

Foreign Film

by Kathy Fish

They are watching a movie about a man who cheats on his wife, whom he loves, and is so disconsolate that his wife eventually loses all patience and leaves him. They are at the point in the film where the man considers his many blunders as he walks along a rocky shoreline carrying what looks to be a large vase. The director of the film is Yugoslavian.

They have argued through dinner and through the night and now it's nearly dawn. They have no eyes for subtitles. The musical score unnerves them. It is exactly the sound of an accordion squeezing the life out of a kitten.

The woman rolls off the couch and lies on the floor. The light in the room changes. Through the window, the clouds resemble dove's feathers. The man stretches his legs out. He mutes the television and chuckles. She thinks he muted the television to make sure she would hear him chuckle.

"I'm going out there," she says, pointing. "I'm going to put my boots on and go for a walk."

The disconsolate man's face fills the screen but the couple is no longer watching. The subtitles flash in quick succession.

"And when I get back, I'm taking a shower," she continues. "And you, Laughing Man, you can do whatever you want."

The man in the film stares. The screen is clear of words. His gaze is urgent and equable.

"Are you listening to me?" she asks. She has not gotten up. She has not put on her boots.

"It's all here," he says, tapping his forehead. "It's been archived." He chuckles again, eyes closed.

The room brightens. She stands and hovers over him. He is sleeping. She plays the fingers of one hand and lowers them to his

face. The click and whoosh of the furnace makes her jump. She turns to the television. The disconsolate man has waded into the surf. He cocks the vase back in his palm and heaves it in a wide arc into the sea.

#####

