

YALE FILM BULLETIN

V. 2
N. 1



The Yale Film Bulletin

Volume II Number 1

October, 1965

A Publication of the Yale Film Society: Editor, Gary L. Davis
2005 Yale Station Consulting Editor, John H. Dorr
New Haven, Connecticut

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COVER: This month's cover is from
Jean-Luc Godard's new Pierrot le
fou, with Anna Karina and Jean-
Paul Belmondo.

From the Yale Film Society

We are very glad to present our more or less monthly
magazine to our audience for another year. Should we
repeat again that articles are most welcome from viewers
however remotely connected with Yale (one of our con-
tributors last year was so remotely connected with Yale
that he was going to Harvard)?

The Yale Film Society will hold a Healing Meeting
on Thursday, October 21, at 7:30 P.M. in the Jon-
athan Edwards College Lounge for all interested in
membership.

Notes from the Editor - Gary L. Davis

The best film shown at the recent New York Film Festival was, of course, Carl Dreyer's Gertrud. It is the story of a beautiful woman's futile search for ideal love, filmed in a perfect and indescribable way. The reservations which many people seem to have about Gertrud are not, I think, admissible: it is a masterpiece of one of the cinema's greatest artists, who was, by the way, present at the screening and given an ovation. Gertrud will be distributed in the U.S., perhaps soon.

Louis Feuillade's Les Vampires, also shown at the Festival, is a remarkable case. It consists of nine 40-minute episodes of a serial from 1915. The plot is extremely involved and weird, and the absence of the original titles makes the film even more a completely baffling nightmare. The beauty of The Vampires lies in the absolutely realistic style in which its incredible events are shown: deep-focus photography, long shots, and natural settings are beautifully used throughout. This mixture of the dreamlike and the documentary constitutes the greatness of The Vampires, links it with such a recent film as Alphaville, and explains, I think, the very high praise which such authorities as Andre Bazin, Alain Resnais, and many of the Surrealists gave it.

I am sorry to admit that I missed Godard's Alphaville at the Festival, which seems to be one of his best films. Later in this issue a summary will be found of a conference where Godard spoke of Alphaville and other matters.

The following are recommended films which may be seen now or soon:

These Are the Damned: A bizarre science-fiction fantasy, wonderfully directed by Joseph Losey, it should show soon at the Crown Theater.

Stronboli: Rossellini's great film with Ingrid Bergman was badly altered for American release. It will be shown next Tuesday, October 19, at 2:00 P.M. on Channel 9.

The Informer: Although its reputation as one of John Ford's best films is exaggerated, The Informer is excellent. Monday, October 18, at the Yale Law School Film Society

In New York City:

Alphaville should open soon at the Paris Theater, and Godard's marvelous attempt at an ethnological view of modern society, The Married Woman, is now at the Art Theater.

La Terra Trema: Shown for the first time in this country, Luchino Visconti's famous study of Sicilian fisherman is now at the New Yorker Theater.

The Garrick Theater will present another excellent double-bill this Monday and Tuesday: Ray's The Lusty Men and Fuller's Shock Corridor.

The Third New York Film Festival was opened with the first U.S. showing of Alphaville, the ninth film of Jean-Luc Godard. Godard, who had introduced A Woman is a Woman and Band of Outsiders when they were first shown here at last year's festival, was in New York for the opening and remained in the city through the day of the first U.S. screening of Godard's second film, The Little Soldier at the festival about one week later. With The Married Woman playing simultaneously in New York to surprisingly large audiences and a triple bill of older Godard films having been recently revived, it was particularly appropriate that one of the panel discussions on film, initiated this year by the festival, should include a panel interview of the famed French director.

