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A FILM LIKE ANY OTHER (1968)

This film deals with the events of May 1968 in Paris, the so-called May Revolution. Like "British Sounds", which follows it in the chronology of the Dziga Vertov Group films, (it seems based on the theory) that revolutionary films must oppose complex sounds to simple images in order first to liberate the medium from an oppressive ~~bourgeois~~ tradition that subjects "sound" to the tyranny of the image. However, it is not nearly so successful ~~as~~ an experiment in revolutionary film-making as "British Sounds" : audiences invariably ~~•~~ walk out in boredom, and even Godard's most ardent partisans find it difficult to defend this film, except as a provocation, in which role the film succeeds admirably: "art film" consumers choke on this film after five or ten minutes, and have been known to turn their wrath on its exhibitors (the only New York showing ^{resulted in} caused a small riot inside Lincoln ~~Center~~ ^{mark} Center) -- as the first Dziga Vertov Group film, it does effectively punctuate a change in Godard's direction as a film-maker, and separates the career of a film artist from that of a film-militant. It can be described in fairly simple and brief terms. Two basic image sequences which alternate every five or ten minutes are opposed by a complex sound montage made up of five or six elements. One image sequence consists of fast-cut, black and white shots of street demonstrations and speeches filmed in jerky, newsreel style in the midst of the May events: intercut with this random montage are static long takes, in color, of a group of militants sitting in a sunny meadow outside Paris in June, discussing May and what to do next -- here, the camera never focuses on the participants in the discussion, preferring instead to place high grass in the foreground or frame ~~the~~ only the backs, knees, elbows or other anatomical ^{parts} ~~fragments~~ of those in the group. On the soundtrack is a mix of many elements: the discussion on the grass, street sounds from May, speeches from May, voices reading newspaper reports, and in the English version -- for surrealist effect (it would seem) as much as for clarification -- there is the voice of a UN ~~interpreter~~ ^{interpreter} desperately trying to deadpan a ~~translation~~ simultaneous translation of the French ~~speech~~ ^{COLLAGE}. In French alone, the soundtrack mix is nearly impossible to decipher: in the English version, the viewer is saved the trouble of even trying to

separate and understand the sounds, which probably were never intended to be ~~literally~~ literally followed: Godard himself was pleased when he heard Leacock-Pennebaker added this extra level of confusion to the sound-track, ~~and~~ ^{also} pleased that the film ^{provided} ~~got~~ ~~such~~ an outraged mob reaction at its American Premiere in ~~Lincoln Center~~ Philharmonic Hall. The film runs 110 mins. about ~~two hours~~, and is ^{mounted} ~~mounted~~ on two 2000-ft reels: ~~and the delay~~ an audience vote or a flip of the ~~coin~~ coin is suggested (~~by~~ by the film-makers) to determine which reel plays first.

-- Tom Luddy

the film suggest that a random poll or the flip of a coin be used to determine etc