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Weekend (Week-end), Godard, Jean Luc, 1968

Lotte in italia (Struggle in Italy), Group, Dziga Vertov, 1970

RoGoPaG, Rossellini, Roberto, 1963

Amore e rabbia (Love and anger), Lizzani, Carlo, 1969

Paris vu par... (Six in Paris), Pollet, Jean-Daniel, 1965

Tout va bien, Godard, Jean Luc, 1972

Un film comme les autres (A film like any other), Godard, Jean Luc, 1968

Pierrot le fou, Godard, Jean Luc, 1965

Vivre sa vie (My life to live), Godard, Jean Luc, 1962

Le petit soldat (The little soldier), Godard, Jean Luc, 1960

Une femme est une femme (A woman is a woman), Godard, Jean Luc, 1961

Masculin-féminin, Godard, Jean Luc, 1966

Tous les garçons s'appellent Patrick (All the boys are called Patrick), Godard, Jean Luc, 1957

Loin du Vietnam (Far from Vietnam), Klein, William, 1967

Opération béton, Godard, Jean Luc, 1958

La chinoise (The Chinese girl), Godard, Jean Luc, 1967

Le Nouveau monde, Corneau, Alain, 1995

Le mépris (Contempt), Godard, Jean Luc, 1963

Les carabiniers (The soldiers), Godard, Jean Luc, 1963

Le gai savoir (The joy of learning), Godard, Jean Luc, 1969

One plus one, Godard, Jean Luc, 1968

Cinétracts, Godard, Jean Luc, 1968

Charlotte et son Jules, Godard, Jean Luc, 1959

Pravda (Truth), Godard, Jean Luc, 1970

À bout de souffle (Breathless), Godard, Jean Luc, 1959

Le plus vieux métier du monde (The oldest profession in the world), Indovina, Franco, 1967

Les plus belles escroqueries du monde (Beautiful swindlers), Godard, Jean Luc, 1963

Vent d'est (Wind from the east), Godard, Jean Luc, 1970

GODARD

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ZOETROPE 2

THE FILMS OF JEAN-LUC GODARD

February 9, 1972: TOUS LES GARCONS S'APPELLE PATRICK
(All Boys Are Named Patrick, 1957.)

AU BOUT DE SOUFFLE (Breathless, 1959)

TOUS LES GARCONS.....

Script: Eric Rohmer; Photography: Michel Latouche; Editing: Cécile Décugis; Music: Beethoven; Sound: Jacques Maumont; Producer: Pierre Braunberger; Production: Les Films de la Pléiade. Running time: 21 min. Filmed on location in Paris. Distributed in the U.S. by Pyramid Films.

CAST: Jean-Claude Brialy (Patrick); Nicole Berger (Veronique); Anne Colette (Charlotte).

TOUS LES GARCONS. . ., as Richard Roud has pointed out, owes as much to scenarist Eric Rohmer as it does to Godard: it is very much like one of his moral tales. But in a cafe a man is reading Arts (for which Godard sometimes wrote). The headline is "The French Cinema is Dying Under the Weight of False Legends." Godard has begun!

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AU BOUT DE SOUFFLE

Script: Godard (supposedly based on an idea by François Truffaut); Photography: Raoul Coutard; Camera Operator: Claude Beausoleil; Editing: Cécile Décugis, Lila Herman; Technical counsellor: Claude Chabrol; Music: Martial Solal; Sound: Jacques Maumont; Assistant Director: Pierre Rissient; Producer: Georges de Beauregard; Production de Beauregard/Société Nouvelle de Cinéma/Imperia. Running time: 89 minutes. Shot on location in Paris and Marseilles in August and September 1959. Aspect ratio: 1:1.33. Cost 400,000 New francs. Prix Jean Vigo 1960. Distributed in the U.S. by Contemporary Films.

CAST: Jean-Paul Belmondo (Michel Poiccard alias Laszlo Kovacs); Jean Seberg (Patricia Franchini); Daniel Boulanger (Police Inspector); Jean-Pierre Melville (Parvulesco); Liliane Robin (Minouche); Henri-Jacques Huet (Antonio Berruti); Van Doude (journalist); Claude Mansard (Claudius Mansard); Michel Fabre (plainclothesman); Jean-Luc Godard (informer) Jean Domarchi (a drunk); Richard Balducci (Tolmatchoff); Roger Hanin (Carl Zombach); Jean-Louis Richard (journalist); André S. Labarthe, Jacques Siclier, Michel Mourlet, Jean Douchet, Philippe de Broca, Guido Orlando, Jacques Serguine, Louiguy, Virginie Ullmann, Emile Villion, Jose Benazeraf, Madame Paul, Raymond Ravanbaz.

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Biographical Background:

Godard was born in Paris, December 3, 1930. After secondary school in Switzerland and Paris he studied at the Sorbonne obtaining a Certificat d'Ethnologie, and was at the same time quite involved with the Ciné-club de Quartier Latin, where he met, among others, Jacques Rivette and Eric Rohmer. He founded with them the short-lived Gazette du Cinéma. In January 1952 he began writing for Cahiers du Cinéma which had been founded only eight months earlier. He wrote regularly for Cahiers from 1956 to 1959 and sporadically thereafter.

In 1951 Godard has travelled extensively in North and South America. In 1954 he worked on a dam construction site in Switzerland, where he shot his first film, Operation Beton. He has also written for Arts magazine. Godard sometimes used the pseudonym "Hans Lucas."

Breathless:

BREATHLESS is dedicated to Monogram pictures and is a fitting first episode in Godard's life-long love-hate relationship with American culture and the children of Marx and Coca-Cola. I doubt any other film of that period so well captures the cultural ambience of the times; certainly no other film uses that ambience to make a political or philosophical statement of such grand dimensions. If there is one single theme that unites all the films of Godard and makes them grippingly cogent it is this one: the terrifying internal battle between the urge to contemplation and the urge to action and the (sometimes) paralyzing consequences of that action or inaction, for the filmmaker, it should be noted, as well as for his characters.

For Godard, this theme is specially framed for he knew long before Marshall McLuhan that the central characteristic of our times is the enormous power of popular culture. We cannot act; we can only react, as does Laszlo Kovacs. He has no personality that is not based on culture-heroes; his essence is to imitate Humphrey Bogart. He understands the superficial characteristics of Bogart full well, but he has missed the soul. Compare the morality of The Maltese Falcon or Casablanca with the non-morality of BREATHLESS. When Bogart tells off Mary Astor at the end of the Maltese Falcon she understands and she is hurt; when Belmondo spits out his disgust at Jean Seberg she smiles vaguely and asks: "Qu'est-ce que c'est: Degueulasse?" She doesn't understand; she isn't hurt. People in Godard's film seldom make any kind of human contact; they are paralyzed from the beginning; they may talk about love, about politics, but they seldom make either.

Seen with the benefit of hindsight, BREATHLESS is a catalogue of elements of the Godardian universe: action vs. contemplation, gray city streets, ambivalence towards women, lovelessness, the iconography of words, the power of popular culture, the grotesque distortions of capitalism, the transience (no one has a home); the cafes, the endless talk, the formal -- almost classical -- mise-en-scene, the dependence on dialectical reasoning, the syntax of sound vs. image, the seductive quality of American culture, the strong roots in American film history, the chilling romance with death, the commonness of death -- and on, and on.

"AU BOUT DE SOUFFLE" is better translated "Out of Breath." Godard is out of breath, beaten, at the beginning of his career. The dozen years after BREATHLESS are, for him, a struggle to regain composure.

Jim Monaco
2/72

ZOETROPE 2

THE FILMS OF JEAN-LUC GODARD

February 16: HISTOIRE D'EAU (1958
LE PETIT SOLDAT (1960)

HISTOIRE D'EAU:

Script: Godard; Co-Director: Francois Truffaut; Photography: Michel Latouche; Editing: Godard; Sound: Jacques Maumont; Producer: Pierre Braunberger; Production: Les Films de la Pléiade. Filmed on location in Paris by Truffaut, completed by Godard. Running time: 20 min. originally, 12 min. English version.

CAST: Jean-Claude Brialy, Caroline Dim.

Truffaut had always wanted to make a film about floods. When the opportunity presented itself he found he was stuck. What can you say about a flood? He turned the footage he had shot over to Godard. The question remains: what can you say about a flood?

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LE PETIT SOLDAT:

Script: Godard; Photography: Raoul Coutard; Camera: Michel Latouche; Editing: Agnes Guillemot, Nadine Marquand; Lila Herman; Music: Maurice Leroux; Sound: Jacques Maumont; Assistant Director: Francis Cognany; Producer: Georges deBeauregard; Production: de Beauregard/Société Nouvelle de Cinéma. Filmed on location in Geneva, April-May, 1960. Banned by the French Censor Board and Minister of Information. First shown in Paris in 1963. Running time: 88 minutes. Released in the U.S. by New Yorker Films.

CAST: Michel Subor (Bruno Forestier); Anna Karina (Veronica Dreyer); Henri-Jacques Huet (Jacques); Paul Beauvais (Paul); Laszlo Szabo (Laszlo); Goerges de Beauregard (Activist leader); Jean-Luc Godard (bystander at the Railway station); Gilbert Edard.

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I wanted to show a confused mind in a confused situation. Well, that could be considered wrong, because perhaps one should not have been confused. But that's how it was. My film, in any case, was a kind of auto-critique.

---Godard, quoted in Roud.

Freedom is still the central theme in this, Godard's second film. As in Breathless, the characters aren't quite sure whether happiness is the cause of freedom or the other way round. For Bruno Forestier, as for Michel Poiccard before him, existential freedom grows out of the barrel of a gun. However, if Forestier doesn't exactly have a set of ethics, he does hesitate before he kills and I think this makes him a much more complex--a much more serious--character than Poiccard in Breathless. As a result, LE PETIT SOLDAT is a much more contemplative film than Breathless; it is much closer to that mysterious art known as "real life" and much further away from the, for Godard, very familiar and friendly art of film. In this sense it represents the first step in Godard's program for the purification of the art. Early in the film it is announced that:

The time for action has passed. . . The time for reflection has come.
Godard, out of breath in Breathless, begins at zero in LE PETIT SOLDAT.

2.

The politics of LE PETIT SOLDAT ARE curious is one has an image of Godard as a militant leftest. Bruno, the hero, does, after all, work for the wrong side even if he does change his mind. But I think that as we progress through Godard's various artistic periods it will become clear that, no matter what he professes his own politics to be, his films all share a profound ambivalence. It's true the ambivalence usually reveals itself in questions of action vs. contemplation rather than in matters of political line as in LE PETIT SOLDAT. Nevertheless, it is the intellectual approach to the subject which is of first importance rather than the subject itself and Godard himself has indicated as much. ("My film, in any case, was a kind of auto-critique.")

Bruno, like Michel before him and so many Godardian heroes after him, is betrayed by a woman and by his emotions and this quasi-misogynistic theme will occupy Godard for several more films before he returns to political and social questions. Note, please, that like Michel, Bruno is not so much betrayed by Veronica as by his simplistic image of her. Like Patricia, she is compared to paintings throughout the film and, although she may be alive for us, she is nothing more than a work of art for Bruno. Eventually, (or at any rate he will learn very quickly of his mistake!) Starting with A Woman is a Woman and My Life to Live the political and social position of women becomes a central concern and an important metaphor for Godard. With the benefit of hindsight we can understand that Bruno is not betrayed by Veronica so much as by a society which makes objects of woman (and men, as well.).

There is no program scheduled for next week, February 23rd. The next film is Une Femme est Une Femme on March 1.

Jim Monaco
2/72

ZOETROPE 2

THE FILMS OF JEAN-LUC GODARD

March 1: LA PARESSE (1961)
UNE FEMME EST UNE FEMME (1961)

LA PARESSE (Sloth), sketch in LES SEPT PÉCHÉS CAPITAUX (The Seven Capital Sins).

Script: Jean-Luc Godard; Assistant Director: Marin Karmitz; Photography: Henri Decaë (Dyaliscope); Editing: Jacques Gaillard; Music: Michel Legrand; Sound: Jean-Claude Marchetti and Jean Labissière; Camera: Jean-Paul Schwartz; Production Manager: Jean Lavie; Production: Films Gibe/Franco-London Films/Titanus. Running time: 12 minutes. Distributed in the U.S. by CCM Films. Other episodes: "Anger," Sylvain d'Homme (Script by Eugene Ionesco); "Envy," Edouard Molinaro; "Gluttony," Philippe DeBroca; "Lust," Jacques Demy; "Pride," Roger Vadim; "Greed," Claude Chabrol. Filmed on location in Paris, September 1961.

CAST: Nicole Mirel, Eddie Constantine.

LA PARESSE is easily the best episode of LES SEPT PÉCHÉS CAPITAUX and is phrased by Godard as a comment on all the other deadly sins. As the narrator explains at the end of the sketch, laziness is not so much a sin as an anti-sin, preventing us from enjoying the other sins. Eddie Constantine is famous for his portrayal of "Lemmy Caution" in the series of French films about an American private eye. Godard will use him later in Alphaville.

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UNE FEMME EST UNE FEMME (A Woman Is A Woman).

Script: Godard, based on an idea by Geneviève Cluny; Assistant director: Francis Cognany; Photography: Raoul Coutard (Techniscope--Eastmancolor); Editing: Agnès Guillemot, Lila Herman; Art Director: Bernard Evein; Music: Michel Legrand; Song "Chanson d'Angela" Legrand and Godard; Sound: Guy Villette; Production Manager: Phillippe Dussart; Producer: Georges de Beauregard, Carlo Ponti; Production: Rome-Paris Films. Running time: 84 minutes. Released in the U.S. by Contemporary films. Shot in the Studio Saint-Maurice and on location in Paris, November 1960 -- January 1961.

CAST: Jean-Paul Belmondo (Alfred Lubitsch); Anna Karina (Angela); Jean-Claude Brialy (Emile Récamier); Marie Dubois (Suzanne); Nicole Paquin (1st prostitute); Marion Sarraut (2nd prostitute); Jeanne Moreau (woman in bar); Catherine Demongeot.

[Note: these credits and most others for the series are taken from Godard by Richard Roud and were compiled by Tom Milne and Jan Dawson.]

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UNE FEMME EST UNE FEMME, like Breathless before it and Le Mepris and Alphaville after it, is one of Godard's experiments in genre filmmaking. This time the subject is the American Romantic comedy, with homage aside to the musical. The character Belmondo plays is named Lubitsch and the triangular plot has that Lubitsch touch. Angela and Alfred

envision themselves in a Gene Kelly musical with choreography by Michael Kidd. A WOMAN IS A WOMAN is Godard's second comedy and his first (and last) lighthearted film. More than any of his other films it has the warmth and aura of love: love of his new wife, Anna Karina, love of the classic genre of the American 30s comedy; love of his new-found "toy," color; love of the freedom of wide-screen composition. (It is his first film in widescreen, being filmed in Techniscope a process which is economical as well as extremely adaptable and which becomes a favorite tool of Godard in the middle sixties.)