The panel included critics Pauline Kael of Partisan Review, Hollis Alpert of the Saturday Review, Andrew Sarris of the Village Voice, and historian and critic Parker Tyler, with Arthur Knight moderating and director James Ivory on hand for brief remarks on his own film, Shakespeare Wallah, later shown at the festival. Except for Sarris, the members of the panel, as most of the New York paper critics, seemed either baffled or annoyed by Alphaville and evidently felt the same way about most of his later films, if not all his films since Breathless, his first. In consequence, the interview was of a very uneven quality, and what follows are more isolated remarks by Godard on various aspects of his technique rather than any kind of complete portrait of the film-maker today. To clarify the discussion of Alphaville, personal observations have been supplemented.

Alphaville portrays the society of another planet in which science and computer control have superseded all human values and emotions, the vicissitudes of free will. Life in every part of the planet is dominated by the all-governing machine, Alpha 60. It is a sterile, unyielding world, whose inhabitants are conscious of no past and no future, their actions rigorously mechanized, their terms of existence, their language posited for all to know in their ubiquitous dictionaries—volumes that have replaced bibles in every hotel room. Into this world enters Lemmy Caution (Eddy Constantine), the tough earthling gangster-movie hero turned reporter for an earth newspaper The Figaro-Pravda under the alias Ivan Johnson. His mission is to find out Werner von Braun, the leader of Alphaville, and destroy him. The guide assigned to him for his stay, Alpha 60 not anticipating his ultimate goal, is Natasha Von Braun (Anna Karina), the government chief's daughter. She, in the end, escapes the nightmare passive existence of Alphaville with Lemmy Caution, having helped him to destroy Alpha 60, and begins to learn from him for the first time the meaning of the word love.

Godard was asked if it was true he made Alphaville simply because he wanted to make a "pop-art, gangster, camp, science fiction" film, with no essential regard for the actual content of the film. The director replied, Alphaville is not science fiction but a realist film; it had, after all, been shot on locations in Italy and France. The film, he said, is a fable of modern man. It is a film shot in the past future tense, and may be regarded as the story of a man of the present going into the future or, with as much validity, a man of the past coming into the present. It is also, he said, the first film in which he had become so vitally concerned with working out such a tight structure for what was to be his most straightforwardly narrative film.

What so many of the critics had been objecting to as in-jokes on filmmaking or mere gimmicks in the film are essential parts of the film's meaning and style, Godard's unique personal expression. One such device is the switching to negative film Godard employs both here and in The Married Woman. Godard explained that Alphaville is a film of "lights and darks", a society in which humanistic values were reversed and standardized. This is what he wanted to remind us of in the sudden switches to negative. In The Married Woman a similar idea was in mind, plus

the fact the negative was used in portraying a photographer taking shots of models, thus having a more direct iconographic relationship.

Sarris pointed out the appropriateness of Alphaville's musical score, a Max Steiner-ish soundtrack heightening the tension of melodrama, romantic attachment, Lemmy Caution and a world of Warner Brothers films of two and three decades ago placed in the context of the numb, sleep-walking, "superior" society of Alphaville. Frequent shots through glass, also pointed out as gimmicky, serve beautifully, aside from their purely visually exciting nature, to further express the alien nature of Alphaville.

The general tone of many of the slurs against the film indicated the critics had expected a fast and even basically amusing film which Alphaville most certainly is not. The tone is nightmarish. Alpha 60 is seen as a glaring circular neon grill light against a black background, whose slow, harsh, awful voice, as Godard mentioned, was not electronically created, but done by placing a microphone at the larynx of a man whose vocal cords had been badly damaged and who had been retaught to speak through the use of the microphone. Scenes are dimly lit with very few exteriors, lending such unusual impact to the beauty of Natasha when we first see her standing by a window, lit by sunlight. The expressionless face, formal gestures demanded of the inhabitants of Alphaville, cannot obscure well enough for Lemmy Caution the humanity within Von Braun's daughter.

The pace, to critics' dismay, is slow, episodic, with long and scrutinizing close-ups. The camera is constantly dollying down corridors that seem never to end. A terrifying sequence near the end of the film depicts Lemmy and Natasha groping along the walls of the inescapable, unending complex that houses Alpha 60, trying to find the door, never found before, that can lead them to freedom.

