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"There is a very short distance between high art and trash, and trash that contains the element of craziness is by this very quality nearer to art." --Sirk.

Sirk, the uprooted émigré, sees the world and the subjects he undertakes with an anguished objectivity; observing, absorbing and reflecting his material. Like Ozu, Sirk takes on the least facile task of presenting the present; what is accepted by custom, mores and standards taken for granted, caste rules and stratifications, and qualifies them by his treatment and eye-of-God attitudes. No other Hollywood director of the 50's - not even Hitchcock - so ruthlessly exposes and undermines the hollow cupidity and superficiality of middle class ideals of the Eisenhower years in America. These films are perfect time capsules. And yet the works are made universal by a sensibility encompassing an acceptance of the varied states of life, by benign contemplation and an awe of the poetry of existence, as well as being viscerally permeated by an Olympian grace (a camera that glides); a Constructivist cinema deploying architecture to comment on the characters' iconography and their emotive stances. Take nothing for granted in a Sirk film: composition, cutting, color, light, sets (the textural diversity) - the control will guide you.

Jane Wyman goes blind (indirectly caused by shiftless playboy Rock Hudson, who earlier on was also responsible for the death of Jane's beloved husband. At the end they find out they're right for each other). The theme of blindness (literal displacement), of infirmity, crystallizes our constant anxiety of groping for a place in the sun. But this coming to face with the realization is also the beginning of hope; most people are blind but don't know it. Laugh if you must. Sirk is laughing too. But he's also weeping.

--Warren Sonbert