

1973

Pauline Kael

Mr. President, I have the honor to present as a candidate for an honorary degree PAULINE KAEL, distinguished American Film Critic. Native of California, Pauline Kael majored in philosophy at The University of California, later managed two art film houses in Berkeley. She reviewed films for *The New Republic* in 1966-67 and since 1968 has reviewed films for *The New Yorker*. She was awarded a Guggenheim Grant in 1969. Her film criticism has been collected in four volumes, *I Lost It At The Movies*, *Kiss Kiss Bang Bang*, *Going Steady*, and *Deeper Into Movies*. She also co-authored *The Citizen Kane Book*.

Pauline Kael's criticism is unified by the insight that all art is entertainment but not all entertainment is art, that low-browism sometimes masquerades as high-browism, that often there is a little art in good trash and perhaps more trash than is generally recognized in some of the most acclaimed art movies, and that the enemy is always the commercial, faddish manipulation of human desire.

In her own words:

I don't trust critics who say they care only for the highest and the best; it's an inhuman position, and I don't believe them. I think it's simply their method of exalting themselves. It's not always easy to analyze what is going wrong in movies, what is going right — even if only in small ways — and why. One might think this an exercise in futility, but, ideally, the regular reviewer provides a touchstone for movie lovers — so that they have a basis for checking themselves out — and for all those actively involved in movies. The regular reviewer knows he will not effect a radical transformation of movies, but he may be able to help us keep our bearings. Movies, far more than the traditional arts, are tied to big money. Without a few independent critics there's nothing between the public and the advertisers.

Therefore, on behalf of the Faculty of Kalamazoo College, I recommend that upon PAULINE KAEL be conferred the honorary degree, Doctor of Humane Letters.