

Document Citation

Title	A director lost in his script
Author(s)	Thomas Quinn Curtiss
Source	<i>International Herald Tribune</i>
Date	
Type	review
Language	English
Pagination	
No. of Pages	1
Subjects	
Film Subjects	Duelle (Duel), Rivette, Jacques, 1975

A Director FILMS *Lost in His Script*

By Thomas Quinn Curtiss

PARIS, Sept. 15 (IHT).—*“Duel-le”* (at the Marignan, the Madeleine and the Studio de la Harpe) is an alarming demonstration of eccentricity. It is the first of a projected quartet of films by Jacques Rivette and it is reported that Part Two has already been completed. Part One is bound for the New York film festival.

A program note explains that it concerns the battle of the goddesses of two peoples: The daughters of the sun and the daughters of the moon. They have but 40 days to live among we mortals, that term stretching from the last moon of winter to the first moon of spring. Their rivalry is for the possession of a talisman that will permit a prolongation of their stay on earth. This information is indeed welcome, for without it the spectator would be bewildered.

The warfare of the divinities is conducted on subway platforms, in shady cabarets, by the flickering candlelight of chateau terraces and in a train station storeroom where the charm has been checked in a locked vault. The two visitors from the heavens are constantly and literally at

sword's point. Jean Babilee at times seems to be acting as a referee, but appears to change sides as often as the native of a neutral town disputed by two foreign armies. In one particular the happenings conform to standard movie procedure: The story is a chase.

The stylized imagery displays a strong sense for composition and there is a refined polish to the camera work. The queen of the night is clad in smart, masculine black and the sun goddess is a blonde, but this color contrast and the zodiacal implications of the outline fail to clarify the details of the raging conflict.

In theory Rivette is on the right track. The fantastic possibilities of the screen have been neglected and in them lies prom-

ise for the cinematic poet. But fantasy must have its own persuasive logic, as it does, say, in Cocteau's "Orpheus" and in the cubistic "The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari."

One hears of actors who lose themselves in a role. On this occasion a director has lost himself in his script. Obviously an allegory about the endless war between the powers of darkness and the powers of light is intended, but it remains undramatized.

* * *