Now the UNE FEMME EST UNE FEMME is more than a decade old it has acquired, for us if not for Godard, an extra dimension of nostalgia for that last year before we were overtaken by the events of the 1960s. Romance was as simple as the reds and blues of Godard's palette, and musical comedy fantasies were a very real and present refuge. It captures for us a world of bicycle races and plaid skirts and white blouses in which the magical powers of film discovered 60 years earlier by Georges Méliès are part of the fabric of everyday life. (the flipped egg, the instant costume changes.) UNE FEMME. . . is after all a Godardian essay in romance and a catalogue of its elements; colors, poses, milieus, songs, words, gestures, objects, and games. Except for Le Mépris it is Godard's closest approach to commercial filmmaking so it represents only one aspect of Godard's thought on domesticity. His new film, Tout va Bien looks like it will provide the antithesis to complete this particular Godardian syllogism.

Godard, tu te laisse aller. (Merci.)

Jim Monaco
3/72

NOTE: Next week we return to the auditorium for Vivre Sa Vie, Tous Les Garçons S'Appelle Patrick, and Charlotte et son Jules.

Zoetrope 2

The Films of Jean-Luc Godard

March 8: TOUS LES GARCONS S'APPELLE PATRICK (1957)
CHARLOTTE ET SON JULES (1958)
VIVRE SA VIE (MY LIFE TO LIVE) (1962)

CHARLOTTE ET SON JULES

Script: Godard; Photography: Michel Latouche; Editing: Godard; Music: Pierre Monsigny;
Sound: Jacques Maumont; Producer: Pierre Braunberger; Production: Les Films de La
Pléiade. Filmed in Godard's hotel room, Rue de Rennes, Paris. Running time:
20 min./ 14 min. Distributed in the U.S. by Contemporary films.

CAST: Jean-Paul Belmondo [voice dubbed by Godard] (Jean); Anne Colette (Charlotte);
Gérard Blain (Charlotte's friend.)

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VIVRE SA VIE

Script: Godard, documentation from Ou en est la prostitution? by Marcel Sacotte;
Photography: Raoul Coutard; Camera: Claude Beausoleil, Charles Bitsch; Editing: Agnès
Guillemot, Lila Lakshmanan; Music: Michel Legrand; Song "Ma Môme, elle joue pas les
starlettes": Jean Ferrat, Pierre Frachet; Sound: Guy Villette, Jacques Maumont;
Assistant directors: Bernard Toublanc-Michel, Jean-Paul Savignac; Producer: Pierre Bruan-
berger; Production manager: Roger Fleytoux; Production: Les Films de la Pléiade. Filmed
on location in Paris, February-March 1962. Running time: 85 minutes. Distributed in the
U.S. by Contemporary films.

CAST: Anna Karina (Nana Kleinfrankenheim); Sady Rebbot (Raoul); André-S. Labarthe (Paul);
Guylaine Schlumberger (Yvette); Brice Parain (The philosopher); Peter Kassowitz [voice
dubbed by Godard] (Young man); Dimitri Dinoff (Dimitri); Monique Messine (Elizabeth);
Gérard Hoffman (Nana's buyer); Gilles Queant (Client); Paul Pavel (Photographer); Eric
Schlumberger (Luigi); Laszlo Szabo (wounded man who enters bar).

VIVRE SA VIE is classic Godard in several senses of the word. After his brief fling at
an homage à Hollywood, Godard returns now to the business at hand of the development of a
purer and clearer cinematic language. This is the first of his films in which his
adaptation of Brechtian techniques of alienation is obvious. The film is enddistanced
by draining the drama from it, by the exclusive use of direct sound recording, often with
only one microphone picking up both dialogue and background; by the rigorous choices
of long shots and medium shots over closeups; by the rather obvious use of extended
shots together with slow pans rather than the more intimate and lively technique of
cross-cutting; by the stark nature of the blacks and whites; by the dull settings; by the
lengthy narrated shots; by the distant voice of the narrator reading statistics; by the
total insouciance the characters show towards the fact of the camera; and by many other
devices which Godard will soon develop into one of the most personal languages in cinema.

VIVRE SA VIE, then, is classic Godard in the sense that it is very representative of the
style that has become associated with the filmmaker. But it is also classic in a more
formal sense. The film is exquisitely balanced, both in its wholeness and in the details
of its parts (as Richard Roud has ably pointed out).

VIVRE SA VIE is divided into 12 sections, the titles of which reveal the symmetry of the
film:

[1] A cafe--Nana feels like giving up--Paul--the pinball machine.

- [2] The record shop--200 francs--Nana lives her day.
- [3] The concierge--Paul--The Passion of Joan of Arc--a press agent.
- [4] At the police station--Nana is being questioned.
- [5] On the street--the first client--the room.
- [6] Running into Yvette--a cafe on the outskirts--Raoul--Machine gun fire in the street.
- [7] The letter--Raoul again--On the Champs Elysees.
- [8] Afternoons--Hotels--money--client pleasing.
- [9] A young man--Luigi--Nana thinks maybe she's happy.
- [10] The street--a client--pleasure is no fun.
- [11] Afternoon cafe--the stranger--Nana doesn't know she's a philosopher.
- [12] The young man again--the oval portrait--Raoul sells Nana.

As in classical tragedy, the film is divided neatly into exposition, development, crisis, and conclusion, all of which are couched in a mood of the inexorability of fate. Again, as in classical tragedy, most of the "dramatic" events are kept off the stage and the greater part of the work is devoted to the development of the consequences of events--in other words, talking.

But I don't want to carry this parallel too far, for Godard is just as radical stylistically here as he is reactionary. The film, like most of his work after this point in time, resembles an essay more than it does any other literary genre (novel, play). The theme of prostitution is introduced; here it is "realistic"; in the future it will become the grand Godardian metaphor, through which many of his political ideas will be developed. (It should be noted that the word "essay" does not imply a strict documentary approach; the essay has been a literary form of considerable latitude, flexibility and subtlety and no doubt will become a cinematic form with just such qualities. Possibly Godard, with Montaigne, Voltaire, and Rousseau as part of his literary heritage is more aware of this than we.)

It is obvious then, that with the benefit of hindsight VIVRE SA VIE is the first truly Godardian film, at least as regards the style of its logic and grammar. But it is not unrelated to the films that come before it. Nana is no less an object (sometimes of Veneration, sometimes of detestation) than were Patricia, Veronica, and Angela. She also is compared to paintings. But whereas the first three films were all seen from an essentially masculine point of view, Nana is allowed to control the perspective of at least part of the VIVRE SA VIE. (Possibly the struggle between Godard's viewpoint and Nana's provides some of the ambivalence of the film and tends to make the distantiation even greater.) Nana, like her predecessors is also concerned with Godard's first existential question: Am I not free because I am not happy or am I not happy because I am not free? Godard's men seldom ask this question of themselves. They are much less passive than his women. Finally, VIVRE SA VIE is connected to the films which precede it by its fascination with the idea of amorality. Nana, like Veronica, Patricia, and even Angela in her way, interests Godard because she operates from a set of moral principles quite different from his own. The quality that makes this film more complex philosophically than the others is that here Nana is given a chance to work out the logic of her way of life; her sisters were not allowed that opportunity. Eventually Godard's female characters will take precedence over his male characters. Nana does not die in vain.

ZOETROPE 2

The Films of Jean-Luc Godard

March 15: MONTPARNASSE ET LEVALLOIS (sketch in PARIS VU PAR. . .)
LES CARABINIERS

Montparnasse et Levallois

1963. Script: Godard; Photography: Albert Maysles (16mm Ektachrome, Eastmancolor print); Editor: Jacqueline Raynal; Sound: Rene Levert; Producer: Barbet Schroeder; Associate producer: Patrick Bauchau; Production: Films du Losange/Barbet Schroeder. Running time: 12 min. Filmed on location in Paris in December, 1963. Released in the U.S. by New Yorker films. English title: Six in Paris. Other episodes: Gare du Nord (Jean Rouch); Place de l'Etoile (Eric Rohmer); La Muette (Claude Chabrol); Rue St. Denis (Jean-Daniel Pollet); St. Germain des Près (Jean Douchet). Total running time: 90 minutes.

CAST: Joanna Shimkus (Monika); Philippe Hiquilly (Ivan); Serge Davri (Roger).

MONTPARNASSE ET LEVALLOIS is a realization of the story that Alfred tells to Angela in the cafe in A Woman is a Woman. It is rather a straightforward narrative and bears few if any touches that we can recognize as Godard's which leads me to believe that this sketch might better be ascribed to Maysles than to Godard. Nevertheless, there is something about the localises of the film that makes them representative of "Godard's Paris" as we have seen it before, and the quality of Monika's relationship with men is also quite Godardian.

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LES CARABINIERS

1963. Script: Jean-Luc Godard, Jean Gruault, Roberto Rossellini, based on the play I Carabinieri by Beniamino Joppolo adapted into French by Jacques Audibert; Photography: Raoul Coutard; Camera: Claude Beausoleil; Editor: Agnès Guillemot, Lila Lakshmanan; Art Director: Jean-Jacques Fabre; Music: Philippe Arthuys; Sound: Jacques Maumont, Hortion; Assistant directors: Charles Bitsch, Jean-Paul Sauvignac; Producers: Georges de Beauregard, Carlo Ponti; Production: Rome-Paris Films/Laetitia. Running time: 80 minutes. Released in the U.S. by New Yorker Films. Filmed on location in Paris, December 1962--January 1963.

CAST: Marino Masè (Ulysse); Albert Juross (Michel Ange); Geneviève Galéa (Venus); Catherine Riberò (Cléopâtre); Gerard Poirot (1st carabinier); Jean Brassat (2nd Carabinier); Alvaro Gheri (3rd carabinier); Barbet Schroeder (car salesman); Odile Geoffroy (Young communist girl); Roger Coggio and Pascale Audret (couple in the car); Catherine Durante (heroine of the film-within-the-film); Jean Gruault (Bebe's father); Jean-Louis Comolli (soldier with the fish); Wladimir Faters (revolutionary); Jean Monsigny (soldier); Gilbert Servien (soldier).

The first thing to be said about LES CARABINIERS is that it was made from a play. However since Godard is a Brechtian filmmaker, this particular film-play loses less in his translation than it would if it had been translated by anyone else. We have already seen how Brecht's alienation-effect is applied by Godard to the quite separate art of cinema; in LES CARABINIERS we have a textbook example of that technique of distantiation. Closeups are escheewed, plot twists are avoided, Coutard's grainy newsreel photography further separates us from the characters who are, by the way, rather unsympathetic. Deaths are superflous, violence arbitrary, and sympathy dead.

For an antiwar film I think this technique is particularly effective -- indeed necessary. Richard Lester, who has made a film which is often compared favorably to LES CARABINIERS (How I Won the War) explains that the great problem with antiwar films is that they must by definition almost always include the exciting stuff of prowar films. Godard avoids battle scenes and patriotism and any attempt to reason about war -- merely to accept that war may have arguable premises is to allow it too great a stature. Lester, who made his film five years later, does a better job, I believe, in making us understand how very much war is a creature of media -- especially film -- by phrasing How I Won The War as a parody of war films from World War II to the present. I think Lester also has the advantage on Godard in that How I Won. . . is about a specific war -- the GOOD war -- world War II. Godard's generalized war is a more useful subject, I suppose, than world war one (obviously a bad and stupid war--any anti-world war one film leaves one with the inevitable corollary: yes, that was a bad war but world war 2 was a good one), but by attacking the best of wars Lester achieves a much stronger statement.

On the positive side, Godard understands very well that war is about territory and things -- possessions. The scene in which Michel-Ange and Ulysse show their booty of post-cards is one of the grand catalogues of cultural artifacts (which will become more and more important as Godard matures.) It is stunning in it's matter-of-factness. In addition it should be noted that the film has a clean logic all its own which is not always immediately apparent. Godard is quoted by Ian Cameron as saying:

Each shot, each sequence corresponded very precisely to one precise idea: the occupation, the Russian campaign, the regular army, the partisans, etc. Or it had a precise emotion: violence, confusion, the absense of passion, derision, disorder, surprise, emptiness. Or a precise fact or phenomenon: noise, silence, etc.

If one watches the film with this concept in mind it is easier to organize the procession of sounds and images which Godard has collected while always remembering (as is evident even from the first shot) that this film is only a film despite its strong moral statement about an important political issue. Even in an anti-war film (at least at this early point in his career) Godard still finds space for an homage to the Lumieres (the two little films are Godard's recreations of two of the films from the Lumieres' first program).

A word about the "alienation-effect":

Why does Godard (or Brecht) wish to separate his audience from the emotional experience of the film? The theory is that the film, if it is to teach anyone who is not already convinced of its truth must begin to excite thought rather than emotion. In LES CARABINIERS as in any Brecht play, the real experience begins with the ending of the film.

A dilemma is posed in such a way that the audience must inevitably begin to think about the issues involved; this happens normally after the film is over. As a technique for argument or propaganda (in the best sense of that word) I don't think the alienation-effect can be faulted. In his later political films Godard will be obsessed with this problem -- how to speak to the unconverted -- almost to the point of paralysis. In LES CARABINIERS, he is only beginning to consider the dilemma of Porthos which Brice Parain states in Vivre Sa Vie. At this point Godard has not yet begun to puzzle about how he can put one foot in front of the other.

Jim Monaco
3/72

Zoetrope 2

The Films of Jean-Luc Godard

March 22:

LE MÉPRIS (CONTEMPT).

1963. Script: Godard, based on the novel *Il Disprezzo* by Alberto Moravia; Photography: Raoul Coutard (FRANSOPE, Technicolor); Editing: Agnes Guillemot, Lila Lakshmanan; Music: Georges Delerue (Italian version: Piero Piccioni); Costumes: Nanine Autre; Sound: William Sivel; Assistant director: Charles Bitsch; Producers: Georges de Beauregard, Carlo Ponti, Joseph E. Levine; Production managers: Philippe Dussart, Carlo Lastricati; Production: Rome-Paris Films/Fioms Concordia/Compagnia Cinematografica Champion. Running time: 100 minutes (France); 103 minutes (U.S.); 84 minutes (G.B.) Released in the U.S. by Embassy/Audio Brandon films. Filmed on location in Rome and Capri, April - June 1963. [Godard had his name removed from the credits of the Italian version because footage had been cut from the Odyssey sequence, the music and some dialogue altered, the dolor changed, and certain sequences re-edited. -- Tom Milne and Jan Dawson in Roud: Godard.]

CAST: Brigitte Bardot (Camille Javal); Michel Piccoli (Paul Javal); Jack Palance (Jeremiah Prokosch); Fritz Lang (himself); Georgia Moll (Francesca Vanini); Jean-Luc Godard (assistant director); Linda Veras (a siren).

* * * * *

LE MÉPRIS is a simple film about complicated ideas.

