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Document A

May Swenson, "The James Bond Movie", *New and Selected Things Taking Place* (Little Brown and Company, 1978)

The popcorn is greasy, and I forgot to bring a Kleenex. A pill that's a bomb inside the stomach of a man inside

The Embassy blows up. Eructations of flame, luxurious cauliflowers giganticize into motion. The entire 29-ft

5 screen is orange, is crackling flesh and brick bursting, blackening, smithereened. I unwrap a Dentyne and, while

jouncing my teeth in rubber tongue-smarting clove, try with the 2-inch-wide paper to blot butter off my fingers.

10 A bubble-bath, room-sized, in which 14 girls, delectable and sexless, twist-topped Creamy Freezes (their blond,

red, brown, pinkish, lavender or silver wiglets all screwed that high, and varnished), scrub-tickle a lone

male, whose chest has just the right amount and distribution of curly hair. He's nervously pretending to defend

15 his modesty. His crotch, below the waterline, is also below the frame—but unsubmerged all 28 slick foamy boobs.

Their makeup fails to let the girls look naked. Caterpillar lashes, black and thick, lush lips glossed pink like

20 the gum I pop and chew, contact lenses on the eyes that are mostly blue, they're nose-perfect replicas of each other.

I've got most of the grease off and onto this little square of paper. I'm folding it now, making creases with my nails.

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Document B

Tom Englehardt, from "How the Movies Saved My Life: Seeing the World in Black and White (With Subtitles)", November 2011, www.tomdispatch.com

[...] Fortunately for me, geography came to my rescue. My street, was -- no hyperbole here -- unique at that moment. You could have traveled a fair distance in 1950s America, hundreds or possibly thousands of miles, without stumbling upon a movie house dedicated to "foreign films," and yet between Sixth Avenue and Lexington Avenue, in fewer than three and a half city blocks, I had three of them -- the Paris just west of Fifth Avenue, the Plaza by my house, and between Park and Lexington, the Fine Arts.

You would no more have wondered about why they were clustered there than why your parents duked it out each night. And yet how strange that was in a still remarkably white bread and parochial American world. Immigration, remember, had largely been shut down by act of Congress in 1924 (see, for example, the Asian Exclusion Act) and America's doors didn't begin to open again until the early 1950s. In a time when you can get bagels in El Paso and Thai, Japanese, or Mexican food in Anytown, USA, it's hard to remember just how rare the "foreign" in "foreign films" once was. In that earlier era of American fear and hysteria, that word and the dreaded phrase "Communist influence" were linked.

And so, to enter the darkness of one of those theaters and be suddenly transported elsewhere on Earth, to consort with the enemy and immerse yourself in lives that couldn't have seemed more alien (or attractive), under more empathetic circumstances -- well, that was not a common experience. Think of those movie houses not simply as one confused and unhappy teenage boy's escape hatch from the world, but as Star Trekian-style wormholes into previously unsuspected parallel universes that happened to exist on planet Earth.

By the time I was thirteen, the manager of the Plaza had taken a shine to me and was letting me into any movie I cared to see. *A Taste of Honey* (a coming-of-age story about a working-class English girl -- Rita Tushingham with her soulful eyes -- impregnated by a black sailor and cared for by a gay man), *Alain Resnais's Last Year at Marienbad* (a film of unparalleled murkiness, notable for a matchstick game the unnamed characters play that caused a minor cocktail party craze in its day), *Billy Liar* (a chance to fall in love with the young Julie Christie as a free spirit), *Ingmar Bergman's The Virgin Spring* (a medieval tale of rape and revenge) -- it didn't matter. I seldom had the slightest idea what I was walking into, and in that Internet-less world there was no obvious place to find out, nor was there anyone to guide me through those films or tell me what I should think, which couldn't have been more disorienting or glorious.

On any afternoon I might suddenly be French or Russian or -- weirdest of all for a Jewish kid living in New York City -- German. Each film was a shock all its own, a deep dive into some previously unimagined world. If I needed confirmation that these movies were from another universe, it was enough that, in an era of glorious Technicolor, they were still obdurately and inexplicably black

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and white, every one of them. What more evidence did I need that foreigners inhabited another planet?

45 The actors in those films, unlike Hollywood's, existed on a remarkably human scale. Sometimes, they even fought as fiercely and messily as my parents and they had genuinely bad times, worse than anything I had yet imagined. Above all -- a particularly un-American trait in the movies then -- everything did not always end for the best.

50 In fact, however puzzlingly, sometimes those films didn't seem to end at all, at least not in the way I then understood endings. As in the last frozen, agonizing, ecstatic image of a boy's face in Francois Truffaut's *The 400 Blows* (which I didn't see until college), it was easy to imagine that almost anything might happen within moments of such "endings," that life would go on -
55 - which was, for me, completely unexpected at the movies.

60 And don't forget that these films made you work. Except for the British movies, there were always subtitles, exotic in themselves, which made them seem like so many illustrated novels. And here was the strangest thing: that black-and-white world you had to read to decipher had an uncanny ability to suck the color out of Manhattan.

65 And those films offered history lessons capable of turning what I thought I knew upside down. In my American world, for instance, the atomic bomb was everywhere, just not in clearly recognizable form. If you went to the RKO to catch *Them!* or *This Island Earth*, for instance, you could see the bomb and its effects, after a fashion, via fantasies about radioactive mutant monsters and alien superweapons. Still, you could grow up in 1950s America, as I did, without ever learning much or seeing a thing about what two actual atomic bombs had done to Hiroshima and Nagasaki -- unless, that is, your local movie theater happened to show Alain Resnais's 1959 film *Hiroshima Mon Amour* (scripted by
70 the novelist Marguerite Duras) [...]

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Document C

Edward Hopper, "New York Movie" (1939). Oil on canvas (81.9 x 101.9 cm)

