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Another derivation—from the pure ethnic documentary of the Flaherty school—emerges as a work of art. Jean-Louis Bertucelli's **Ramparts of Clay**, based on Jean Duvignaud's book of a Tunisian community, *Chebika*, is the story of a 19-year-old girl in a southern Tunisian village, a girl who observes the life and ritual of her community, who reaches for liberation and finally frees herself. It is a near-silent film about silent people who eloquently move through their lives with an inner resolution and self-determination. It emerges as half-legend-half-ballad on film, a stirring glimpse of an alien culture made familiar and meaningful by the relevance of all that occurs.

The film was actually made in Tehouda, Algeria, with only one actress, Leila Schenna, a girl of breathtaking primitive beauty, and one actor, who portrays the city man who employs the men of the village that lies between the salt hills and the desert. All the rest are villagers who go about their living, fulfilling the drama that enters their community when two social workers come for statistics, a camel-borne nomadic clan comes to use the well and, for the village's crisis, the city paymaster of the rock company cuts the men's wages. The sit-down strike that ensues and its ramifications bring the girl's life to a turning point.

This is the rare film that brings the exotic to us in everyday terms that bring empathy. Here ritual animal slaughter or superstitious blood rites neither horrify nor revolt us, so completely are we drawn into the community. The beauty of even the harsh and unrewarding earth, the clustered living, the unspoken communications of the village elders, the questioning and receptive eyes of the young—all are exquisite to experience. *Ramparts of Clay* is a film to absorb and savor.