--Jean-Luc Godard

LE MÉPRIS is also Godard's closest approach to the orbit of Hollywood, with a script from a famous novel, produced by Ponti and Levine, including Bardot and Piccoli and Palance in its cast. As a result, it offers us a fascinating laboratory in which to discover the elements of Godardism which may have been hidden from us in his earlier, more personal films. It is a film filled with ideas about "Cinema, the invention without a future," (as Lumiere is quoted as saying) and with comments on the making of the film LE MÉPRIS itself. The theme of prostitution now takes on new dimensions of actuality as Godard signs with a big-time producer and is given the great sex star of the late fifties to work with in a film which is itself about the prostitution of a writer in similar circumstances. Paul Javal was described by Godard as "a character from Last Year at Marienbad who wants to play the role of a character in Rio Bravo." He shares with Godard's earlier heroes a childlike devotion to fantasy. But what sets this film apart from the ones that come before it is Godard's increasing lack of concern for psychology of character and his increasing devotion to the epic narration of a dialectic of ideas. This progression is all the more obvious, I think, because the stuff of LE MÉPRIS is such familiar commercial material.

In addition, Godard has transformed the novel by Moravia, certainly an epitome of bourgeois psychological dramatic literature, into a really classical film without psychology, with little drama, and epical in approach, rather than bourgeois. He plays the assistant to Fritz Lang (who portrays himself wonderfully well!) whereas he is actually directing Lang. He has to deal with the grand persona of BB and he does so by fitting the character to her rather than the other way round. He is told to include a nude scene and he makes of it a curiously unerotic essay. He makes the parallel film

The Odyssey more a series of footnotes and illustrations than a film within a film-- and these shots give to the film a classical grace by allusion as well as by style. Whereas in the novel all the characters are Italian, in Godard's rendition they represent four nationalities and speak four languages and the shostly figure of Francesca (Georgia Moll) must follow them discretely, trying to make sense of their pronouncements and soliloquys -- for us, as well as for the other characters.

This is Godard's sixth film and the third in which Brechtian ideas have been prominent. More and more Godard eschews montage ("mon beau souci," he used to call it when he was Hans Lucas). Godard's radical stylistic innovations are more obvious here than in Les Carabiniers where the ghost of the play was always at hand, or in Vivre Sa Vie which was so totally of itself. We can see here that the long scene is becoming much more important for him than the quick editing for which he was first famous. The scene between Camille and Paul in the apartment takes a full half hour (and is by the way a condensation of many scenes they had together in the novel). Epic narration in a series of set pieces and tableaux which ignore dramatic factors in favor of the logical development of ideas -- this is the high style of Godard's middle period. Within the course of the next two or three films this stylistic development will be pretty much complete; then it will be time for the serious and rigorous development of Godard's worldview.



The New School Department of Film

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ZOETROPE 2

The Films of Jean-Luc Godard

March 29:

ANTICIPATION, OU L'AN 2000
(from LE PLUS VIEUX METIER DU MONDE, OU
L'AMOUR À TRAVERS LES AGES)

BANDE À PART (Band of Outsiders).

ANTICIPATION (1967)

Script: Godard; Photography: Pierre Lhomme (Eastmancolor); Editor: Agnes Guillemot; Music: Michel Legrand; Assistant director: Charles Bitsch; Producer: Joseph Bergholz; Production: Francoriz Films/Les Films Gibe/Rialto Films/Rizzoli Films. Running time: 15 minutes. Filmed on location in Paris at Orly airport, November 1966. Distributed in the U.S. by Audio--Brandon films. Other segments of the film The Prehistoric Era (12 min., script: Ennio Flaiano, direction: Franco Indovina [uncredited]); Roman Nights (10 min., script: Ennio Flaiano, direction: Mauro Bolognini); Mademoiselle Mimi (17 min., script: Daniel Boulanger, direction: Philippe DeBroea); The Gay Nineties (20 min., script: Georges and André Thébet, direction: Michael Pfleghar); Paris Today (15 min., script: Jean Aurenche, direction: Claude Autant-Lara); Anticipation (Godard).

CAST: Jacques Charrier (John Dmitrios); Marilu Tolo (1st prostitute -- physical love); Anna Karina (Eleanor Romeovitch -- sentimental love); Jean-Pierre Léaud (Bellboy); Daniel Bart, Jean-Patrick Lebel.

Godard's sketch comes at the end of the OLDEST PROFESSION IN THE WORLD -- anything looks good at the end of this boring and sophomoric movie, but I think ANTICIPATION excites some interest even when it is shown by itself. We are in the Godardian science fiction universe which was exploited previously in Alphaville -- the present as awful future. The sketch also offers two other items of interest: the use of the filters, and the very Godardian joke of the invention of the kiss. "They are making love, conversation, and progress all at the same time!" declares the PA voice. For Godard, this is paradise!

For what it is worth, and so you won't ever be tempted to sit through the entire boring experience of THE OLDEST PROFESSION, Here are synopses of the other plots:

The Prehistoric Era. Britt, a cavewoman who wears a cantilevered bra, discovers for us all that the art of makeup can make sex an economic proposition.

Roman Nights. Caesar is impotent with his empress until he meets her in a brothel. They make love and she tells him she has come to the brothel only to win back his love, but he discovers when the coins drop from her purse that she has a more extensive interest in the brothel.

Mademoiselle Mimi. During the revolution a young man (Jean-Claude Brialy) tricks a prostitute (Jeanne Moreau) into free services by convincing her that he is about to become rich as his uncle has just been guillotined. The ruse works. At the end, the prostitute's fiance arrives -- a kid by the name of Napoleon.

The Gay 90s. Raquel Welch is a prostitute who takes a client on for the night and spends an interminable amount of time stripping down to her elaborate corset. She discovers the client is a rich banker and she tricks him into marrying her.

Paris Today. Two prostitutes are arrested for hanging out in the Bois de Boulogne. They have an idea: ply their trade from an ambulance. The flics catch on, but as luck could have it their first client is a real doctor and fools the police.

=====

BANDE À PART (1964)

Script: Godard, based on the novel Fool's Gold by Dolores Hitchens; Photography: Raoul Coutard; Camera: Georges Liron; Editors: Agnès Guillemot, Francois Collin; Music: Michel Legrand; Sound: Rene Levert, Antoine Bonfanti; Assistant director: Jean-Paul Savignac; Production manager: Philippe Dussart; Production: Anouchka Films/Orsay Films. Running time: 95 minutes. Filmed on location in Paris, February - March 1964. Released in the U.S. by Columbia Cinémathèque.

CAST: Jean-Luc Godard (Narrator); Anna Karina (Odile); Claude Brasseur (Arthur); Sami Frey (Franz); Louisa Colpeyn (mme. Victoria); Daniele Girard (English teacher); Ernest Menzer (Arthur's uncle); Chantal Darget (Arthur's aunt); Michele Seghers (pupil); Claude Makovski (pupil); Georges Staquet (Legionnaire); Michel Delahaye (Doorman at language school).

BANDE À PART is, as Pauline Kael has said, a film about "a girl and a gun," and should therefore be one of Godard's simplest and most popular films since Breathless. However, at least in New York, BANDE À PART has been relatively unpopular, even for Godard -- I don't really understand why, for it is a fine summation of his early work and ideas. Once again we are with people who have difficulty separating "art" from reality ("Franz did not know whether the world was becoming a dream or a dream was becoming the world," says Godard as narrator.) Once again, we find ourselves dissecting a society in which criminality is a kind of virtue and very seductive (again Godard too much ahead of the times to be popular -- look at the crowds swarming around the Godfather for a chance to spend a few hours identifying with Al Pacino.) But these are not yet "the children of Marx and Coca-Cola" who will later attempt to channel these desires and sentiments into political action. Odile, Arthur, and Franz lose the game to the older generation. Nevertheless, this Band of Outsiders will learn from the experience and will learn from the experience and will later try to make use of that knowledge as they become politicized.

In the end, BANDE À PART is a relatively simple film for Godard, I think, almost a breathing space before Godard enters his "middle period," in which his films become much more complex because he is then striving mightily for simplicity -- to "return to zero." The film is a nice summation of the first few years of Godard's career, and for an audience who knows the films that come before it, it should have a certain familiar warmth and easiness about it. Robin Wood, as usual very perceptive, has pointed out that

Stylistically and structurally the film is built on two tensions which characterize all of Godard's work [up to this point], but the opposing pulls in each here find a unique balance: the tension between traditional narrative and what I have called collage, and the tension between naturalism and stylization, both pushed to extremes. [The Films of Jean-Luc Godard, Praeger]

With his next film (which I regard as one of his very best), Une Femme Mariee, those tensions are no longer so obvious: naturalism loses to stylization and collage supercedes traditional narrative. As a result BANDE A PART is the last Godard film which can be regarded as the product of the apparatus and ideas of traditional cinema.

Jim Monaco

3/72



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ZOETROPE 2

THE FILMS OF JEAN-LUC GODARD

April 5:

LOIN DU VIETNAM (Far From Vietnam)

UNE FEMME MARIEE (A Married Woman)

LOIN DU VIETNAM

1967. Directors: Alain Resnais, William Klein, Joris Ivens, Agnès Varda (episode not included), Claude Lelouch, Jean-Luc Godard. Organizers: Jacqueline Meppiel, Andrea Haran. Principle collaborators: Michèle Ray, Roger Pic, K.S. Karol, Marceline Lorian, François Maspero, Chris Marker, Jacques Sternberg, Jean Lacouture, Willy Kurant, Jean Bosty, Kieu Tham, Denis Clerval, Chislain Cloquet, Bernard Zitzerman, Alain Levent (Godard's photographer); Théo Robichet, Antoine Bonfanti, Harold Maury, Claire Grunstein, Alain Franchet, Didier Beaudet, Florence Malraux, Marie-Louise Guinet, Roger de Menestrol, Ragnar, Jean Ravel, Colette Leloup, Eric Plouet, Albert Jurgenson, Ethel Blum, Michele Boudier, Christian Quinson, Jean Larivière, Maurice Carrel, Bernard Fresson, Karen Blanguernon, Anne Bellec, Valerie Mayoux. Color process: Eastmancolor (in part.) Uncredited Supervisory Editor: Chris Marker. Compiled from footage shot in U.S.A., Vietnam, Cuba, and France. Running time: 115 min. Distributed in the U.S. by New Yorker films.

Godard's contribution to LOIN DU VIETNAM is pretty much discrete and consists of an episode that comes about two-thirds of the way through the film in which Godard, as narrator, explains the difficulties of his position--as a filmmaker, not a political activist, as a Frenchman, not a combatant. It is a quiet, rather simple episode and can rather easily be overlooked in the context of this important film, but it gives the title of the film new significance and in the end it is one of the most historically accurate statements made in the film. Godard understands and attempts to explain here one of the more significant problems of radical politics: How can one participate actively and effectively in a struggle for liberation when one is more closely identified with the oppressor than with the oppressed. How does a white man aid the Black revolution? How does a man aid feminine liberation? How does a Frenchman aid the Vietnamese struggle? For Godard, the answer is not an answer: we are all far from Vietnam, and therefore in a sense powerless; we must, therefore, mirror Vietnam where we are and where we are at. For Godard the filmmaker and Frenchman, the Vietnamese war must be translated into a war against Hollywood and against the French system. The war has many fronts. In his contribution to LOIN DU VIETNAM Godard uses several clips from his film-in-progress, La Chinoise, the film which more than any other marks his politicization. Whether or not he succeeds in bringing the struggle home to Hollywood and Cinecitta will be the paramount topic of discussion during the next several weeks as we see the films of his recent "political" period. It is always possible that the metaphorical distance from Vietnam and the general struggle it symbolizes will be too great to be bridged and that the logical bind in which Godard finds himself will be ultimately paralyzing.

A scene outline of LOIN DU VIETNAM is available separately so that Godard's part of the film can be seen in perspective.

UNE FEMME MARIEE

1964. Director: Jean-Luc Godard; Script: Godard; Photography: Raoul Coutard; Camera operator: Georges Liron; Editors: Agnes Guillemot, Francoise Collin; Art Director: Henri Nogaret; Music: Extracts from Beethoven's Quartets nos. 7, 9, 10, 14, 15; jazz by Claude Nougaro; song "Quand le film est triste" by J. D. Loudermilk, G. Aber, L. Morisse, sung by Sylvie Vartan; Sound: Antoine Bonfanti, Rene Levert, Jacques Maumont; Assistant directors: Claude Othnin-Girard, Jean-Pierre Leaud, Helene Kalouguine; Production: Anouchka Films/Orsay Films; Production manager: Philippe Dussart. Filmed on location in Paris and at Orly airport, June-July 1964. Running time: 95 minutes (originally 98 minutes.) Distributed in the U.S. by Columbia Cinematheque. A title change (from The Married Woman to A Married Woman, and a few minor cuts were imposed by the French censor.)

CAST: Macha Meril (Charlotte Giraud), Bernard Noel (Robert, the lover), Philippe Leroy (Pierre, the Husband), Roger Leenhardt (himself), Rita Maiden (Madame Céline), Cris Tophe (Nicholas), Margaret Levan and Véronique Duval (two girls in swimming-pool bar.)

A MARRIED WOMAN may well be Godard's best film. It brings together most of the elements of content and style that have made Godard such an influential filmmaker over the years and it uses these elements in a way that is both innovative and sublimely classical. Both the styles and the themes of the film have been foreshadowed by Vivre Sa Vie, but A MARRIED WOMAN is a much richer film, a more assured film, and a more insightful film. Essentially, the difference between the two is that Godard has seen that it isn't the prostitute qua prostitute that is significant; it is the prostitution in everyday life that is the ideal metaphor to describe contemporary capitalist society.

A MARRIED WOMAN is subtitled modestly "Fragments of a Film Shot in 1964." Hereafter, Godard will make films that are categorically separate from the general run of cinema for they will always be about themselves: for Godard, the only way to be an artist and at the same time to be honest. All of the basic Godard materials are here present (except possibly for the rigorously dialectic political consciousness that will characterize his later films--see LOIN DU VIETNAM for a very good explication of that part of Godard's world): Woman as mystery and focal point; media as reality; the fascination with the semiological and semantic possibilities and powers of languages; the central political struggle--Masculine vs. Feminine; the importance of domestic politics; an almost cubistic dialectics of image; the interview as a method of avoiding the lie inherent in the art of film; the inseparable union of art and life; the inescapable and insidiously powerful force of the artifacts of industrial, commercial civilization; film as essay rather than narrative; the basic religious comfort of the circle; the technique of Brechtian alienation; the final post-Freudian realization that to understand is not to conquer.

A MARRIED WOMAN is obviously a portrait (a cubistic collage?) of its eponymous heroine but it views its subject through very complex semantic screens against an even more complex semiological background. It is true that at the center of the film we find an actual character, a married woman, but we see her through a glass, darkly, as the married woman--a concept rather than an actuality, for she has been formed and molded by the languages of media: film, magazines, literature, records--and these media, these languages exist for us in a very complex relationship for they are the forces that have formed the subject of study and they are at the same time the languages we must use to perceive that same subject. It is a unified field theory of cinema that Einstein would have appreciated. But wait, for there are further complications: the subject of study of the film is both A Married Woman and The Married Woman (person and concept) and the most important message of the film is the nonfusion we so subtly make between the two. (Do we ever perceive any individual without investing our perception with a fund of knowledge that we have already acquired about the roles that person plays for us,

the masks that person wears?) So the universe of UNE FEMME MARIEE is a glorious, shimmering network of interconnections between and among:

The Married woman (concept)

A Married woman (person)

The languages and media that have formed the person through the concept.

