Sights: 'The Pumpkin Eaters'

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To say that "The Pumpkin Eaters" was a good film is perhaps doing it a great injustice—for the fact of the matter is that in spots it was far and away the best thing that Houston has seen in the past year—except for maybe "The Servant."

"The Pumpkin Eaters" is basically a study in human identity—a subject which might, perhaps, discourage the more literal-minded amongst us. However, be that as it may, the movie deals with one woman's struggle for self-identification through reproduction.

"She just sits in a corner and thinks birth" says her husband (Peter Finch), crossly as he explains to a doctor why he's becoming tired of his seven foster children.

Identification Lost

You see, Finch is Ann Bancroft's third husband in the movie, and more and more this gap grows between Bancroft and Finch—until in a last valiant effort to save her marriage, Bancroft submits to an abortion and hysterectomy—thereby losing her means of self-identification.

Things come to a greater point of tension; however, when James Mason (whom most people will never recognize) tells Bancroft that her husband has fathered a child with his wife.

Whether this is true or not is never quite clear—for Finch alternately denies and admits the charge as his wife pursues him on the subject—but one point is made certain—Anne does commit adultery—with her second husband—and this, perhaps, could be construed as the film's greatest irony.

Too 'Tricky'

There will be some who will criticize this film as being a bit too "tricky" on the technical side—but nobody can dispute the fact that Bancroft's spell-binding portrayal of a woman in search of herself and James Mason's razor-sharp perform-