Document Citation

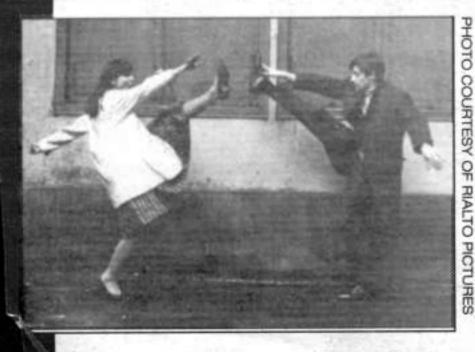|	
Title	**'A woman is a woman'**
Author(s)	David Fear
Source	*San Francisco Bay Guardian*
Date	2003 May 14
Type	review
Language	English
Pagination	95
No. of Pages	1
Subjects	
Film Subjects	Une femme est une femme (A woman is a woman), Godard, Jean Luc, 1961

'A Woman Is a Woman'

Go-go Godard

To sum up the plot (apply the term loosely here) of Jean-Luc Godard's third feature film is easy enough: A stripper (Godard's wife and muse, Anna Karina) decides out of the blue that she wants to have a baby. Her husband (Jean-Claude Brialy) isn't ready to father a child, so he enlists his best friend (Jean-Paul Belmondo) to do the deed. To attempt to describe the sheer giddiness this giggle-inducing deconstruction will induce in viewers, however, is a wee bit harder. Rather than dipping his toe into the avant-garde, the Gallic wunderkind dove in headfirst by dismantling musical conventions one by one: bits of swirling scores blast in and out at random then drop into silence, song lyrics are mostly spoken straight as dialogue, and dance numbers are choreographed as freeze-frames. Yet even as it morphs into a dense look at what happens when the un-reality of the spectacle gets injected with nouvelle vague rawness, Godard still manages to keep things breezy, goofy, and soufflé-lite. For him, a woman may simply be a woman, as the title implies, but a film is never simply a film: It's also a love letter, a manifesto, a poem, a prank, a journal, a forum, a house of cards to be knocked down, and a hall of mirrors (Belmondo, named "Alfred Lubitsch", wants to get home early since "*Breathless* is on TV"; at one point Jeanne Moreau shows up and is asked how the in-progress *Jules et Jim* shoot is going). Godard claimed he'd set out to film a romantic comedy using the grammar of melodrama; later he humbly admitted, "I don't know whether it's a comedy or a tragedy. At any rate, it's a masterpiece." You'll get no argument from me. (David Fear)