The languages and media that have formed our conception of the subject.

The languages and media which we must use in order to perceive the film.

Godard's intellectual world, from now on is an enormously complex, relativistic universe in which subject and object merge and turn in upon themselves: his films will never again be about anything so much as themselves. These "Klein-bottle" films, obviously, are very difficult for an audience (which always exists outside a film) to perceive, but their honesty and rigor are fascinatingly courageous. Godard and David Bowman are cousins.

With UNE FEMME MARIEE, Godard has found a new stride; he may set a fast pace for us, but the attempt at keeping up with him is, at least, useful intellectual exercise.

"On va retourner a zero."

* * * * *

NOTE: With all this talk about semiology and semantics, it might be of interest to take a look at Peter Wollen's Sighs and Meaning In the Cinema (Indiana University Press. Cinema One Series). Although Wollen doesn't say much about Godard, he does offer an interesting and almost unique semiological interpretation of the art of film which should be of help in understanding alter Godard.

IMPORTANT NOTE: New Yorker films has notified us taht STRUGGLE IN ITALY will not be available for another six to nine months. We have replaced that film on the May 3 program with ONE P.M. (One Parallel Movie) the film D.A. Pennebaker made from the footage Godard shot for ONE A.M. (One American Movie) which was never completed.

Jim Monaco

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ZOETROPE 2

THE FILMS OF JEAN-LUC GODARD

April 12:

ALPHAVILLE (6 p.m.)

UNE FILM COMME LES AUTRES (A Film Like Any Other: approx. 7:50 p.m.)

ALPHAVILLE, UNE ÉTRANGE AVENTURE DE LEMMY CAUTION.

1965. Director: Jean-Luc Godard; Script: Godard; Photography: Raoul Coutard; Camera Operator: Georges Liron; Editing: Agnès Guillemot; Music: Paul Misraki; Sound: René Levett; Assistant directors: Charles Bitsch, Jean-Paul Savignac, Hélène Kalouguine; Producer: André Michelin; Production Manager: Philippe Dussart; Production company: Chaumiane (Paris)/Filmstudio (Rome). Running time: 98 minutes. Filmed on location in January-February, 1965. U.S. Distributor: Contemporary Films.

CAST: Eddie Constantine (Lemmy Caution); Anna Karina (Natasha von Braun); Akim Tamiroff (Harry Dickson); Howard Vernon (professor Leonard Nosferatu, alias von Braun); Laszlo Szabo (Chief engineer); Michel Delahye (von Braun's assistant); Jean-Andre Fieschi (Professor Heckell); Jean-Louis Comolli (Professor Jeckell).

ALPHAVILLE is circular and exists at the center of "the outer countries" in the film and at the center of the 1960s in Godard's career. With Une Femme est une Femme, Au Bout de Souffle, and parts of the other early films, it is an experiment in genre -- this time science fiction. It was made just a month earlier than Truffaut's similar science fiction effort, Fahrenheit 451 and even more than that interesting failure attempts to convince us that the dreaded future of much science fiction is already upon us. All the sets of Alphaville are really structures of contemporary Paris and Godard has said in an interview that he regarded Lemmy Caution not so much a traveller in the future as a man from the past travelling in the present. And it is true that Lemmy is very much a creature of the detective fiction of the 1940s.

ALPHAVILLE is mostly interesting to me because it shows the elements of Godard's art in such a clear light, being as it is a film from a classic genre -- the old clichés don't hold for Godard: ALPHAVILLE is more cultural futurist fiction than it is science fiction. It is a film about darkness and light, as Robin Wood has noted, and very much in the line of development of Orpheus and Eurydice myths. This time the underworld is contemporary Paris, a land so dark that it is necessary to use flashbulbs in daylight. The dark--light motif is basic to the film.

Of course, all the elements of Godardian thought are present in ALPHAVILLE: Narrative and visual culture are thoroughly confused with the culture of "actuality" -- Lemmy Caution, played by Eddie Constantine, is the hero of a whole string of unconscious French parodies of American detective thrillers. Natasha's last name is von Braun, of course. Dick Tracy and Harry Dickson are involved and so are Nosferatu and Akim Tamiroff. Fieschi and Comolli are Cahiers critics who play Heckel and Jeckel (remember the cartoon blackbirds?) (The contradictions, always the contradictions!) The voice of Alpha-60 is not machine-produced, it is the voice of a man without a larynx who has learned to speak from the diaphragm. The circle vs. the Arrow: Signs are everywhere, but the camera is the gun. The Dictionary/Bible is continually revised. But Lemmy Caution (a pun on pig in French) teaches Natasha some new words: Je...vous... aime... And Orpheus takes Eurydice out away from the underground. Into the light.

Like their descendants in Anticipation Lemmy and Natasha make love, progress, and conversa-

tion--all at the same time. Caution succeeds where Flash Gordon has failed, in the capitale de la douleur.

* * * * *

UNE FILM COMME LES AUTRES.

June, 1968. A film by Jean-Luc Godard and the Dziga-Vertov group (uncredited.) Running time: c. 110 minutes. Distributed in the U.S. by Leacock-Pennebaker. Filmed on location in and around Paris in May and June 1968 in 16 mm.

During the events of the Spring of 1968 in France Godard underwent a process that for want of a better word we shall call "radicalization." He decided to make films collectively rather than individualistically and formed the Dziga-Vertov collective, named after the famous Russian director who is noted for the documentary technique called "Kino-eye." So far as is known, the only other member of the Dziga-Vertov group is a 31 year old radical named Jean-Pierre Gorin. Gorin has described the principle of the Dziga-Vertov group this way:

"The old principle says "Go and fetch images and then try to edit them." The point we are at now is to build images -- build images as simple as possible so you can build your analysis."

A FILM LIKE ANY OTHER is the first fruit of the collaboration between Godard and Gorin. When it was shown at Philharmonic hall in early 1969 a "small riot" resulted, according to Tom Luddy. You will see why.

A FILM LIKE ALL THE OTHERS must be accepted on its own terms. It was never meant to be shown in commercial cinema. It is not "entertaining." It is a very simple film. For those who are at least mildly interested in the May 1968 revolution, it is a film of some substance. For those who aren't interested in May 68, it is a huge bore. But it is very much a Godard film and it fits well into the development of his art along dialectical lines.

Images are subordinated to sounds: there are only two major visual sequences in the film: people sitting in a meadow outside of Paris discussing where they have been politically and where they will go; and newsreel scenes of the events of the spring. The sequences have little connection with the development of the development of the sound-trace (which is quite complex.) We hear the people in the meadow discussing politics, we hear snatches of speeches, voices reading from newspaper reports, etc. Close attention will reveal the development of a certain logic (even if the filmmakers have suggested that a coin be flipped to decide which of the two reels should be played first.) The English version includes a voice-over simultaneous translation which, on the original soundtrack of the film, makes almost everything--French and English--indecipherable. Godard was reportedly pleased when he heard that this extra level of confusion had been added to the film.

Godard has said that it is time to stop making "political films" and to start making "political films politically." In the light of that comment the extremely experimental cast of his films after One Plus One makes some objective sense. The question always in my mind regarding the output of the Dziga-Vertov group since 1968 is whether or not the extreme intellectualization of the filmmaking process will ultimately be paralyzing and therefore counter-productive. There is a line in One Plus One (which Godard now condemns) which says:

The only way to be a revolutionary intellectual is to stop being an intellectual. Godard's recent films lead me to believe there is more than a little truth in that line. But never fear! Godard's new film to be shown at Cannes next month stars Academy-award winner Jane Fonda!

Godard has said:

Brecht said:

Thinking comes after defeat and before action.

Maybe that explains a lot about the last four years. I hope for all of us as well as for Jean-Luc Godard.

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For information on Godard's post-1968 films see TAKE ONE, vol. 2, no. 10 (March 1971)

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NOTE: Because Struggle in Italy will not be available in the U.S. until the fall, we have replaced it on the program of May 3rd with One P.M. the film D.A. Pennebaker made from the footage Godard-Gorin shot for One A.M., which was never completed.

Jim Monaco

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ZOETROPE 2

THE FILMS OF JEAN-LUC GODARD

April 19:

PIERROT LE FOU, 1965 (6 p.m.)

BRITISH SOUNDS (SEE YOU AT MAO), 1969 (8 p.m.)

PIERROT LE FOU

Director: Jean-Luc Godard; Script: Godard, based on the novel Obsession by Lionel White; Photography: Raoul Coutard (Techniscope, Eastmancolor); Camera operator: Georges Liron; Editor: Feancoise Collin; Art Director: Pierre Guffroy; Music: Antoine Duhamél; Songs "Ma Ligne de Chance," and "Jamais je ne t'ai dit que je t'aimerai toujours" Antoine Duhamel, Bassiak; Sound: René Levert; Assistant directors: Philippe Fourastié, Jean-Pierre Léaud; Producer: Georges de Beauregard; Production manager: René Demoulin; Production companies: Rome-Paris Films (Paris)/Dino de Laurentiis Cinematografica (Rome). Filmed on location in Paris and the south of France in June and July 1965. Running time: 110 minutes. Distributed in the U.S. by Contemporary Films.

CAST: Jean-Paul Belmondo (Ferdinand); Anna Karina (Marianne); Dirk Sanders (her brother); Raymond Devos (the man on the pier); Graziella Galvani (Ferdinand's wife); Roger Dutoit (Gangster); Hans Meyer (Gangster); Jimmy Karoubi (dwarf); Christa Nell (Mme. Staquet); Pascal Aubier (2nd brother); Pierre Hanin (3rd brother); Princess Aicha Abidir (herself); Samuel Fuller (himself); Alexis Poliakoff (a sailor); Laszlo Szabo (Laszlo Kovacs, political exile from Dominican Republic); Jean-Pierre Léaud (man in cinema).

LA LUTTE CONTINUE

The quotation from Elie Faure with which PIERROT LE FOU begins sets up the theme of the film. As Godard has said, he wanted to make a film about "the last romantic couple, the true descendents of La Nouvelle Eloise and Werther," a film not about people but about the spaces between people. Many of Godard's earlier characters have talked and dreamed about going South: Ferdinand and Marianne accomplish it for all of them--for Michel Poiccard (a.k.a. Laszlo Kovacs) who was betrayed by Patricia before he left town, for Franz and Odile ("next episode: Franz and Odile in the tropics in widescreen and color"), for Lemmy and Natasha who are reinventing love as they escape from Alphaville. The trip South is a journey into anarchy and confusion, however, and ends in death. I suppose in the context of Godard's oeuvre it is a cathartic death, for his films change rapidly after this last summation of the early films.

PIERROT LE FOU is the last film in a series the subject of which has been betrayal. This time that subject is handled in an intensely personal way: After Marianne has told Ferdinand that she doesn't know who he is, Anna Karina turns to the camera and says (to us? to Godard?): "I don't know who you are either." The passionate effort at understanding which began five and half years ago, when Marianne says she last knew Ferdinand (The time Breathless was made) ends here in a gunshot and an explosion of primary colors (and primary significance.) "Marianne" ("Anna-Mariée" as Michael Walker has noted) and Ferdinand are, let it be said, much more aware of themselves and others than any of Godard's people heretofore and it is this intellectual self-awareness that imbues the film with a moral quality that has only been fleetingly glimpsed in Godard's earlier films (Contempt is probably an exception here and elsewhere). In French, La conscience means both "self-awareness" and "conscience".

In that confluence of meanings, Godard has discovered a great mine of significance. If Ferdinand can't get through to Marianne and is therefore terrifyingly isolated, it is also true, as she says to him, that "You speak to me with words and I look at you with feelings."

PIERROT LE FOU is a tragedy because the active intelligence of Marianne and the passive intelligence of Ferdinand will never meet, must always remain as separate as L'Allegro and Il Penseroso. Seen from the position of the contemplative consciousness (which is certainly Godard's position, and probably mine, if I must confess it) there is no more poignant and frightening tragedy than this. Marianne will never accept the existence of Ferdinand -- in fact, she insists that he is not "Ferdinand" at all, but the clown of the commedia dell-arte, Pierrot. Ferdinand's one act is to light the fuse -- an act which his truer, contemplative self immediately refutes -- but too late.

PIERROT LE FOU, then, is about action and contemplation, "consciousness" and "conscience," words and feelings; but it is also a "romance"--in the older sense of that word as well as the more modern. In medieval literature a "romance" was not so much about love as it was about adventure, and not by coincidence many of those old romances take place in the same general geographical area as PIERROT LE FOU. Most of Godard's earlier films ended with an escape: an action taken in defense of freedom; this one begins with that action and investigates the consequences. So long as Ferdinand and Marianne pursue their adventure alone; so long as their journey to the other side of Weekend is personal and private, it will end in disaster. What Godard discovered himself a few years later was that that adventure of transcending the mindlessness and anomie of Weekend must be done in community with others -- it must be done with a sense of the politics which are always lurking on the sidelines and margins of PIERROT LE FOU. Then, at least, the betrayals are invested with some meaning and are not so perfectly absurd as those of the earlier films. This side of Weekend differs from that side as the artistic relationship with Karina differs from the artistic relationship with Wiazemsky: the former pivots on the process of discovery, the later pivots on the process of acceptance.

PIERROT LE FOU (Like almost all his films I admit) is an important marker on the path of Godard's development. It summarizes with keen insight one of the most important themes of the films which precede it: the curious obsession of men with women, the fascination which the active principle holds for the contemplative artist. It also foreshadows the concerns of the films which will come after it: the politics which lurk with foreboding like a Greek chorus at the borders of the film will move to center stage; the personal demons of obsession will be ignored (if not exorcized) and the problems of the community will take precedence. PIERROT LE FOU is Godard's MISSISSIPPI MERMAID. Both films served the same function for their respective authors; in each, a new level of consciousness is reached which enables both Truffaut and Godard to proceed into areas less private.

NOTE: We apologize for the poor condition of the print. Contemporary films is well aware that a new print must be made, but so far, the authorities have not been convinced that it would be worth the money.

BRITISH SOUNDS (SEE YOU AT MAO)

Director: Jean-Luc Godard; Script: Godard; Photography: Charles Stewart (Eastman-color, 16 mm.); Editor: Elizabeth Kozmian; Sound: Fred Sharp; Researcher: Mo Teitelbaum; Producers: Irving Teitelbaum, Kenith Trodd; Production company: Kestrel Productions (for London Weekend Television). Filmed on locations in England, at the BMC plant at Abingdon and at the University of Essex, February 1969. Running time: 52 minutes. A film by the Dziga-Vertov Film Group.