Among Miss Kael's numerous objections was the way Lemmy Caution kept shooting his way out of any desperate-looking dilemmas when Alphaville agents would grow suspicious of him. This, Godard made clear, is the only way Lemmy can solve his problems, and is perfectly valid in the context of the fable. The violence throughout Alphaville is as analytic as grim or brutal. A fight scene is followed in slow motion; an execution of criminals in Alphaville is shown, the condemned forced to jump into a swimming pool at the firing of rifles, and as they swim towards the end of the pool a row of girls dive after them, always catch up to, and stab the condemned to death, to the appreciative applause of an audience; —these are no less realistic, meaningful in the violence they portray as commentary on the nature of the society than Akim Tamiroff's grotesque but more naturalistic death scene. The machine world has made what once might have seemed like terror become the order of the day; it is this terrifying robot-like kind of existence, animation that is given to a series of microphones that move towards and away from Lemmy in a series of close shots of him as he is questioned by Alpha 60 as to his purpose in coming to Alphaville.

Miss Kael was also bothered by Godard's script, as she usually is, and suggested the director seek other writers. Godard frankly admitted he liked writing his own screenplays, could not conceive of working with another writer, and believed his scripts were probably better than others' would be for him to work with anyway. Sarris backed him up in pointing out how wonderfully and totally are Godard's films personalized. Alpert suddenly asked Sarris if he thought Godard was the greatest living director; Sarris expressed his preference for the classics, Hitchcock et. al. but thought Godard was probably the most exciting new director and auteur in films today.

The discussion moved on to more general subjects and other films. Miss Kael was afraid Godard's films had been progressively dealing with less and less "truth" and concentrating too singlemindedly on visual tricks. Godard said he believed

his style was not something separable from what he was trying to say in his films; what he aimed at were the interchangeable values, truth and beauty, and where he found one, he found the other. He found it both in Rossellini and in Hitchcock, and a camera movement was just as likely to contain as much meaning as a line of dialogue. Kael objected to Godard's reference to Hitchcock, stating that his films had also met with a decline since the fifties; —where was the great Hitchcock of the thirties? Asked to give an example of Hitchcock's decline, Kael offered Vertigo. Godard smiled, evidently in quite fundamental disagreement; Sarris made clear the opposite poles of criticism at which he and Miss Kael stood, and the subject was dropped.

Godard spoke of his early days at the Cinemathèque in France where he and so many other filmmakers and critics (Truffaut, Rivette, Rohmer) practically lived in their attempt "to see everything." He said he still saw about ten movies a week to keep up with what had and was being done by people who knew how to make film. Kael took the opportunity to remark that perhaps in seeing so many films he had learned plenty of "cinematic truth," but had lost contact with "life itself." There was no reply.

On early influences, Godard mentioned Preminger's films of the forties. While confessing he did not like Preminger's later works as much, he maintained great respect for the man and could not see how any serious film student would not see Bunny Lake is Missing when it opened. Godard was asked about Brechtian influence in his work and he said the only Brecht he had ever seen was a production of Arturo Ui which inspired him to use the tableau form of My Life to Live.

Regarding general technique, Godard described his various relationships and problems in making films. Concerning actors, Godard confirmed his frequent preference for improvisation, which he has been progressively able to direct with greater and greater control (from the philosophical considerations of Jean Seberg in Breathless to those of Macha Meril in The Married Woman). He likes working with more professional actors, those who can respond most naturally to the roles he wants realized—those such as Jean-Paul Belmondo, Anna Karina, Akem Tamiroff.

Godard expressed the closeness he likes to maintain between himself and all the people working under him, attachments that have resulted in such long artistic partnerships as those with Agnes Guillemot, his editor, and Raoul Coutard, his cameraman. Cameramen in France are often great dictators, Godard commented, and he had at first feared Coutard would be one when the studio had appointed him to Godard. But the match did turn out well, Coutard being perfectly willing to adapt his own creative technical abilities to Godard's style to the extent where Godard, once having explained the needs of a shot to Coutard, feels free in letting Coutard do his own framing. Asked if he prefers working with a large or handheld camera, Godard said he tried to fit the camera to the specific film and scene. Breathless needed handheld movements and Contempt had to be filmed with a Mitchell.

