

Document Citation

Title	French film -- excerpt. Quai des Orfèvres
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Source	<i>Falcon Press</i>
Date	1953
Type	book excerpt
Language	English
Pagination	114-115
No. of Pages	2
Subjects	
Film Subjects	Quai des Orfèvres (Jenny Lamour), Clouzot, Henri-Georges, 1947

Brumes. It was forgotten that the success of these pre-war pictures had been as much due to their novelty as to their deep sympathy with the thought of the times, but all that had been some years ago. These commercialized revivals of rehashed subjects resulted in mechanical copies of ancient formulae. The French pre-war film had been a reflection, good or bad, of contemporary reality, but the post-war imitations went on repeating endlessly such faults as they had had, usually in the form of a convention for aping a 'naturalism' far removed from actual life.

Dedée d'Anvers and *Une si jolie Petite Plage* are both typical of this naturalistic tendency. Directed by Yves Allegret, the plots are handled, unquestionably, with great skill. Allegret is a director who knows all the resources of brilliant editing and photography. For these pictures he had, in addition, such fine players as Gérard Philippe, Bernard Blier and Simone Signoret, one of the most gifted actresses of the post-war phase. In France these films did have a limited commercial success, as some audiences still enjoyed the taste of the dead past. In the International Festival at Venice, *Dedée d'Anvers*, bringing nothing new, went unnoticed. The scripts of these films were almost parodies of *Quai des Brumes* and *Pépé le Moko*, and even surpassed them in their atmosphere of despair. Almost the entire action of *Dedée d'Anvers* takes place in a brothel, and everything centres around ignoble characters, fit only for extermination. In the final shot, at least, some hope does appear with the gleam from the lights of the workmen as they cycle off to work. As a second-hand murderer, who, knowingly, refuses escape for suicide, the hero of *Une si jolie Petite Plage* (Gérard Philippe), brother to the Gabin of *Le jour se lève*, is resigned to his fate beforehand.

The naturalist tendency, particularly characteristic of Yves Allegret, was followed by Julien Duvivier's *Panique* and *Au Royaume des Cieux*. No less characteristic was Blistene's *Macadam*, which had some artistic quality, through being supervised by Jacques Feyder.

G. H. Clouzot's post-war films are similar in theme to the old pre-war naturalistic tendency. This gifted director achieved his peak with *Quai des Orfèvres*. The subject, an insignificant detective novel, was of neither interest nor importance, and devoid of any deep meaning. In short, the director repeated the old Hollywood formula of restimulating the banal subject-matter of a moderately well-planned plot by adding a picturesque study of some social circle. Clouzot had a perfect under-

standing of how to portray the actual Quai des Orfèvres (the French equivalent of Scotland Yard) and the most up-to-date Parisian café concerts, and to these portrayals he brought all the good taste, plastic feeling and artistic culture usually lacking in corresponding American productions. Certain scenes recalled the art of Manet, Degas or Lautrec. The value of the film, as a whole, lay entirely in its form and in the quality of its photography. The insignificance of the actual story pushed considerations of morals and manners into the background; it is almost an apology for the ambitions of a young singer with no scruples, who trades solely on her pretty face.

After this mediocre plot, Clouzot was asked to undertake a subject worthy of his great talents. He pleased everyone with his choice of *Manon*, and he took the famous novel written in the eighteenth century by the Abbé Prevost intending to change it into a pitiless picture of youth torn by the chaos of immediate post-war times. *Manon* roused the greatest anticipation and on its opening day the public fought to get in to see it until the police intervened. This initial eagerness made its subsequent failure all the more marked.

Clouzot overcame the somewhat conventional, pre-war pessimism by aiming, in particular, at effect. In *Quai des Brumes* the pure love of the Gabin-Michèle Morgan couple combated against Evil, personified by the 'gang' who triumphed in the end. *Manon* was nothing more than a prostitute, who cared only for money and made her lover, Des Grieux, share this mania. Their love was defined by one of the key speeches in the film's dialogue: 'Nothing is disgusting when one is in love.' *Manon* says this when he knows that she had just sold herself to some old man. Her infatuated lover follows her throughout her criminal career. Love is represented in *Manon* with masochistic and perverse resignation, and Evil is represented as inevitable and almost desirable.

The film also suffered from weakness in direction, which, unlike Clouzot's other films, was marred by overloading, bad taste, and unevenness in handling the lapse of time; the French Liberation, the Parisian black market and the Jewish-Arab war in Palestine, were false and superficial in treatment, inspired more obviously by news items from the lurid press than by any true sense of reality. The picture was characterized by a self-conscious striving after big effects and sensation. It taught French films, at least, how to avoid the particular pitfall of theoretical abstraction. The failure of *Manon* revealed the one thing