As the original title indicates, BRITISH SOUNDS is another attempt to liberate sound from the tyranny of image -- this time Godard is considerably more successful than he was in A Film Like the Others.

The film is composed of six sequences:

(1) A ten-minute tracking shot down an automobile assembly line with the noise of that assembly line, the words of Marx and Engels, and the voice of a little girl memorizing her Marxist catechism.

QUESTION: is this sequence as effective a critique of the dehumanization of the assembly line as Chaplin's Modern Times?

(2) A static shot of a staircase: a nude woman walks in and out of doors, up and down the stairs. On the soundtrack the same woman reads the texts she has written on woman's liberation. The final shot is a medium-shot of the nude torso from chest to thighs. Tom Luddy has written this, "is a bold attempt to present the image of a naked female in a way that does not reduce her to a depersonalized sex-object-- an image of sexuality and femininity that cannot be consumed by the pornographic appetite created by capitalism."

QUESTION: Does the sequence not depersonalize the woman? Does the sequence re-personalize the woman? Does the film connect pornographic appetites to capitalism?

(3) "Capital Sound". A man with an upper-class accent is seen in black and white reading a blatantly racist and chauvinist speech. This is intercut with shots of workers and slum-dwellers.

QUESTION: Which is more dangerous? The racism displayed here? or the much more subtle racism of everyday life? What effect would this sequence have on a group of revolutionary workers? What effect would this sequence have on a group of revolutionary students?

(4) "Worker's sound". A meeting of a "trotskyist union men." The sequence emphasizes the collective nature of the group by seldom focusing on the speaker.

QUESTION: What attitude does the film take towards the workers? What is the dialectic of the meeting?

(5) "Student Sound." A group of students are shown occupying a liberated University of Essex building, working lettering signs and rewriting the lyrics to several Bratles songs.

QUESTION: Did the Dziga-Vertov group mean us to react positively to the students' struggle? If so, what is the effect of a comparison or contrast between the students' struggle as shown in the film and the worker's struggle as shown in the film? What does this sequence say about the analysis of class struggle in the late 1960s and 1970s?

(6) "Sound of Revolution." A shot of long duration: a bloody arm is moving across dirt and snow to take up a red flag which lies on the ground. The flag is raised, paper union jacks are smashed by fists. An all red frame: NO END TO CLASS STRUGGLE. The soundtrack is a complex montage of revolutionary songs and slogans ending with the song from Marat/Sade: "We want our revolution now!"

QUESTION: Are these sounds of revolution examined from a dialectic point-of-view or an aesthetic point of view? What does this sequence say about class struggle? What is the effect of quoting the song from Marat/Sade?

Please remember that these Dziga-Vertov films have two announced objectives: First, they are made to be shown to small groups of already committed revolutionary workers, not to general audiences. Second, they have a dual esthetic ideal: to liberate sound from the tyranny of image and to construct images anew, not to "go and fetch images." All this, is, according to Godard and Gorin, supposed to be done in the context of "making political films politically." I presume that phrase implies a good measure of self-criticism.

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NOTE: Struggle in Italy will not be shown on May 3rd. It has been replaced in the program by One P.M., the film D.A. Pennebaker made from the footage Godard shot for One A.M. which was never completed.

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The script for Pierrot le Fou is published in English by Simon and Schuster. Also see the article by Michael Walker in The Films of Jean-Luc Godard, ed. Ian Cameron, Praeger.

For information on the Dziga-Vertov films, two issues of Take One are indispensable: Vol. 2, no. 10 and vol. 2, no. 11. See especially the article on British Sounds by Tom Luddy in no. 11.



The New School Department of Film

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ZOETROPE 2

The Films of Jean-Luc Godard

April 26:

MASCULIN-FÉMININ (1966): 6:00 P.M.

VLADIMIR AND ROSA (1970): 3:00 P.M.

MASCULIN-FÉMININ, QUINZE FAITS PRÉCISES.

(1966). Director: Jean-Luc Godard; script: Godard, supposedly based on two stories by Guy de Maupassant; Photography: Willy Kurant; Editor: Agnès Guillemot; Music: Francis Lai; Sound: René Levert; Assistant directors: Bernard Toublanc-Michel, Jacques Barratier; Production manager: Philippe Dussart; Production company: Anouchka Films/Argos Films (Paris)/ Svensk Filmindustri/Sandrews (Stockholm). Filmed on location in Paris, November-December, 1965. Running time: 110 minutes (103 minutes in U.S.A.). Distributed in the U.S. by Columbia Cinematheque.

CAST: Jean Pierre Leaud (Paul) · Chantal Goya (Madeleine) · Catherine-Isabelle Duport (Catherine) · Marlene Jobert (Elizabeth) · Michel Debord (Robert) · Birger Malmsten (The man in film-within-the-film) · Eva Britt Strandberg (the woman in film-within-the-film) · Brigitte Bardot and Antoine Bourseiller (couple rehearsing a play in cafe) · Chantal Darget (Woman in Metro) · Elsa Leroy ("Mademoiselle 19 ans") · Francoise Hardy (Friend of American officer in car).

* * * * *

There is no longer any escape.

MASCULIN-FÉMININ is the realist mirror of the romantic Pierrot le Fou. Paul, like Ferdinand, is obsessed with a woman; but Paul has no thought of escape south. He remains in the city, and so will Godard for the next few years. Romantic escape is no longer a satisfactory alternative. MASCULIN-FÉMININ, like so many of Godard's previous films, is a story of betrayal, a dialectic argument between the feminine forces of action and the masculine forces of contemplation. As always, the active principle wins; the man is betrayed and destroyed. MASCULIN-FÉMININ marks a significant turning point, however, for politics lurks around the edges of the film and would, if it could, we feel, take center stage even now. In Pierrot le Fou we discovered with Godard once again that there is no escaping the 15 precise actions of MASCULIN-FÉMININ. Reality must be confronted. Paul tries and almost succeeds. It only remains that Godard himself take over the function of protagonist, eschewing fictional heroes. This he will do in his next film, 2 ou 3 Choses Que je sais d'elle.

Already in MASCULIN-FÉMININ, the central character, Paul, has become an interviewer, a figure of the artist-filmmaker which will later be superseded by the director himself. Plot has all but disappeared. (Although the film was supposed to be based on two stories by de Maupassant, when the publisher who owned the rights saw the fine cut of the film he agreed that it bore no relation to the Maupassant stories and that the producers could use them again.) "Story" has been superseded by a kind of cinema-

vérité or kino-pravda. Godard has noted that Marker and Rouch had already done Paris in the spring and summer: he wanted to do Paris in the winter. In the late fall of 1965 he found himself, he says, at loose ends between generations, accepted by a group of younger people (who included the yé-yé singer Chantal Goya) and fascinated with their lives. He proceeded to make a film about them, the "children of Marx and Coca-Cola."

MASCULIN-FEMININ, six and a half years later, is still one of the very few films which understand with any degree of intelligence and sympathy what it was like to be young in the sixties. With the benefit of hindsight we know that Godard had discovered years before anyone else that the central contradiction, the motive force, of the generation of the sixties was that dialectic tension between Marx and Coca-Cola. No one has said it better since* Paul and his "friends" are surrounded by inane violence--there are five rather meaningless deaths in the film, to which no one reacts with any degree of emotional involvement. That violence has killed all sympathy: the basic mode of dialogue in the film is the interview. Many questions are asked but few are answered. The media, the culture, continually act to separate the characters from each other. Madeleine wants only to be a consumer product. "Mademoiselle 19 ans" is perfectly willing to adapt her tastes in music to include Bach as well as the Beatles if that is what the interviewer wants to hear. In bed with two complaisant women, Paul is every bit as much alone as his brother Ferdinand. Like him, Paul believes that "one cannot live without affection." When Madeleine suggests that Elizabeth live with them in the new apartment, he takes a step off the edge into the air. His death/suicide is just as ambiguous as was Ferdinand's, for we are also told that he "wanted to take some pictures" and stepped too far back--the desire for objectivity kills too.

Nevertheless, MASCULIN-FEMININ is not an entirely pessimistic film: the political landscape can be glimpsed in the distance. If Paul/Godard can conquer the obsession with romantic love, there is good work to be done and a community of workers to do it with. MASCULIN-FEMININ is an attempt to triumph over that very human obsession. As it captures the taste and smell of a place and time it is one of the masterpieces of truth-cinema. As it explicates with great sympathy and intelligence the dilemma of being young in the sixties it is socio-politically invaluable. Its controlled complexity and stunning rhythms, its richness and bold contours, make it one of Godard's masterpieces.

* * * * *

VLADIMIR AND ROSA.

(1970). A film by Jean-Luc Godard and the Dziga-Vertov Film Group. (16 mm., color). Running time: 99 minutes. With Anne Wiazemsky, Juliet Berto, Godard, Gorin, and others.

As is evident from the opening shots, VLADIMIR AND ROSA is a film of "theory" not of "practice." The problem is always just here with the Dziga-Vertov films; when will they develop "practice" as well as "Theory?" Godard explains on the soundtrack at the beginning of the film: Why are we making this film? Well the last film was the Palestinian film. We are making this film to pay for that film. Economic necessity. But that doesn't mean this film can't be a good one.

1. VLADIMIR AND ROSA is nominally about the Chicago Seven trial. Some names have been changed, of course -- that's not important. What is important, I feel, is the addition of a young worker to the group of defendants. It is obvious from the scenes allocated to this character that Godard/Gorin's sympathies lie mainly with his situation. The Dellinger figure, the Seale figure -- these are vague and distanced.

*Paul Williams has come close. See Out of it, The Revolutionary, and especially Dealing which opens today in general release.

The question is: do Godard/Gorin know how the addition of the worker character distorts an analysis of American politics? Maybe they do and they have added the character to give the film wider relevance. But maybe they don't.

2. Anyway, more important to the film, as Dziga-Vertov fans would guess, is the investigation of the filmmaking process--and here, I think Godard is successful on two counts:

A. Godard and Gorin discuss filmmaking on a tennis court. The image is dialectically right. The comment is just: they become incoherent. We go back to this scene twice more, each time there is less coherence.

B. The press conference scenes. The images constructed here seem to me to have the freshness and originality and relevance that Godard/Gorin have set as their going ("Not to go and fetch images, but to build them.") The cameras focused on the bright red chair are at once pure Godard and effective political lesson.

3. The word of the film is ROMPER (break). To break out, to break away, to break through. This is the struggle and, from the evidence of VLADIMIR AND ROSA, victory in this particular battle is still ahead of us. As in Wind from the East, Godard is well aware of the failures of the film, both politically and filmically, both in "theory" and in "practice." He is much more concerned with dialectics qua dialectics than with dialectics as a means to a political end, and he knows it. In VLADIMIR AND ROSA this awareness is accompanied by a degree of Godardian humor and irony that hasn't been seen for a long while. That, I think, is a kind of progress.

The real drama here is the drama of the filmmaker stripped naked. The real emotion is the nausea that is the result of the eternal battle between theory and practice, just as the real emotions of Godard's earlier films were inherent in the tension between the contemplative male characters and their active female betrayers. We have simply, in going from middle Godard to late Godard translated the emotional sources from people to ideas. This is the central theme of all Godard's work from Breathless to Tout Va Bien: How can I act when I know I act? How can I feel what I think I feel? How can I resolve the opposition of theory and practice? The consequences are terrifying:

After "Bobby X" has been found and gagged and removed from the courtroom the screen goes black. We hear Godard explaining: you may wonder why we have this shot of a black screen. Well, we finally got a chance to use it. We've been carrying it around since the summer of '68 and we didn't know what to do with it. At first we thought it represented shots we could not envision such as the damage of bourgeoisism and imperialism; then we realized that they represented shots we were incapable of making -- the same. So now we are using it to represent the absence/presence of the Black man at the trial; after we have shown you shots of the others, then we show you this black screen.

This is a joke, certainly, but it is much more. "We've been carrying it around since the summer of '68." The black screen is Godard's ultimate fear and also his ultimate aim. The artist who has known the power of controlling images and sounds wants to use that power to help to control political reality. But he cannot find any way of giving true political power to mere sounds and images: immediately they are constructed, they become false and impolitic. Why? Because they are fabricated, they are made, they are not real. The black screen is the only truth but it is a useless truth. It is for Godard the equivalent of Paul's and Ferdinand's suicides -- true, but not useful. This is the bind.

Godard says: "Sometimes the first meaning of a film is not apparent until the second viewing.

Note: Struggle in Italy is not yet available in the U.S. It has been replaced on next weeks program with One. P.M., the film D.A. Pennebaker made from the footage Godard shot for One A.M. which was never completed.

The script of Masculine-Feminine is available from Grove Press.

Jim Monaco
4/72



The New School Department of Film

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ZOETROPE 2

THE FILMS OF JEAN-LUC GODARD

May 3 DEUX OU TROIS CHOSES QUE JE SAID D'ELLE (6:00 P.M.)

ONE P.M. (One Parallel Movie, by D.A. Pennebaker, 7:45 P.M.)

TWO OR THREE THINGS THAT I KNOW ABOUT HER

1966-67. Director: Jean-Luc Godard; Script: Godard, based on an article by Catherine Vimenet in Le Nouvel Observateur; photography: Raoul Coutard (Techniscope, Eastmancolor); Camera Operator: Georges Liron; Editing: Francois Collin, Chant 1 Dekattre; Music: Beethoven; Sound: René Levert, Antoine Bonfanti; Assistant directors: Charles Bitsch, Isabelle Pons; Production manager: Philippe Senné; Production: Anouhka Films/ Argos Films/Les Films du Carrosse/Parc Films. Running time: 95 minutes. Shot on locations in Paris, August--September 1966. Released in the U.S. by New Yorker Films.

CAST: Narrator: Jean-Luc Godard, Marina Vlady (Juliette Janson), Anny Duperey (Marianne), Roger Montsoret (Robert Janson), Jean Narboni (Roger), Christophe Bourseiller (Christophe), Marie Bourseiller (Solange), Raoul Levy (John Bogus), Joseph Gehrard (M. Gerard), Helena Bielicic (Girl in Bath), Robert Chevassu (Electricity meter-reader), Yves Beneyton (long-haired youth), Jean-Pierre Laverne (writer), Blandine Jeanson (student), Claude Miler (Bouvard), Jean-Patrick Lebel (Pecuchet), Juliet Berto (girl who talks to Robert), Anna Manga (woman in basement), Benjamin Rosette (man in basement), Helen Scott (woman at pinball machine).

In 1967, TWO OR THREE THINGS ... won the Prix Marilyn Monroe.

* * * * *

TWO OR THREE THINGS is one of those Godard films that sums up past achievements and refines new techniques rather than striking out in new directions. It was made during the summer of 1966 at virtually the same time as Made in U.S.A. and the pair of them are to each other as Pierrot le Fou and Masculin-Feminin of the year before. Pierrot and Made in U.S.A. represent the fictional and romantic - historical side of Godard's work while TWO OR THREE THINGS and Masculin-Feminin are representative of Godard's innovative work as a film essayist. Godard himself has noted this dichotomous relationship and, although TWO OR THREE THINGS and Made in U.S.A. were not originally conceived as a diptych, he has suggested that they be shown together on the same program -- possibly with reels alternating.

