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SWN,
With *The Green Room*, Francois Truffaut, among the warmest of directors, has also brought us a cool, if far from brittle, work. As with *Adele H.*, Truffaut has here set for himself the prodigiously difficult task of describing reactions to a great passion that we, the audience, never witness. (In *Adele H.*, it was a love affair; here it is the love between a husband and a wife who dies.) When *The Green Room* opens, Julien's wife is dead and most of his friends have been slaughtered in the First World War. The story of *The Green Room* is the story of a man who refuses to stop grieving, who is true to his love for the dead at the expense of love for the living. The film is intelligent, but bleak and without tension/or humor. Where *Adele H.* succeeded because of the wild, almost tangible romantic passion of its heroine (beautifully conveyed by Isabelle Adjani), *The Green Room* fails because Julien is

so dour and uninteresting.

Shot by cinematographer Nestor Almendros (*Days Of Heaven*), *The Green Room* is often beautiful to look at. There's one particularly lovely sequence where we watch the delirious Julien lying drenched in his sweat while images of candles are superimposed over his face and the sound of battle comes over the soundtrack.

Emily Dickenson wrote, "After great pain a formal feeling comes . . ." This "formal feeling", Julien's feeling, is a feeling few mortals are lucky enough to escape; so we understand both Julien's loss and his initial sorrow. But because our feelings are so personal, because they arise from love for a particular human being, it is hard to identify with Julien's grief for a wife and for friends we never meet. It would require a quirkier talent and a more vital actor than the loveable Truffaut to bring this off. ●