The director was asked if he felt limited by the small budgets he had to work with. He replied that he wasn't at all hampered by this, that he couldn't conceive of making The Married Woman for more than a hundred thousand dollars. Sometime he might want to make a more expensive film, but with the films he is currently making, he feels adequately budgeted. Contempt cost over \$1 million dollars because of Bardot more than anything else, and probably because Joseph E. Levine had envisioned a different film from the one Godard gave him. As Godard understood it, Carlo Ponti had even re-edited much of the film for Italian distribution. Godard had himself been forced by Levine to make some artistic compromises, but for all his former talk of withdrawing his name from the film, he does still consider it his own personal work.

Censorship in France he felt to be a greater problem than money, a much greater restraining influence in France, he believed, than in America. The French govern-

ment forced him to change the title of The Married Woman for French release to A Married Woman in the hope its pessimistic representation of a housewife would not be construed as universally true in France. Godard expresses a desire to make a political film but felt hampered by government controls. The Little Soldier had been banned on its release in France.

Godard anticipated Pierrot Le Fou, his tenth and newest prizewinning film in widescreen and color and with Jean-Paul Belmondo and Anna Karina to open in New York by the end of the year. In two months he plans to start shooting a new film, which he did not describe. It should be noted here that Alphaville is tentatively scheduled to open at the Paris Theatre in New York by mid-October. It should not be missed.

---Robert Edelstein

Doris Day Is Dead

Doris Day is dead, but her memory lingers on and on and on. Of course, Miss Day is very much in the living; but the group of situation sex comedies known rather pejoratively as "Doris Day" comedies (I'd Rather Be Rich, Bedtime Story, etc.) have been dead for so long that even their titles lack originality. This goes also for the Italian Doris Day comedies (Divorce Italian Style, Seduced and Abandoned, Cassanova 70) and the French Doris Day comedies (Cartouche, Banana Peel, Lale Hunt) and the British Carry On Doris Day comedies. Every one knows that the Carry Ons are bad and most people have, by now, abandoned the American entries, but the Italian and the French subtitles still seem to convince people that they are seeing something new. Of course, the cool "in"ness of Belmondo and Mastroianni engendered in the films of Godard and Fellini helps hide the Doris Day-ness of these more recent exploitations. The film that has finally buried D.D. is Clive Donner's What's New Pussycat?

It is sort of ironic that Pussycat should come from Great Britain, that vast cinematic wasteland previously ruled by the Carry Ons and equally deadly Peter Sellers comedies. It is especially ironic since Sellers stars in Pussycat; and, contrary to public opinion, this is the first time that Sellers has been brilliant in British comedy (possible exception, The Mouse That Roared). Pussycat also establishes its director Clive Donner as the best of the young British directors. (Joseph Losey and Richard Lester are really Americans, and no one can really see exactly what Tony Richardson is). Donner was not really well known in this country, although his The Caretakers and Nothing But the Best were well received, but not widely seen. Pussycat was written by Woody Allen and is probably the best screenplay of the year. A few other "greats" belong to Paula Prentiss and bravos to the rest of the cast and physical presence of Ursula Andress, reason enough to see any film.

What's New Pussycat? is the essential question thematically and aesthetically in this amoral sex comedy. I say "amoral" as opposed to "immoral" or just plain "moral" these last two better characterizing the Doris Day International style. When the Doris Day heroine is faced with bed, the question is one of immorality and morality. The writer always seems to be saying, "Well, just how sophisticatedly frank or sacrilegious must we be to get our sexually self-conscious audience to laugh at a traditional moral confrontation." Doris Day is not confronted with the so-called new morality but with the enactment of the ever so worn old morality that has filled dirty-joke books for years. These films are billed "adults only" because anyone under 18 would be too sophisticated to find them funny. Only pre-World War

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Hers can find comic release in these old jokes. I won't define any "new morality," but judging from the brand of humour that we find collegiately popular today (in our magazines and dining-hall conversations) it seems that "sex-right or wrong" jokes are really passe. We accept sex; our jokes are pointed at the humour inherent in sex, not in the morality of sex. The jokes used to end at the intercourse; now they begin at the intercourse. This is amoral humour; that which is not concerned with the right or wrong, but starts with the accepted fact. What's New Pussycat? is amoral humour (as, I suppose, is James Bond). Amoral humour is what's new.

