movies...

'Sunday and Cybele' A Poetic 'Lolita'

By Gilberto Ponce-Gullette

The story in Serge Bourguignon's 'Sunday and Cybele' might be thought of as a poetic variation on the Lolita theme. Pierre, an ex-soldier, suffers from insomnia and the obsessive thought of having killed a little girl in war. When he meets Cybele, a twelve-year-old girl, he is attracted to her at once. The girl, neglected by her relatives and finally abandoned by her father in a religious school, grows attached to him as well. Their relation, of an unmistakably erotic origin as it is, acquires poetic overtones, holding the strange fascination of a child's wonderland. The film is touching and at times splendid, but it is often flawed by Mr. Bourguignon's constant striving for technical effect.

Mr. Bourguignon has a painter's sense of visual beauty, and his use of the landscape gives unusual quality to Pierre's and Cybele's wonderland. Henri Decae's photography is outstanding in its views of lakes, leaves, waves on the water, the image of the ex-soldier and the girl reflected from the surface of the lake. In the water effects Mr. Bourguignon is most successful - as in the superb lunch scene, where the camera often behind Pierre, and Cybele's facial expressions are always seeming a trifle too smooth at times, while her facial expression are always moving. Hardy Kruger makes a believable Pierre, and Nicole Courcel is effective in the role of his mistress, Madeleine.

There are some other weaknesses here. The reaction of some of the characters at the end, representing.

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