not easy; they are complex and ambiguous: a man must be aware that Grace exists, know that it is possible for him to make a decision for it, make that decision, and stand by it to the point of death.

In the Ranown cycle the Boetticher-Kennedy characters save or damn themselves through moral decisions. Scott continuously confronts his enemy with the moral question. In *Comanche Station* Richard Rust says of a dead companion, "It ain't his fault. All he knew was the wild side." Scott replies, "A man can cross over any time." And Rust returns, "It ain't that easy, it ain't that easy at all."

"Crossing over" is not a matter of physical action, but of moral decision. Scott knows that crossing over "ain't easy," but he also knows that it can be done, and therefore he never vacillates from his moral stance. Grace, this extraordinary power Scott possesses, is available to every character if he will only choose it. Sometimes the villains (who are very much like Scott himself) seem predestined to rejection of this Grace. "I come too far to turn back now," Claude Akin says in *Comanche Station* before he shoots it out with Scott. But Scott rejects moral defeatism; when Richard Boone in *Tall T* states that "Sometimes you don't have a choice," Scott replies, "Don't you?" And rarely — very rarely — it is possible for a villain to cross over and make the decision for the Right, as Pernell Roberts does in *Ride Lonesome*.

Humor, or more accurately, wit is a measure of the "modernity" of the Scott archetype. Manola and Arruza are relatively humorless men; they perceive and execute their task in a straightforward manner. In contrast, Randolph Scott has an endearing, laconic sense of humor. He dislikes confronting an opponent physically, preferring to use word-play and parable. He employs a crackerbarrel Socratic method: questioning, teasing, suggesting. Scott's task is only straightforward in principle; in reality it is ambiguous and circular. Scott not only finds irony in existence, but delights in it. Scott's wit is a defense mechanism: he knows that if he is patient time will justify his virtue, and irony provides the necessary distance so that he can be patient and wait for events to take their inevitable course. Virtue personified in an expedient world is an *ironic* situation, and Scott's irony allows him to exist in the world.

Scott's deep irony is unique in Boetticher's films and is probably a by-product of the working relationship with screenwriter

The moral argument: Randolph Scott confronts L. G. Jones *(Buchanan Rides Alone)*, Richard Boone *(Tall T)*, and Claude Akins *(Comanche Station).* "Scott continuously confronts his enemy with the moral question . . . he dislikes confronting an opponent physically, preferring word-play and parable. He employs a crackerbarrel Socratic method: questioning, teasing, suggesting."

***Comanche Station.* Above: Randolph Scott saved from the Indians. "Scott is not a particularly skillful gunfighter; he often finds himself at the mercy of others. In each western his life is saved by his enemies at least once." Below: Richard Rust, Nancy Gates, and Scott. "Kennedy sought to 'play with' the Scott character, leading him into confusing, embarrassing, and demeaning situations. . . . Into these potentially degrading situations comes Boetticher's matador archetype, determined to accomplish his task formalistically, precisely, and succinctly."**

Burt Kennedy. One might hypothesize the Boetticher-Kennedy interaction like this: Kennedy sought to "play with" the Scott character, leading him into confusing, embarrassing, and demeaning situations. The scripts have often led Scott into degrading circumstances designed if not to demean an archetype at least to "humanize" him: in *Tall T* he awkwardly bumps his head, in *Comanche Station* he hobbles about, howling in pain after an ointment is poured on his knee, and in *Decision at Sundown* he learns that his supposedly virtuous wife was not so pure after all. Perhaps Burt Kennedy is not directly responsible for these specific incidents, but this much is true: they are the type of indignities which Kennedy likes to inflict upon the heroes of his later westerns *(The Rounders, The War Wagon, Support Your Local Sheriff),* and they do not occur in Boetticher's bullfighting films which were not scripted by Kennedy. Into each of this potentially demeaning situations comes Boetticher's matador archetype, determined to accomplish his task formalistically, precisely, and succinctly. But he can't; instead, he must avoid the snares Kennedy has laid for him. Out of this Boetticher-Kennedy tension evolves a modern, ironic archetype. Scott gains self-consciousness and insight, seeing the irony and seeming futility of life, yet nonetheless chooses Virtue, becoming a modern archetype — that is, a primitive figure who can exist in a contemporary situation.