So much for the screen play aspect of Pussycat. The directoral style is new. The James Bond books are essentially modern in thematic content, but the films are basically traditional action films--there is little freedom of style. Pussycat is a fast moving, free wheeling cluster of wildly funny jokes tied loosely together by a plot about Peter O'Toole's sex life. The de-emphasized plot is reminiscent of the comedies of Howard Hawks as far back as the 1930's, to cite the most classic of sources in the tradition of the situation comedy. More contemporary are the films of Jerry Lewis, whose films, if you enjoy his sort of humour (a moral humour) are particularly fast and free. Blake Edward's attempts at this freedom (Shot In the Dark) are his least successful films, revealing that de-emphasized plot does not suit all directors. The real source, perhaps, of the Pussycat style is in the New Wave where such freedom has been applied with such success to basically serious films.

What's New Pussycat? does not pretend to reflect real life--it is a movie, made with actors and props, not a chunk of life. What I mean is that there is no attempt to fool the audience. Peter Sellar's house is a prop pure and simple, not a real house. It exists in only two dimensions. And the actors are merely people being filmed doing funny and fun things. One has but to see the expression on Romy Schneider's face during the toy auto chase to realize that she is merely an actress enjoying herself and not a troubled fiancée being chased by the police. There are "in jokes" (reference to Ursula Andress as a personal friend of James Bond), a pointless guest appearance by Richard Burton, effects that make the audience perfectly aware that they are watching a creation, a piece of film, and not a peep show of real life. In all the other arts, copying nature has long since given way to expression of the medium as a creative medium, and yet films get criticized for admitting to the nature of the process that created them. While not denying that photographic reproduction is the best suited of the arts, by its nature reality producing nature, this certainly should not invalidate a moving image that admits of the creative process.

What's New Pussycat? is a modern sex comedy--one, I would contend that is more suitable to the times. One last footnote will associate the film even more with our generation: the soundtrack is composed of several songs in the popular music idiom sung by such as Tom Jones and Dionne Warwick. These replace the traditional background music which we usually do not recollect having heard after the film ends. Maybe Doris Day isn't dead yet, but the makeup artists are having a hard time covering up her ever more obvious wrinkles.

--John Dorr

Film Festival???

Anyone interested in showing films at a Yale Film Festival should contact either Gary Davis or John Dorr in Jonathon Edwards College or George Vogt in Calhoun. Tentative plans call for a festival of Yale produced films on any subject.

The Birds presents peculiar problems to the critic. Its subject is the Unknowable, the Irrational, that for which no words exist. As soon as the critic has explained that, there is suddenly very little more to say. Certain characters in the film are would-be critics of it (the ornithologist, Annie, the drunk man who quotes the Bible), yet obviously fail. A perfect and self-contained whole, The Birds offers few means of analysis. There is little, wonder, therefore, that we have no "review" of the film to offer here. Instead we present two very limited attempts.

Random Notes on The Birds

To begin with, this is not the first time that Hitchcock has used birds as a subject. Three years earlier, in Psycho, we find Norman Bates stuffing birds (and his mother) as an avocation. The stuffed creatures surround the walls of the motel office and are often framed with Norman. Norman comments that Marian Crane (Janet Leigh) eats like a bird.

The haunting musical themes of all Hitchcock's recent works are supplied by Bernard Herrmann. Mr. Herrmann's first musical score was for Orson Welles' Citizen Kane, but since The Trouble with Harry he has been a Hitchcock regular. The track of The Birds is particularly interesting in that there is no traditional musical score, but only the sounds of birds in attack, created by electronic music. Hitchcock has reached the point where he can intensify a suspense-horror scene, usually achieved with building music, by absolute silence.

