

Document Citation

Title	Tales of ordinary madness
Author(s)	Gene Moskowitz
Source	<i>Variety</i>
Date	1981 Sep 09
Type	review
Language	English
Pagination	
No. of Pages	1
Subjects	
Film Subjects	Tales of ordinary madness, Ferreri, Marco, 1982

Tales of Ordinary Madness

(Storie di Ordinaria Follia)

(ITALIAN-COLOR)

Venice, Sept. 8.

23 Giugno, Gini Film release and production. Stars Ben Gazzara, Ornella Muti. Directed by Marco Ferreri. Screenplay, Sergio Amidei, Ferreri, Anthony Fournier, from stories by Charles Bukowski; camera (Eastmancolor), Tonino Delli Colli; editor, Ruggero Mastroianni; music, Philippe Sarde. Reviewed at Venice Film Fest (competing) Sept. 4, '81. Running time: 107 MINS.

Charles Ben Gazzara
Cass Ornella Muti
Blonde Susan Tyrrell
Ex-Wife Tanya Lopert

(English soundtrack)

Marco Ferreri, the anarchically-inclined Italo filmmaker who has delved into the human psyche often in its mainly frustrated, exploited aspects in today's world, seems to have found a kindred spirit in the work of the '60s Yank sub-culture writer-poet Charles Bukowski. Film is a distillation of Ferreri's past themes.

Ben Gazzara, in a knowing characterization of a poet (Charles) searching for the essence of love though primarily self-destructive and half believing in its redemptive powers, is first seen giving a philosophical comic talk in some foreign university on a tour. Going back to a dressing room, he finds a Lolita-like runaway who steals his money when he falls asleep.

He goes back to L.A. to write, drink and keep searching for women in a sort of adventurous series of escapades reminiscent of Henry Miller but not as self-indulgent and sex-for-its-own-sake as the writings of Miller.

The self-destructiveness and the film's indication of pre-permissive days in the U.S. gives a Sixties feel to the film. It may seem scatalogically excessive despite today's outspokenness. Still, it may have some playoff value on its sheer naked look at the anti-hero's adventures compounded by an ex-wife next door and the threat of death if he keeps drinking.

One day a sexy-looking blonde catches his eye in the street and he follows her. He finds her house and goes in to be suddenly devoured by her sexually but then turned over to the police for molesting her. Susan Tyrrell is effective in her sexual quirkiness.

Charles is freed and joins the tramp wino world for a while. Then home again to write and dry out. He also comments on the action along the way off-screen. He meets the beautiful Cass (Ornella Muti), a prostitute, and a rarified erotic relationship ensues. She is somewhat a liar and mythomaniac and despairing of men and the world.

She finally kills herself. Charles' ex-wife, played with harsh resentment by Tanya Lopert, moves away from the house where she was his neighbor and he now has no support at all. Losing Muti drives him back to drink and then sobering up in a beach motel administered to by three old ladies.

A young girl comes into his life and it ends with him perhaps finding some grace again in life and love. Film may find some cult outlets but will need more care for regular outlets. Film outrageously follows a poet's progress. But Charles even alienates a chance to be subsidized and published by a rich man who helps writers and poets he feels have talent.

Self-destructiveness can get a bit wearing, as it sometimes does here. Film has a forthright look at

Charles' almost heroic attempts at finding something in women that will alleviate his need for love. He is not macho Charles treats his women as objects but in a human way on his quest for the absolute.

Ferreri has given this a fine filmic flair and feel but it is too picaresque and indulgent and calls for careful handling for best results.

Ferreri has made films in English before and there is no problem with the film's rhythm on that score. Film could start more interest in the work of Bukowski.

—Mosk.