Scott's decision for Grace is exemplified by ironic wit because it often takes a sense of irony to accept Grace in a modern world. The emphasis on *decision* in the Ranown Westerns situates them in the modern archetypal tradition: in the bullfighting films, as in *Everyman,* the archetype must only perform the ritual, the good wook, whereas in the westerns, as in contemporary morality plays like Charles William's *Grab and Grace,* the archetype must make the decision in receiving Grace to function archetypally. Randolph Scott can function as a primitive archetype like Aurrza, but he can also function in a much more demanding and rewarding manner, like a modern archetype. Scott can bridge the gap between individual and icon because he knows that the gap is moral, not physical, and that the bridge is made of decision and Grace.

4

The outer shell of this article has been the metaphor of critical method. The ambivalence that Boetticher can have about his characters is like the ambivalence a critic can have about Boetticher. Carlos Arruza may be considered a great exhibitionistic sports star, or he may be considered a faceless archetype; Budd Boetticher may be considered an idiosyncratic director, or he may be considered an archetypal director.

The choices open to Boetticher and his critics may be compared to what Jung called individualization and individuation. Both methods were open to a psychiatrist; both were accurate. Individualization concentrated on the uniqueness of a single personality. Individuation, which Jung favored, searched out the nonidiosyncratic, universal qualities of the human psyche. Individualization sought to discover how men were different; individuation sought to discover how they were alike.

Some artists see the world as an extension of their own personality, and individualization serves them all. Other artists, like Boetticher, integrate their personality with universal, pre-existing archetypes, and individuation best reveals their contribution.

The auteur approach, to the extent that it emphasizes the *uniqueness* of Boetticher's personality, resembles individualization in psychiatry; it seeks out his superficial characteristics. When auteur criticism concentrates on Boetticher's personality it misses the crucial, archetypal qualities of his art. Kitses faults *Arruza* because "its power is diminished by the nature of its fundamentally static hero." An archetypal analysis, however, reveals the stasis is basic to Arruza's character as Boetticher understands it, and that stasis is, in fact, responsible for the power of the film. In describing Boetticher's art as individualistic, Wollen writes, "For individualism, death is an absolute limit which cannot be transcended"; yet the ending of *Arruza* seems to contend just the opposite, that death is precisely the limit which the individual-become-archetype can transcend.

The psychological-biographical critical method bypasses the most enduring qualities of Boetticher's art. Carlos Arruza's most endurable quality was neither his personality nor his emotional depth, but his ability to function archetypally. Budd Boetticher's most endurable quality is neither his "personality" nor his neuroses, but his intuitive need to integrate his personality into archetypal structures.

Boetticher's films have not found wide acceptance in the American critical community. Partially this is beause many mass media reviewers condescending reject "discovered" auteur directors out of hand (Stanley Kauffmann's jab at Boetticher criticism in a review of Don Siegel's *Two Mules for Sister Sara* is a recent example); partially it is because of the limitations of the biographical-psychological method itself — Boetticher's "personality" is certainly less rich than those of many other American directors: Welles, Chaplin, Hitchcock, Hawks, Peckinpah. But primarily it is because audiences and critics have often been slow to appreciate the great intuitive, Primitive art that is all around them. The dilemmas of archetype and Grace are situated in such commonplace conventions in Boetticher's films that many intellectuals cannot recognize them. They search for transcendence in the year 2001, in "Jupiter and beyond," when perhaps the closest thing to an archetypal "transcendence" has occurred in these neglected Randolph Scott westerns.

W. H. Auden, in "For the Time Being," contrasts the two groups of visitors to the manger, the Wise Men who spent an "endless journey" through ideas and ideas to reach the Christ-child, and the Shepherds who came immediately, instinctively to the same place. Other artists have found different metaphors for saying the same thing. In Bresson's *Pickpocket* Michel, after his spiritual "liberation" in prison, says to Jeanne, "How long it has taken me to come to you." In Boetticher's *Ride Lonesome* Pernell Roberts, after he has finally "crossed over" (the only one to ever do so successfully in a Boetticher western), says to Scott, "Funny, how a thing looks one way and turns out to be the other." ★

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