A recurring character in Hitchcock's recent films, and not absent in The Birds, is the faithful girl-friend who, although rejected by the male lead in the past, has remained true to him and continues a one-sided love affair. Remember Barbara Bel Geddes in Vertigo, Diane Baker in Marnie, and Suzanne Pleshette here in The Birds. All are wholly sympathetic characters, devoted to hopeless causes, who must stand by and watch their lost lovers be engulfed in the mystique of the leading lady.

Several of the key suspense scenes in The Birds have direct precedents in Psycho. As Tippi Hedren climbs the stairs to the attic where the birds await her, we are reminded of Vera Miles descending the stair to the wine-cellar to meet "mother." The ensuing attack in Psycho is illuminated by a light-bulb swinging back and forth, just as Melanie's flashlight flashes in the attack of the birds. And when Hedren is trapped in the phone-booth, birds attacking at all directions, the camera, action, and cutting is quite similar to the shower

murder in Psycho. Hitchcock has all the montage genius of Eisenstein integrated with a much more humanistic view of life.

- John Dorr

The Lovebirds

The pair of lovebirds which Melanie brings to Bodega Bay are perhaps the center of The Birds. For they combine two of the film's main subjects: Nature and Love, which they symbolize.

As Melanie's car zooms around the curves in the highway, the lovebirds are made to lean to one side. This shot hints at a major theme of the Birds, which may be called the perversion of nature. The pet shop where the film begins represents a facet of this theme, since imprisonment is an unnatural state. In fact, the whole world which Hitchcock presents us in the early part of his film is extremely perverted; nature has somehow been outraged. The main manifestation of this condition is, as often with Hitchcock, the absence of the Father and the resulting dominance of the Mother over the Son. Yet something is unnatural also in Melanie: her life is merely a frivolous game from a cheap sex comedy; and this is perhaps also due to a fault in the child-parent relationship. The structure of the Family, the fundamental unit which nature imposes upon all human society, is rotten.

One may well think of King Lear. For there, also, we find a perversion of the parent-child relationship. And there, too, a terrible cataclysm of natural forces is the result.

The storm on the heath leads Lear to an understanding of his folly and to a perception of love. The attacks of the birds lead Melanie and Lydia and Mitch Brenner toward the same perception. One cannot say, of course, that they find love as fully as Lear does, for they are in no sense tragic figures, and The Birds ends on a very inconclusive chord. Yet there is a hope, shown especially in Lydia's final acceptance of Melanie, that the natural cataclysm may ultimately purify mankind.

And Cathy takes the lovebirds away with them at the end. There are hints that the lovebirds somehow gave signals to all the other birds and caused the attacks. Whether they will allow the characters to escape remains a question of eternal suspense.

- Gary L. Davis

The Birds is a subtle horror film: it clubs no one over the head with a message. Even while using the old theme of animals turning upon man, Hitchcock realizes this new aspect of the horror genre.

The film is often criticized for being terribly "dead" and deadly dull. That is to miss the point. Hitchcock has tinged The Birds with a deliberate use of inaction and sweeping pans across nothing (somewhat like Antonioni) to augment carefully the scenes of frenzied terror. What could be more unsettling than waiting for an inevitable attack? Structurally, the film uses device after device to maintain suspense. For example, the soundtrack is in large part nothing but silence, the rest of the time electronically produced bird sounds—never music. And Hitchcock makes ordinary objects and creatures take on horrible aspects: beautiful birds become "ugly" attackers; a webbed pane of glass recalls the attacker that crashed into it.

There are no deformed monsters in the picture: they are created in the viewer's mind. Hitchcock deals with the ordinary and depends upon the viewer to fill in the blanks. Those viewers with considerable imagination will find The Birds delightfully understated and more horrible in proportion to the time spent mulling it over.

—George L. Vogt