A poster for TWO OR THREE THINGS Announces:

"HER: the cruelty of neo-capitalism; HER: prostitution; HER: the Paris region; HER: the bathroom that 70% of Frenchmen don't have; HER: the terrible law of great complexes; HER: the physicality of Love; HER: contemporary life; HER: the war in Vietnam; HER: the modern callgirl; HER: the death of modern beauty; HER: the circulation of ideas; HER: the gestapo of structures."

It is all there: politics is people; culture is architecture; objects are feelings; ethics is esthetics. TWO OR THREE THINGS THAT I KNOW ABOUT HER begins as a narrative of 24 hours in a woman's life (and therefore reminds us very much of A Married Woman) but soon widens its perspective to become a scathing and curiously cool essay on the "things of life" in modern Paris: buildings, machines, rooms, products, highways clothing--in short, a compendium to rival the postcard collection of Les Carabiniers, an inventory of the objects which define us and confine us.

Wittgenstein said: "Don't think, but look!"

Husserl said: "To the things themselves!"

W.C. Williams said: "No ideas but in things."

This is the dialectical mode that will become more and more important to Godard as time passes. Richard Roud compares the poetic nature of TWO OR THREE THINGS to the work of the poet Francis Ponge who wanted to return to the basic job of the poet: the naming of things. In TWO OR THREE THINGS Godard rediscovers the cinematic power of those objects: a coffee cup full of coffee, an ironic "dejeuner sur l'herbe" where the characters are consumer products, immutable shots of cranes reaching for the sky and highways that go nowhere (see Alphaville, see Pierrot).

But of course, there is a third element, equally acutely Godardian: the logical conclusion to be drawn from the juxtaposition of the objects of life and the lifestyles is the grand cinematic dilemma: how to build images that will speak forcefully. Even in 1966, several years before Godard had articulated that dilemma, it is evident in his work. The first scene of the film invokes Brecht, who more than anyone else was responsible for posing that esthetic question; the last scene invokes Beckett who, more cynical than Brecht, decided that "communication" was impossible, even if the hope of it was necessary to life. In future, Godard chooses to side with Brecht, as we always knew he would. Cinema will become a tool.

"Ethics is the esthetics of the future."

* * * * *

ONE P.M. (ONE PARALLEL MOVIE)

1969. Director: D.A. Pennebaker. Filmed by Jean-Luc Godard, Pennebaker, and Richard Leacock, with Mark Woodcock, Mary Lampson, Robert Leacock, Kate Taylor. Production: Leacock-Pennebaker Films and NET. Filmed on location in New York and Berkeley in 1969. Running time: 83 minutes. 16 mm., Ektachrome. Distributed in U.S. by New Yorker films.

CAST: Jean-Luc Godard, Rip Torn, Eldridge Cleaver, Tom Hayden, Big Business, The Jefferson Airplane, Ameer Baraka (Leroi Jones), children in class room in Harlem, the filmmakers listed above.

Godard set out in 1968 to make a film tentatively called "One A.M.: One American Movie." He had planned and shot, with the aid of Leacock-Pennebaker, footage for the five real and five staged sequences he had planned: Eldridge Cleaver, Tom Hayden, The Jefferson Airplane, a woman wall street executive, and a young Harlem girl together with matching sequences in which Rip Torn would act out a piece of theatre commenting on the five real sequences. The project was finally abandoned in early 1970 and Pennebaker took the footage Godard had shot and mixed it with some of his own documentary footage to create a rather interesting melange comprising three basic elements: American politics as seen by Godard, Godard and his film as seen by Godard, and Godard and his film as seen by Pennebaker.

It is easy to see, I think, why Godard abandoned the project. Once again, a film ostensibly with a political foundation, finds itself overly concerned with the

problems of making political films. The major topic of the Cleaver sequence is the relationship between the "Film Mafia" (of which, Cleaver says, Godard is a part) and Black people's struggles. Hayden also is troubled by his "role" in the filmmaking process as is evident in the dialogue between him and Godard in their second sequence. Finally, the classroom sequence, obviously one of the "fictional" sequences Godard had planned, exists now (as Pennebaker has edited it) mainly as an indictment of Godard's techniques of manipulation. (Of course, Godard knew this full well. This sequence is a perfect example of the inutility of found images as opposed to constructed images.)

In the end we have, really, a Pennebaker film about Godard, rather than a rough cut of Godard's envisioned film. Paradoxically, this result isn't that far from what Godard may have intended since it is obvious that Godard's film would have also dealt with Godard's own relationship to the film, albeit from a quite different point of view. It is futile, of course, to guess what Godard might have done with the footage if he had thought it successful but I myself find it difficult to see how that footage could have been salvaged. The sequences, in and of themselves, are pretty much failures. It is only when they are viewed with the perspective of the history of the project that they take on any real significance.

It is curious to note that, of the eight films Godard has shot since the Spring of 1968 only one, A Film Like all the Others, was made in France about French politics. Wind from the East bears some relation to French politics but was made in Italy and Vladimir and Rosa was made in France but had a basically American theme as its subject. British Sounds, Struggle in Italy, Pravda, and Till Victory have Britain, Italy, Czechoslovakia, and Palestine as their subjects. In addition, an announced project, "Communication" was to be made in Canada but was never realized. I'm not sure exactly what that means but I have a feeling that it is significant.

In a colloquy with Godard and Gorin in TAKE ONE (vol 2, no. 10) Tom Hayden criticizes the film in several specific ways:

1. The film does have some political content but it was not put together in a way that could be understood.
2. There was too much discussion in the movie about the role of the working class and not enough concern with the drop-out and student movements as the focus of social struggle and class struggle now.
3. It is true that there is plenty that is degenerate about the rock culture and groups like the Airplane but there is no attempt to focus on that, either, in the film.
4. Finally, Hayden criticizes Godard's attitude towards women's liberation as evidenced in the film and finds it strange, to say the least, that Leroi Jones' people and the Panthers are portrayed as "part of one struggle."

Godard has answers to the last point: the film, if it had been finished, would have shown a different attitude towards women. Secondly, the juxtaposition of Jones and Cleaver is Pennebaker's work, not Godard's. (Pennebaker makes note in the credits that Leroi Jones sequence is not part of Godard's rushes.)

ONE P.M. is an essay on the problems of making political films politically. In a way it is more instructive about those problems because it fails in certain ways.



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ZOETROPE 2

THE FILMS OF JEAN-LUC GODARD

May 10

LA CHINOISE, OU PLUTOT A LA CHINOISE (6 p.m.)

VENT DE L'EST (7:40 p.m.)

LA CHINOISE, OU PLUTOT A LA CHINOISE, Un Film en train de se Faire.

1967. Director: Jean-Luc Godard. Script: Godard. Photography: Raoul Coutard (Eastmancolor). Camera operator: Georges Liron. Editing: Agnes Guillemot, Delphine Desfons. Music: Karl-Heinz Stockhausen. Sound: Rene Levert. Assistant Director: Charles Bitsch. Production manager: Philippe Dussart. Production: Productions de la Gueville/Parc Films/Simar Films/Anouchka Films/Anthos-Films. Running time: 90 minutes. Filmed on locations in Paris, March 1967. Distributed in the US by Leacock-Pennebaker and New Yorker films.

CAST: Anne Wiazemsky (Veronique), Jean-Pierre Leaud (Guillaume), Michel Semeniako (Henri), Lex de Bruijn (Kirilov), Juliet Berto (Yvonne), Omar Diop (Comrade X), Francis Jeanson (himself).

We are back to zero. The page is fresh and clean. It is time for Godard to start again. This is a film about a Chinese woman, or, rather, about the Chinese style: a film in the process of making itself. A tentative film; an ambiguous essay -- a "try." "We must oppose vague thoughts with clear images," says the title -- the best analysis of the gestalt of LA CHINOISE. The ideas are very vague: obviously Godard is no longer a tourist in the city of youth, as he was in Masculin-Feminin, but rather an invited immigrant settler since his marriage to Wiazemsky. Clearly the film is positively oriented to the activities of the group. Yet, one of the group is, it turns out, a revisionist, one is a suicide, and the single concrete action that the group takes must be performed by an individual--and it is bungled. Finally, we discover that this activist commune is only a vacation bungalow. The ideas are muddled. But the images are clear. Politics has superseded Romanticism, and logic poetry.

Guillaume is an actor; Veronique is a student at Nanterre; Henri works at the Institute for Economics; Kirilov (after the Dostoevsky character) is a painter; Yvonne is a peasant-prostitute. In short, the group is a microcosm intent on the unification and reconstruction of their won small society. In the end, Veronique is left alone to return to Nanterre: "I thought I had made a great leap forward, but in fact I had only taken the first timid steps." LA CHINOISE is a story of beginnings. Within a year, the students at Nanterre (Veronique among them we may suppose) have taken to the streets in the revolution of May 1968. (Few filmmakers have been so prescient as social prophets.)

LA CHINOISE is also a beginning for Godard since it is the first of the group of "Commercial" political films which includes One Plus One and Weekend. These three

These three films, along with Le Gai Savoir, are Godard's only attempts (at least until Tout Va Bien) to discuss general political ideas for a general audience. The films of the Dziga-Vertov group differ considerably from the CHINOISE group, directed as they are to small, elitist audiences and dealing more with the problems of making films than of making revolutions. Romantic existential ideas no longer pertain: the masculine--feminine dichotomy is now an accepted "cold" war rather than a subject of discussion as we see in the scene where Veronique demonstrates to Guillaume that in literature and art "one can fight on two fronts simultaneously. Social analysis and personal introspection no longer combine as they did in Two or Three Things and The Married Woman: now is the time for cooperative action rather than private analysis.

What is finally most significant about LA CHINOISE and the three films that follow it is, I think, that this phase lasts so short a time for Godard. It seems difficult for him to act in the Chinese manner for very long before he is thrown back into the introspective investigations of politico-aesthetics in the Dziga-Vertov films. Even here in LA CHINOISE he reveals his basically contemplative nature: action for the group comes too late and is anticlimactically ineffective and sour. Godard's politics seem always to be a politics of analysis and theory, rather than politics of action and practice.

LE VENT D'EST (VENTO DELL'EST)

1969. Director: Jean-Luc Godard (and Jean Pierre Gorin). Script: Daniel Cohn-Bendit, and Godard. Photography: Mario Vulpiano (Eastmancolor). Editing: Godard. Sound: Ze Antonio Ventuza. Producers: Ginanni Barcelloni, Ettore Rosbach. Production: CCC(Berlin)/ Poli Film (Rome)/Anouchka Films (Paris.) (The film has no credits.) Running time: 92 minutes. Filmed on locations in Italy, on the Western town set at Elios Studios, and the soundstages at de Paolis Studios, May 1969. Released in the U.S. by New Line Cinema.

CAST: Gian Maria Volonté (soldier), Anne Wiazemsky (whore), Daniel Cohn-Bendit, George Götze, Christian Tullio, Marco Ferreri, Christiane Tullio Altan, Allen Midgette, Paolo Pozzani, Jose Varela, and Glauber Rocha.

There are two winds: the wind from the East and the wind from the West. The wind from the East will prevail. WIND FROM THE EAST is divided in three parts: 1. "Marxist min-western." 2. a self-critique. 3. A catalogue of advice to militants. The subjects of the film include:

1. The Strike
2. The Delegates
3. The Active Minorities
4. The General Assembly
5. The Active Strike
6. The Police State

THE "A" THEORY

THE "B" THEORY

STRUGGLE ↔ CRITIQUE ↔ TRANSFORMATION

Civil Violence

The first part of the film tells, in its own particular way, the story of THE strike, of a strike, in France in May of 1968. It analyzes the elements of the strike in images and sounds that derive from the Western genre, a genre which is by no means misnamed as Godard notes. Immediately thereafter, the film turns in upon itself and

criticizes its own basic terms. Throughout the first part of the film, the history of militant filmmaking has been analyzed concurrently with the model strike. When the study of the model strike reaches the stage of the "General Assembly" Godard films, as an example, the "general assembly" of the filmmakers themselves (and there are many of them, with conflicting opinions.) The central problem of Dziga-Vertov filmmaking appears once again: "you've made a film. You've learned a little more about images and sounds, but what actually, have you done to advance the struggle?" This dilemma, as we have seen, haunts Godard throughout the Dziga-Vertov period. The "general assembly" scene shows very clearly that the spirit of WIND FROM THE EAST was much more communal than those of the other Dziga-Vertov films, yet here too there was a failure of a kind. Despite the large number of militants involved in the making of the film "what happened was that the two Marxists really willing to do the wilm took power, and -- ALL the anarchists went to the beach." [Godard-Gorin, Take One, vol. 2, no. 10]

I think one can also feel the clash in WIND FROM THE EAST between Godard's interests and the ideology expounded by Daniel Cohn-Bendit, who is reputed to have written the screenplay. WIND FROM THE EAST is unsatisfyingly split: a political tract by Cohn-Bendit, on the one hand, and another exercise in the study of how to make films politically, by Godard, on the other. In the end, I think, WIND FROM THE EAST is one of the lesser Dziga-Vertov films, precisely because it was constructed along Dziga-Vertov principles, that is, because so many people were involved in the decision making process. One can feel the lack of clarity which did so much to enhance the effect of a truly powerful film like British Sounds. WIND FROM THE EAST is, like the countryside in which it is set, a tired, late-summer film, languorous and uninterested. It was time to get away, to refresh the spirit, not to make a film. The film was made in five languages which reinforces the sense of isolation, the lack of connection which would have made it possible to make an effective film. I think the most telling title in the film is this:

THIS IS NOT THE JUST IMAGE
IT'S JUST AN IMAGE.

Jim Monaco
5/72



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ZOETROPE 2

THE FILMS OF JEAN-LUC GODARD

May 17:

WEEKEND (6 p.m.)

PRAVDA (7:45 p.m.)

WEEKEND

1967. Director: Jean-Luc Godard. Script: Godard. Photography: Raoul Coutard (Castmancolor). Editor: Agnes Guillemot. Music: Antoine Duhamel, Mozart's Piano Sonata K 576. Song "Allo, tu m'entends": Guy Béart. Sound: René Levert. Assistant Director: Claude Miler. Production managers: Ralph Baum, Philippe Senne. Production: Comacico/Les Films Copernic/Lira Films (Paris)/Ascot Cineraid (Rome). Running time: 95 minutes. Released in the U.S. by Grove Press. Filmed on location in and around Paris in September and October 1967.

