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'Savage Eye'

At Trans-Lux

By **ALTON COOK.**

"The Savage Eye" plunges deeply into the stream of consciousness style of narrative, a form of which moviemakers have been extremely wary.

The principal players infrequently are seen participating in the progress of the story. Plot develops mainly through offscreen dialogue between Conscience and a wretched girl around whom the theme centers.

These exchanges are accompanied on screen by a chaotic panorama of symbolic episodes. The girl's subconscious and conscious imagination wanders over a jumble of Los Angeles scenes, confused at first but gradually falling into a pattern.

We slowly gather that the girl is a divorcee whose life has drifted into emptiness because she lost the man she still loves. Lonely existence has become a round of bourbon, gambling, petty chores and, more often, simply nothing.

Hates Humans.

She loathes all mankind, she screams to herself, "and the touch of human skin makes me sick." Symbolizing this, her mind strays among the seamiest corners of humanity.

Clutching women scramble greedily in a bargain basement. Ugly women writhe in a reducing salon. Blood streams from horrible people in auto accidents. Phony wrestlers stir repulsive reactions from the crowd.

Her aversion to sex is shown in vulgar, cold flauntings of strip teasers. Subconscious

thoughts slip into obscenity, and the picture suggests this with talk and pictures. One of the most shocking sequences is a prolonged session with a faith healer, conjuring his patients into futile hysteria.

Delirium following her own auto crash makes the images wilder than ever. The climax of this section is an extravagant homosexual party.

Her Eye Opens.

Somehow, these ordeals clarify her mind of its bitterness. That is the weakest part of the picture, but some solid incident had to be provided as basis for a finish.

Barbara Baxley slips in and out of eyeshot fleetingly but always expressively. Her Conscience speaks soothingly in the voice of Gary Merrill.

This remarkable film has been in the making for several years by Ben Maddow, Sidney Meyers and Joseph Strick, all men of solid movie reputation, bolstered by multiple screen credits for directing and writing. Unlike so many experimental films, this one has no trace of the amateur touch.

Such a radical departure is sure to stir a variety of violent verdicts. My guess is that it will also stir a hefty crowd to get around to the Trans-Lux 52d St. to see "The Savage Eye."

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"The Savage Eye," with Barbara Baxley, Gary Merrill, Herschel Bernardi, Jean Hidey and Elizabeth Zemach. A Trans-Lux release made by Ben Maddow, Sidney Meyers and Joseph Strick. At the 52d St. Trans-Lux.