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Contempt

1964 99 min. Color Rental: A

Directed by Jean-Luc Godard; original title: "Le Mepris;" screenplay by Godard, based on the novel "A Ghost at Noon" by Alberto Moravia; photography by Raoul Coutard; music by Georges Delerue. With Brigitte Bardot, Michel Piccoli, Jack Palance, Fritz Lang. French dialog with English subtitles.

Contempt, based on Alberto Moravia's novel *Il Disprezzo*, was shot on location, mostly in Rome, partially at Cinecittà. Its subject is the making of a film (*The Odyssey*); its protagonists are a screenwriter (Michel Piccoli), a producer (Jack Palance), a director (Fritz Lang playing himself), an assistant director (Godard, the director). This self-reflective framework of narrative, character and casting illuminates the work of Godard much as *Day For Night* will illuminate that of Truffaut. The judgement of the world of cinema implicit in Godard's title is in contrast to the descriptive title of Truffaut's film; one is a condemnation of its falsity, the other a recognition of the illusion at its core. Paul Javal, the screenwriter, fails to understand the disdain of his wife Camille (Brigitte Bardot). The two gradually drift apart during the shooting of a film in which Paul prostitutes his art just as his wife thinks he has prostituted their marriage. She leaves and is killed in an accident. There is in *Contempt* a much noted thirty-minute sequence between husband and wife, shot entirely within the confines of a small apartment. The construction of the work in large blocks, of which this sequence is an example, along with the attitude towards the industry expressed in the film, mark *Contempt* as an important moment in the evolution of Godard's style and in the direction of his career. (Filmed in Anamorphic ratio; our prints are flat) (MJA)