CAST: Mireille Darc (Corinne), Jean Yanne (Roland), Jean-Pierre Kalfon (Leader of the F.L.S.O.); Valerie Lagrange (his Moll), Jean-Pierre Leaud (Saint-Just/Man in the phone booth), Yves Beneyton (Member of the F.L.S.O.), Paul Gegauff (Pianist) Daniel Pommereulle (Joseph Balsamo), Yves Alfonso (Gros Poucet), Blandine Jeanson (Emily Bronte/Girl in the farmyard), Ernest Menzer (Cook), Georges Staquet (Tractor driver), Juliet Berto (Girl in car crash/member of F.L.S.O.), Anne Wiazemsky (Girl in farmyard/Member of F.L.S.O.), Virginie Vignon (Marie-Madeleine), Monsieur Jojot, Isabelle Pons.

WEEKEND is a coda to the pre-Vertov period of Godard's work. It is a summary and restatement of themes we have come to know very well throughout the last few months. Its metaphor is as clear and biting as Les Carabiniers: society, bourgeois society, has been thoroughly destroyed: the remnants of a civilization are left to roam the open countryside. Its symbology is as powerful and as thorough as Two or Three Things... Prostitution is still the central device, and, as in Alphaville, Anticipation, and 2 or 3 Things, healthy sexuality has been perverted into machine sex: the automobile has triumphed. If there is a more brilliant cinematic evocation of the desolation of the late twentieth century than WEEKEND'S centerpiece--the full-reel tracking shot of the traffic jam--I don't know it. Of all Godard's "just images" this is certainly the most just.

WEEKEND is more, however, than simply a summary of past theories, for its ambience and mood are considerably more desolate than those of earlier Godard films. There is no source of peace of mind here: no comforting belief in a nostalgic past (as in Breathless), no hope in the future of the "groupuscule" (as in Bande à part and La Chinoise); no concrete analysis of a concrete situation on which to build for the future (as in La Femme Mariée, Masculin-Feminin, or 2 or 3 Things). Here we have only the sublime sense of desolation that is the overpowering motive force of the man who went through the logical terrors of the narration of 2 or 3 Things. At only one point in the film can we hear the echoes of Godard's romantic passion with history (which now seems to wear so well, to be so comforting in the early films): When Paul Gegauff plays the Mozart piano sonata in the barnyard. But Mozart's music has lost its sublime, Baroque qualities upon which Godard had depended in the past. The 360° tracking shot around the pianist is as just in its way as the linear tracking shot of the car jam: the wholeness of the vision we receive is excruciatingly ironic: Mozart exiled to the muddy yard -- that the sublime music survives even here is, well, absurd.

WEEKEND is a product of the cultural catenaria of Samuel Beckett and the demonic schizophrenia of Jean-Genet. As such it is a summation of the doubly perverse nature of modern western middle-class existence that is unrivalled in its completeness. It is interesting to note that Paul Gegauff, Claude Chabrol's script writer, and Jean Yanne, an important actor in several of Chabrol's recent films, both appear in WEEKEND, for WEEKEND strips naked for us the heart of Chabrol's universe: the violent, demonic, insane forces of desecration and destruction which the veneer of bourgeois civilization is barely able, most of the time, to hide from our vision. Chabrol has made some fine films during the last ten years, which lovingly photograph the shimmering veneer and then burst like festering wounds when the violence which ever lurks close beneath the surface explodes through the weakened (weekend) facade. Godard has no patience with the veneer; for him it has long ago dissolved completely; only the Hieronymous Bosch world beneath it is real. WEEKEND, like La Chinoise and 2 or 3 Things, is a film with considerable general political power--the power, possibly, to educate a general audience. It is one of the last two films before the Dziga-Vertov period in which Godard, purposively, turned his back on general audiences to serve the elite cadres. From my point of view, there is more concrete political value in WEEKEND than in any three Dziga-Vertov films. Thankfully, Godard-Gorin's most recent film, Tout Va Bien, seems to mark a return to the WEEKEND - La Chinoise orientation -- political filmmaking which serves "the people" rather than "the cadres."

PRAVDA

Lune 1969. "Jean-Luc Godard and comrades of the Dziga-Vertov Film Group." Shot in Czechoslovakia in color. Running time: 60 minutes. Released in the U.S. by Grove Press.

"Pravda" means "Truth." PRAVDA is narrated by a man named Vladimir and a woman named Rosa. In the English versions of the film, the readers are rather confused by the narration which they are reading. PRAVDA's central concern is Revisionism. Czechoslovakia is the background. The central semiology of PRAVDA concern the movement of the color red--to the left, to the right--red roses trampled in the mud of revisionism, red streetcars turning in circles and going off to the right, a red flag on a truck which is moving left, but which ends the film by going off the screen to the right. The basic dialectic: Revisionism is to the countries in the soviet orbit as U.S. cultural imperialism is to the countries of the Western world. Revisionism, just like westernism, is a matter, for Godard, of prostitution, meaningless work, and the tyranny of the media.

Dziga-Vertov's obsessive concern with the justness of image and sound does bubble up every now and then in PRAVDA but mostly this film concerns itself with issues. The first part of the film, by its own admission, is a political travelogue. The second part of the film announces itself as "a concrete analysis of a concrete situation." It investigates the similarities between "westernism and revisionism." It treats, in turn, of the students, the peasantry, the army, the working class. It shows disdain for all of them as they exist--now--in Czechoslovakia. It explains that they are not "thinking correctly." For example, during the Czech revolution of 1968, the students flew the black flag, not the red--and the black flag of "suicidal humanism" rather than the black flag of anarchy. Vera Chytilova is interviewed. Vera Chytilova is (was) an important figure in the Czech film renaissance of the 1960s (which was of course, hugely imbued with "suicidal" humanism). Vera Chytilova does not speak correctly. She speaks "like Arthur Penn or Antonioni." PRAVDA ends with two important secrets. After a discussion of the Third International, Vladimir tells Rosa "listen Rosa, you're acting dogmatically. You thought you were taking one step forward when in fact you were taking two steps backward." (I think this is true of the film itself, as we shall see). The last sequence is titled "Social Practice" and reminds us of the logic of the struggle: "the struggle for production, then the class struggle, then scientific experimentation. Prepare yourselves for the struggle against revisionism. Goodbye Vladimir, Goodbye Rosa."

PRAVDA has some good images (there is one long-duration shot of a lathe and its operator

which conveys very effectively the dehumanizing effects of industrial labor) and it has some interesting semiological aspects (the movement of the color red) and it has some basically good intentions (the explication of the damage of revisionism), but, finally it is a failure, I think. In fact, it "has taken two steps backwards."

THE FIRST STEP BACKWARDS: By making the mistake of choosing Czechoslovakia in 1969 as his subject for a study of revisionism, Godard has taken on a more complex situation than he can effectively analyze. In his effort to link closely "westernism and revisionism" he must ignore much of the very significant struggle of the Czech people during the previous year, since, as he points out disdainfully, they opposed revisionism (the Russian repression) "only" with "suicidal western humanism." In this way, he misses the point of the Czech revolution and he thoroughly belittles its importance (which I think was considerable) at the expense of making a symmetry which doesn't really exist. This is an exceptionally destructive blindness of the film.

THE SECOND STEP BACKWARDS: PRAVDA is thoroughly imbued with a contempt for the people it photographs as well as their society, and this is a far greater sin, I think, than the mistaken analysis of the first step backwards. There are several interviews in the film with workers, students, peasants -- none of them are translated from the Czech. Don't worry if you don't understand, says Vladimir at one point, it is not necessary to learn Czech because people say the same things in any language. This is certainly no way to conduct a concrete analysis of a concrete situation! In his disdain for the people whom his film prostitutes, Godard mimics the worst qualities of his nemesis Hollywood: this is certainly the low point of his career. France and Czechoslovakia shared a moment of history in the Spring of 1968, but the response of the Czechs to a severe repression in that following summer was heroic, while the response of the French to a very mild and gentle repression was--to put it kindly--minimal. For a Frenchman to criticize the Czech people barely a year later in such snide and unfraternal ways is despicable, and heartbreaking.

It is no surprise that the English narrators are so thoroughly confused here, and sound, when they are not stumbling, as if they were in a race to finish the reams of narration (obviously written language, not spoken, belonging in a book rather than a film) before the images finish. PRAVDA, in its failure, points up the two most significant characteristics of the Dziga-Vertov films:

1. The struggle between dogmatic, effulgent ideology and clear and effective concrete images and sounds. That the Dziga-Vertov group yearns for the latter is obvious and admirable; that they are more often than not paralyzed by the former is also, sadly, obvious.
2. The curious propensity, as we have noted several times before, to examine distant situations rather than "revenir a ses moutons" or "cultiver ses jardins." It now becomes evident that dealing with foreign situations has one very damaging effect on Dziga-Vertov films: it allows them more easily to ignore the people, the humanity, and elevate the dogma. Ultimately this condemns Dziga-Vertov films to the status of intellectual exercises -- some successful (Vladimir and Rosa, British Sounds) some distastefully snide (PRAVDA, Wind From the East). However (and this is pure Godardian irony) we cannot ignore their failures because the films themselves have such a high degree of intellectual self-consciousness that they often notice their faults even before they commit them!

Let a song by Brecht be the final comment on Dziga-Vertov films:

I used to think before old age beset me
That brains could fill the pantry of the poor
But where did all my cerebrations get me?
I'm just as hungry as I was before.

Jim Monaco

5/72



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ZOETROPE 2

THE FILMS OF JEAN-LUC GODARD

Godard Films not available in the U.S.

SHORT FILMS:

Operation Béton. 1954. Produced, directed, and written by Jean-Luc Godard. Photography: Adrien Porchet. Editing: Godard. Music: Handel and Bach. Production: Actua Film (Geneva). Running time: 20 minutes. Filmed on location at La Grand Dixence, Switzerland. Shot at the site of a dam under construction and financed with the money Godard earned as a construction worker on the dam, what is significant about Operation Béton, says Richard Roud, is that it is so very ordinary. The Swedish Film Archives are known to have a copy.

Une Femme Coquette. 1955. Produced and directed by Jean-Luc Godard. Script: "Hans Lucas" (i.e., Godard) based on a story by DeMaupassant. Photography and Editing: "Hans Lucas." Music: Bach. Filmed on location in Geneva in 16 mm. Running time: 10 minutes. CAST: Maria Lysandre (woman), Roland Tolma (man), Jean-Luc Godard (the client). "All of Godard is already there," says Roud. The story of a woman who is fascinated with the idea of prostitution and bags a client she really doesn't want. But the easiest way to get rid of him is to take him, so she does. The Swedish eisode in Masculin-Feminin begins where Une Femme Coquette ends. Hand-held camera work, unmatched shots, and an actress shaking her head and fluffing up her hair.

SKETCHES:

Le Nouveau Monde (in RoGoPaG). 1962. Direction and script: Jean-Luc Godard. Photography: Jean Rabier. Editing: Agnes Guillemot and Lila Lakshmanan. Music: Beethoven. Sound: Herve. Producer: Alfredo Bini. Production: Arco Film/Cineriz (Rome)/Lyre Film (Paris). Filmed on location in Paris, November 1962. Running time of Sketch: 20 minutes. (Rogopag was banned soon after opening in Italy and was rereleased with cuts under the title Laviamoci il Cervello (Let's Wash our Brains). The other episodes of the film were directed by Rossellini, Pasolini, and Gregoretti, hence the title. Roud says, "Le Nouveau Monde is a kind of first sketch for Alphaville and bears many resemblances to it." A man wakes up to find he is the only one who thinks normally, everyone else having been affected by an atomic explosion.

CAST: Alexandra Stewart (Alexandra), Jean-Marc Bory (the narrator), Jean-Andre Fieschi, Michel Delahaye.

Le Grand Escroc (in Les Plus Belles Escroqueries du Monde). 1963. Direction and script: Godard. Photography: Raoul Coutard (Franscope). Editing: Agnès Guillemot, Lila Lakshmanan. Music: Michel Legrand. Sound: Herve. Producer: Pierre Roustang. Production manager: Philippe Cussart. Assistant director: Charles Bitsch. Production: Ulysse Productions (Paris)/Primex Films (Marseilles)/Vides (Rome)/Toho (Tokyo)/Caesar Film (Amsterdam). Filmed on location in Marrakesh, January 1963. Running time of Sketch: 20 minutes. Godard's episode was cut from the film when it was first shown in Paris. CAST: Narrator: Godard, Jean Seberg (Particia Leacock), Charles Denner (the swindler), Laszlo Szabo (Police Inspector). Patricia is a film reporter (hence her last name) who

discovers a confidence man at work and wants to make a film of him ("I make cinéma vérité, like Monsieur Rouch," she says). He tells her that because she is making a film about him to sell to other people, she too is a swindler. Godard's implication, of course, is that pure objectivity doesn't exist.

L'Aller Retour des Enfants Prodiques: Andate e Ritorno dei Figli Prodighi (in Vangelo '70 a.k.a. L'Amore e Rabbia.) Direction and script: Jean-Luc Godard. Photography: Alain Levent. Editing: Agnès Guillemot. Music: Giovanni Fusco. Sound: Guy Villette. Assistant director: Charles Bitsch. Production: Castoro Film (Rome)/Anouchka Films (Paris) Running time of sketch: 26 minutes. CAST: Christine Guého (Her), Catherine Jourdan (Female witness), Nino Castelnuovo (Him), Paolo Pozzesi (Male witness). Other episodes by Lizzani, Bertolucci, Pasolini, Bellocchio. Roud explains, "the plot of Godard's episode is a Titus and Berenice story of a French bourgeois girl and a proletarian man from the Third World who are forced to separate, each to follow his own destiny." L'Aller Retour would seem to be one of Godard's most fascinating short films; unluckily, it has been seen by very few people. It is made in both Italian and French (she speaks French, he Italian and most important remarks are repeated by the observers in the other language.) The episode is set entirely on a roof garden in Paris and clearly points to the work of the future, political period.

DZIGA-VERTOV PROJECTS AND THE CINETRACKS:

Cinetracks were three-minute short films, made anonymously as a result of the events of May 1968. They are all silent and consist mainly of still photographs and intercuts of action. As Roud notes, "Godard's handwriting is unmistakable in many of these tracks, but of course there is no way of being sure that he was responsible for all the films that bear his distinctive calligraphy..."

Struggle in Italy. 1969. Dziga-Vertov Film Group. Color. Running time: 60 minutes. Shot on location in Rome and Paris for Italian television (RAI) but never shown. The English version has been acquired by New Yorker Films and will be distributed in a few months.

Til Victory (Palestine Will Win). Dziga Vertov Film Group. Color. Shot on location in Jordan in 1970. Not finished as of last summer.

* * * * *

MADE IN U.S.A.

1966. Director: Godard. Script: Godard, based on the novel Rien Dans Le Coffre by Richard Stark. Photography: Raoul Coutard (Techniscope) Eastmancolor). Camera: Georges Liron. Editing: Agnès Guillemot. Music: Beethoven, Schumann. Sound: René Levert, Jacques Maumont. Assistant directors: Charles Bitsch, Claude Bakka, Jean-Pierre Léaud, Philippe Pouzenc. Producer: Georges de Beauregard. Production manager: René Demoulin. Production: Rome-Paris Films/Anouchka Films/S.E.P.I.C. (Paris). Filmed on location in Paris, July and August 1966. Running time: 90 minutes. Not distributed in the U.S. due to pending legal suit by Richard Stark. Show at the New York Film Festival in 1967.

