Case of the murdered allegory

By STEVE THORPE
Thresher Amusements Editor

Somebody should have kicked Freud in the teeth.

Anybody who has ever had to search for deep meaning in any purported work of art will tell you that. The world would be a lot safer place for all types of critics if Freud had spent more time dreaming erotic fantasies than writing about them.

It used to be so simple. When an author wanted to use symbolism, all he did was write an allegory — you know — this character stands for truth, that one for sex, etc., etc.

Complicated Symbolism

But no. Modern drama, along with modern literature now must concern itself with the Oedipal urges of the South African Ubangi as portrayed in a Victorian setting before anybody can call it coherent.

But every once in a while something comes along in the old tradition. Symbolism is simple — allegory returns zombie-like from the past.

Oddly enough, this latest outbreak comes in the form of "The Third Secret" (now playing at the Tower) and with perfect irony, the story is that of the search for the murderer of a psychoanalyst.

Doctor Murdered

Dr. Leo Whitset is dead — the coroner's verdict is suicide. Now one of his patients, a man named Alex, suddenly realizes that this can't happen. If the doctor has committed suicide then there can be no hope left.

No. The doctor must have been murdered, and for his own sanity's sake, he must find the murderer.

Wonderful! Simple symbolism. Beautiful allegory, the doctor is the savior of modern society and — well, we can let you figure it out. Anyhow, it's a good beginning.

A Real Thriller

The suspense is delicious. Slowly the movie builds and in true murder mystery style twists into a surprise ending. It is truly fascinating to watch. It's a real thriller, all sorts of dead-end mysteries are introduced and the plot really thickens.

But this isn't a murder mystery. It's allegory! Isn't it? Alex's search for truth is a crusade which finally culminates in . . . It's a shame we never find out just how the allegory ends, we were too busy watching the mystery.

It really is a pity. Stephen Boyd as Alex really comes across with great feeling, but a few clumsy moralizations and the murkiness of the plot never solve our allegory.

Acting Good

The acting is good, though, the only fault is the plot. For instance, Pamela Franklin (who plays Cathy Whitset, the dead man's daughter) is refreshingly devoid of the "charm" that passes for talent in so many child stars, and the supporting cast, lead by Jack Hawkins, is quite good.

Above all, the photography is brilliant, the movie is a visual work of art.

What a shame this had to cast, led by Jack Hawkins, is happen to a good allegory. But you should at least go for the suspense, even that should be a welcome relief from the Oedipal urges of the Ubangi.

Hither and Tither

The Rice Players are deep in rehearsal this week as tickets go on sale momentarily . . . Houston mourned the loss of the youngest member of its theater society this week as ANTA was interred for a year due to deficiency of money — it's to be fervently hoped that it will return . . . The Alley of course, will be dark next year, so an already bleak prospect in Houston theatre becomes almost intolerable — they close to build their new building . . . Contrarily, Baker College sallies bravely forth into the drama field tonight, admission is free, and "The Lesson" starts at 9.

We hope Lawson Taitte and his cast make a go of it — results can be viewed "in the round" at Baker Commons . . . The Winsor is dark too, seems that "Three Penny Opera" died at birth during the press review — most likely even the manager saw how bad it was . . . For those of you who are still able to watch TV — "The Adams Family" is on Fridays at 7:30 on Channel 13, and is, at present, the best thing to see in Houston, with the notable exception of the Allay, which has "The Silence" by Bergman and Peter Sellers' "I Like Money."