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24 mars/March 24

Révolution Politique/Political Revolution

2^e séance/Part II

CUBA SI:

France, 1962, 57 min.

Production

Pierre Braunberger

Production

Réalisation

Chris Marker

Direction

Prises de vues

Chris Marker

Photography

Interviews

Etienne Lalou

Interviews

Igor Barrière

The film is not so much propagandistic as partisan, for as in his other impressionistic travelogues: Marker's didacticism largely takes the form of demystification. His method, like his ideology, is essentially that of Marxism, but since his main concern is to show the contradictory human reality that lies behind most arid abstractions, one never feels that the ideology determines what he sees but always that it emerges from it. The tense, marching procession that turns gradually into a carnival conga, like the impoverished families moved from decrepit slums to sanitary modern dwellings or the holiday crowds that fill the villa gardens once the exclusive domain of industrial millionaires, for him provide an irrefutable justification of the Revolution's ideals. And these simple yet compelling images are accompanied by a deceptively simple commentary, in close harmony with the style — a mixture of patience, passion and poetry — that emerges from the remarkable Spanish interviews as being Castro's own. But Marker's poetry is first and foremost cinematic, and his greatest talent lies perhaps in his ability to turn incongruous details into imaginatively powerful symbols: the mountain climber painting a fresco on a rock face near Vinales conveys the spirit of revolutionary aspiration against overwhelming odds, while the crowded baseball stadium or the Three Wise Men taking children's requests for Christmas presents over the telephone objectively demonstrate that Cuba has assimilated rather than rejected its American heritage. Out of this collage of characteristic details, Marker constructs an affectionate portrait of a young country's slow but cheerful struggle for self-knowledge and self-discovery.

Monthly Film Bulletin, May 1969

Ce qu'il importe de bien laisser voir, c'est le dessin global du Cuba Si. Il ne s'agit pas à proprement parler d'un documentaire (l'information passe toujours au second plan); pas plus d'ailleurs que d'une reconstitution rigoureuse. Le film de Chris Marker pourrait porter en sous-titre "évocation d'un pays en état de révolution." Les faits ici ont peu d'importance; quand on travaille avec des foules en effervescence, tout devient un peu mythique, les symboles remplacent les choses réelles, la poésie envahit les actes les plus quotidiens.

Pour se convaincre de la netteté de ce dessin, il suffit d'étudier la façon dont Marker utilise les actualités filmées. Les événements passés s'intègrent dans la vie courante; on n'arrive pas à distinguer entre l'histoire et l'actualité. On assiste à une vaste opération d'enivrement collectif. Pourquoi refuser à un cinéaste le droit d'exprimer ce qui est palpable dans une réalité particulièrement riche? Au-delà de l'ordre chronologique, il existe pour raconter une révolution un ordre qui tient compte davantage de la vie interne de ceux qui la font.

Michel Patenaude

Positif 62, novembre 1962