CAST: Anna Karina (Paula Nelson), Laszlo Szabo (Richard Widmark), Jean-Pierre Léaud (Donald Seigel), Yves Alfonso (David Goodis), Ernest Menzer (Edgar Typhus), Jean-Claud Bouillon (Inspector Aldrich), Kyoko Kosaka (Doris Mizoguchi), Marianne Faithfull (herself) Claude Bakka (the man with Marianne), Philippe Labro (himself), Rémo Forlani (workman

in a bar), Marc Dudicourt (Barman), Jean-Pierre Biesse (Richard Nixon), Sylvain Godet (Robert MacNamara), Alexis Poliakoff (Man with notebook and red telephone), Eliane Giovagnoli (Dentist's assistant), Roger Scipion (Dr. Korvo), Daniele Palmero (Hotel chambermaid), Rita Maiden (Woman who gives Paula information), Isabelle Pons (provincial journalist), Philippe Pouzenc (Policeman), Fernand Coquet (Billposter), Miguel (Dentist), Annie Guegan (Girl in bandages), Marika Periole (Girl with Dog), Jean-Philippe Nierman (Note-taking policeman), Charles Eitsch (taxidriver), Daniel Bart (policeman), Jean-Luc Godard (voice of Richard Politzer.)

MADE IN U.S.A. is to Deux ou Trois Choses...as Pierrot le Fou was to Masculin-Feminin; the romantic face of the matter, rather than a logical analysis. But MADE IN U.S.A. is an extremely complicated and at times confusing film. The skeleton of the film is Paula Nelson's search for the assassin of her dead lover, Richard Politzer in a French provincial town named "Atlantic City" where many of the residents have distinctly American names (such as Richard Nixon) although sometimes with French overtones (David Goodis, after the author of Shoot the Piano Player). Paul doesn't find Richard's assassin, and it isn't clear at the end just why or how Richard was killed. What is clear, from the final dialogue is that, even in a complex and distantiated film such as this, Godard is developing a political logic which will bear fruit in his later films: Right and left are an outmoded equation. It is necessary to find new terms. The assassination of Kennedy (the first) and the Ben Barka affair provide the specific political grounding of MADE IN U.S.A. During the same summer Godard was shooting Deux ou Trois Choses, a highly analytical and rather lovely simple film in which he discovered that it was necessary to return to zero. The two films taken together make it obvious that the development of Godard's thought marks a significant turning point at this stage.

MADE IN U.S.A., like Pierrot Le Fou, is a film of brilliant and painful primary colors and complex montage, both of image and sound. The images, the sounds, are never simple in themselves; the complicated montage and mixage makes them at times almost indecipherable at first viewing. The whole boiling stew of Godard's romantic iconography is cooked up here. We can tell with the benefit of hindsight that there was a reason for this stew: Godard, if not necessarily his audience, achieved an important catharsis -- those romantic demons were exorcised, finally.

* * * * *

TOUT VA BIEN.

1972. Director: Jean-Luc Godard. Script: Jean-Luc Godard, Jean-Pierre Gorin ("Godard-Gorin"). Photography: Armand Marco (Eastmancolor). Production Manager: Alain Coiffier. Producer: Jean-Pierre Rassam. Production: Anouchka Film/Vicco Film (Paris)/Empire Film (Rome). Shot on location and in studios in Paris, February-March 1972. Opened April 27, 1972. CAST: Yves Montand, Jane Fonda, Vittorio Caprioli.

Godard-Gorin's new film marks a return to traditional channels of distribution and an attempt to approach a wider audience than the Dziga-Vertov films were directed at. Jane Fonda (Academy Award winner!) plays an American journalist married to French filmmaker Yves Montand. Godard says: "To take the offensive today is to make Love Story, but with a difference. That is to say, you go to see a film with your stars. . .as in all films. But when they separate, or when they unite, we'll call that: the Class Struggle." Fonda and Montand spend forty minutes of the film in a factory strike and, apparently, the ideology of the strike is examined closely as well as having an effect on their personal relationship. The film includes, as well, several monologues by Fonda and Montand on various subjects and a grand scene after the manner of the monumental shots of Weekend in a giant supermarket, ultimate temple of consumerism, built especially for the film on a sound stage.

Jim Monaco
5/72



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ZOETROPE 2

THE FILMS OF JEAN-LUC GODARD

May 24

ONE PLUS ONE (6 p.m.)

LE GAI SAVOIR (7:50 p.m.)

ONE PLUS ONE

1968. Director: Jean-Luc Godard. Script: Godard. Photography: Tony Richmond (Eastmancolor). Camera operator: Colin Dorby. Editing: Ken Rowles. Music: The Rolling Stones. Sound: Arthur Brödburn. Producers: Michael Pearson, Iain Quarrier. Production managers: Clive Freedman, Paul de Burgh. Executive Producer: Eleni Collard. Production: Cupid Productions. Running time: 99 minutes. Filmed on locations in London, at the Olympic Recording Studios, Barnes, and at Camber Sands, Sussex, June -- August 1968 (with Interruptions). Distributed in the U.S. by New Line Cinema. Title of Producer's version: Sympathy for the Devil.

CAST: The Rolling Stones (Mick Jagger, Keith Richard, Brian Jones, Charlie Watts, Bill Wyman), Anne Wiazemsky, Iain Quarrier, Frankie Dymon, Jr., Danny Daniels, Illario Pedro, Roy Stewart, Limbert Spencer, Tommy Ansar, Michael McKay, Rudi Patterson, Mark Matthew, Karl Lewis, Bernard Boston, Niké Arrighi, Françoise Pascal, Joanna David, Monica Walters, Glenna Forster Jones, Elizabeth Long, Jeanette Wild, Harry Douglas, Colin Cunningham, Graham Peet, Matthew Knox, Barbara Coleridge. Narrator: Sean Lynch.

ONE PLUS ONE is the new beginning for Godard. We have returned to zero (see LE GAI SAVOIR); now we start afresh to build images and sounds. Godard is supposed to have planned to shoot the film in eight ten minute takes. This isn't, of course, the final form of the film, but that intention reveals the desire for simplicity that underlies the finished product. ONE PLUS ONE, as befits its title, is Godard's most restrained and reserved film, constructed simply of footage of the Rolling Stones painstakingly recording a song intercut with fragmented images and sounds from the world of revolution outside:

Black militants in a junkyard, Eve Democracy interviewed, passages from Mein Kampf read in a strange bookshop, Anne Wiazemsky painting Joycean slogans on most available walls, snips of a fantastical porno-political novel. The world outside is identifiably Godardesque, but the inside world of the recording studio is a set of sequences quite strikingly out of character for Godard.

The basic concept of the film is precise, vivid, and accurate: Godard films the Stones making a recording the way he might film himself making a film. Modern recording techniques require the same lonely, isolated, meticulous, and repetitious work. Sounds coagulate very slowly into music. Each of the Stones works generally alone, separated from the "group" by earphones and acoustic baffles. A phrase is repeated again and again until it is honed to final sharpness when it is preserved on tape, later to be mixed with literally thousands of other, separate phrases, the whole to give an illusion of unity and passion that is frightfully ironic. So, by implication, is the revolution composed of thousands of separate acts and words, each in itself blind or seemingly pointless, the whole making esthetic and logical sense. Iain Quarrier, the

producer of the film (who also is seen reading Mein Kampf -- a none too subtle comment) later released the film under the Title "Sympathy For the Devil" and slightly reedited it apparently changing it only by adding a completed version of the song at the end of the film. These seem small changes, but they are crucial. Quarrier earned himself a sock on the jaw from Godard for his efforts at "improving" ONE PLUS ONE, and no wonder. The logic of this simple film is significantly altered when the title disappears and the song is heard completed. The song is NOT completed, and neither is the revolution. The aim of the film is NOT "sympathy for the devil" but rather sympathy (more in the French than the English sense of the word) for the artist -- revolutionary who is beginning again to build sounds and images into meaning and political action. One can criticize Godard on several artistic counts: sloppiness is not one of them.

ONE PLUS ONE does not end with the sense of completion of work well done that Quarrier's version implies. Rather it ends with one of the most stunning "built" images of Godard's recent work: the "heroine" (and by implication, the theory and practice of bourgeois film) hoist by her own petard, the camera crane, into the windy blue, the black and red flags snapping briskly. It is another of the countless ends-as-beginnings in Godard's work and symbolizes as well as any other image the central quality of his artistic personality: a powerful sense of the vital connection between the real and the ideal, the concrete and the abstract, the synthesis and the analysis; in other words, the cyclical, dialectical, organic nature of modern intelligence. The end is the beginning:

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LE GAI SAVOIR

1968. Director: Jean-Luc Godard. Script: Godard. Photography: Jean Leclerc (Eastmancolor). Production: Anouchka Films (Paris)/Bavaria Atelier (Munich). Running time: 91 minutes. Released in the U.S. by Leacock-Pennebaker and EYR Films. Made at the Joinville Studios for the O.R.T.F. (who refused to show it.) December 1967 January 1968.

CAST: Juliet Berto (Patricia Lumumba), Jean-Pierre Léaud (Emile Rousseau), Chantal Jeanson.

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Simple, complex, structured, anarchic, clear, ironic, revealing, confounding -- LE GAI SAVOIR (The Joy of Learning.) Emile says, "we should start from zero." Patricia says, "no. we must return to zero first." Godard says (via cartoon), "I am equivalent to zero." LE GAI SAVOIR, like all knowledge, is a matter of languages, of analysis, of frames of reference, of misconceptions and new conceptions, of trial and error, of conversation and monologue, of love and pain. "It's necessary," says Emile, to be very careful not to fall into the ideology of being-true-to-life, a trap not always avoided by filmmakers as important as Dreyer, Bresson, Antonioni, Bergman." LE GAI SAVOIR, Godard tells us at the end:

has not wished to, cannot wish to, explain the cinema, nor even to become the goal it seeks, but more modestly to offer a few effective methods for reaching it. This film is not the film which must be made, but shows how, if one is making a film, that film must follow some of the paths indicated here.

LE GAI SAVOIR is a film of brilliant clarity and significant confusion. Emile Rousseau (great-great-grandson of Jean-Jacques) and Patricia Lumumba (daughter of the Third World) stumble over each other in a disused television studio. They embark upon a series of late-night dialogues on film and politics. They meet for seven evenings; more often than not, one of them is late for the meeting. They discuss "how to turn the enemy's weapon--language--against him." It is necessary to dissolve sounds and images first in order to analyze them. This, the film does: "Knowledge may lead us to rules of production for images." They devise a three-year program, which the film traces: First year: collect sounds and images and experiment. Second year: Criticize all that. Decompose. Recompose. Third year: attempt some small models of reborn film. In the end, they are unsure whether this film has been a success. Emile is left with one word: "misotodiman," which Patricia devines is "a mixture of method with sentiment." Here is where LE GAI SAVOIR triumphs over most of the Dziga-Vertov films which follow it and to some extent resemble it. LE GAI SAVOIR owes its vitality to the element of feeling ("sentiment"), all too often lacking in Dziga-Vertov films.

Like Two or Three Things That I Know About Her, LE GAI SAVOIR is impressive as a profoundly personal essay. It is also Godard's most intellectually courageous film, its aim being nothing less than the rigorous examination of the language through which and by means of which politics, love, beauty, and existence are understood and expressed. Patricia and Emile exist alone in a shimmering black void. There is no horizon, there is no ground. There are only three other speaking characters in the film (an old man, a young boy, a young girl) but then there is the voice of the filmmaker which is incessantly heard commenting on, and expanding the action--always his urgent whisper accompanied by the electronic noise that pervades the media-ridden society. (The final irony is that the film was severely censored by the O.R.T.F. even though it wasn't shown. The bleeps on the sound track are a mere direct comment than the words they obliterate.)

LE GAI SAVOIR speaks of love and eroticism, of workers and bosses, of language and meaning in poignantly poetic terms. It is full of the sad but incisive humor that informs Godard's best work. As it destroys the language it analyzes, it creates images and sounds of heartfelt sense. "What is really at stake," Patricia discovers, "is one's image of oneself." Film and politics are as much part of the self as the eyes or the ears. Or, as Emile sings it, there's a "constant current between man's biological nature and his intellectual construction." This is the ultimate Godardian struggle: to overcome the self, to reconstruct the expression of self, finally, to give birth to the self, and so to sanity.

The third part of the film, the "third year" of models of sounds and images, is a swift and powerful catalogue of the genres of film art: the experimental film, the psychological film, the guerrilla film, the film tract, the international film, the imperialist film, the historical film, the militant film, and finally the untranslatable film d'role. LE GAI SAVOIR is a monumental catalogue of film art, language, politics, and love. And that, after all, is a fine summary of Godard's work for the past 13 years.

It is hardly an accident that LE GAI SAVOIR (The joy of learning) rests on the encounter between the great-great grandson of the father of humanist romanticism, and the daughter of the Third World, for that is the dialectic which has been the engine of Godard's career, and the force that has powered the West of contemporary metaphysical culture. Jean-Luc Godard's 37 films comprise one of the most significant oeuvres (in any genre) of this frenetic part of the final century of western civilization. His sinuous roots twist back to Mozart and Bach, to Picasso and Nietzsche and Hegel

and Marx and Dostoevsky and Brecht and Renoir (père et fils) and Joyce and Bogart and Rossellini and Balzac. He has felt and understood the cultural universe which stretches from Bach to Batman, from Racine to the Rolling Stones--and, more important, he has attempted to explain to us this singular truth:

that the culture represses us and suffocates us as much as it expresses us,

that there is no escape from the Alphavillian culture of cities,

that this culture turns our women into objects of consumption and our men into fearful, paralyzed dreamers, like Hemingway and Keats half in love with easeful death,

that our machines of communication and of transportation have overwhelmed us so that it is they who can be said "to live," not us,

that our social contract has been abrogated.

Even for all this Godard would not be an important artist-thinker if he did not always remind us that we still have the power to destroy the decadent elements of a destructive culture and rebuild it--to write a new social contract. If, at times, the details of the new contract seem fuzzy, remember the difficulty of the job.

Remember, too, that throughout his career Godard has revealed an analytic intelligence rather than powers of synthesis. His job has been to explain, to criticize, to abstract. Perhaps it must be left to others to understand, to build, to create. Perhaps it is true that "the only way to become a revolutionary intellectual is to cease being an intellectual." If so, Godard's thorough honesty has already done much to describe just how his own contemplative and analytical nature paralyzes and prevents action. An analysis such as Godard's, which destroys old patterns of thought and reveals the intimate connections between what used to be called "psyche," "society," "economy," "philosophy," and "culture," must be seen as significantly creative. In French, the word "conscience" signifies two concepts for which we have separate words in English: "consciousness of the self," and "conscience." Godard's art is "consciencieuse": an intimate confluence of the personal and the moral. It leaves me breathless.

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