CINEMA REBORN 2024

Sydney 1–7 May 2024
Melbourne 9–14 May 2024

The Films

Front cover photo: Anna Mignani in *Le carrosse d'or / The Golden Coach*, courtesy Minerva Pictures
This page: *Alain Delon* in *Le samouraï / The Samurai*, courtesy René Chateau

CINEMA
REBORN

A message from the Organising Committee

Cinema Reborn presents its sixth season and its biggest ever roster of restored classics. All told we are screening twenty feature films, and a short by Peter Weir, expanding our screenings to Melbourne and, thanks to a generous grant from the Australia-Korea Foundation, devoting a part of our program to a modest exploration of the works of a largely unknown Korean director. We are very excited!

What sustains our enthusiasm for this annual season is the support we receive from all of those who voluntarily commit to supporting our project. Many have been on board from year one. Many of them are listed in this catalogue in the pages devoted to note writers and presenters. They come from near and far. They are supported by a range of institutions both in Australia and abroad and backed up by teams of people at the cinemas and at the production houses who manage the delivery of the films we present, who produce our trailers and film our introductions. We are grateful to them all. We are also grateful to our donors who have given generously over the years. It's an amazing mosaic that brings Cinema Reborn to life each year.

This year, even before we start, we know that our audience will again love *The Samurai* and *Days of Heaven*. We hope you will want to be adventurous and curious and seek out *Ishanou*, *Yeelen*, *The Dupes*, the films of Korean master Im Kwon-taek and indeed everything in between. We are bringing back Jean Renoir, Powell and Pressburger, Robert Siodmak and Michelangelo Antonioni. It will be our first time presenting Mitchell Leisen and Howard Hawks.

We are especially proud to again present a remarkable Australian selection – two classic documentaries, *Journey to the End of Night* and *Light Years*, and two features *Body Melt* and *Three to Go*. Bringing each of these films back to a new audience will re-ignite memories of great moments in the Australian film industry.

We hope that once again you will enjoy the lengths and breadths of a remarkable season of restored classics – films which demand to be seen on a big screen in the dark of a movie theatre.

Body Melt

Philip Brophy

Since the late 1970s, Philip Brophy (born 1959) has involved himself with many, overlapping art and media forms: music, graphic design, performance, sound design, writing, publishing, video and film. Emerging with the Melbourne collective Tsk Tsk Tsk (which developed a faithful cult following in the music and art scenes), Brophy began to sign his own work in the mid '80s. As a filmmaker, he developed his art and craft through Super-8 and video art pieces, then 16mm with the short essay-film, *No Dance* (1985) and the provocative mini-feature, *Salt, Saliva, Sperm and Sweat* (1988). His many attempts to raise government funding for narrative features in Australia have resulted (so far) in only one 35mm project: *Body Melt* (1994) – a horror film that premiered to wild acclaim at the Melbourne International Film Festival, and then seemingly disappeared into disparate circuits of VHS and later digital releases around the world. But this frustration has never slowed him down: in the three decades since, he has written books (including *100 Modern Soundtracks* and *100 Anime* for BFI, and the not-exactly complimentary *Priscilla, Queen of the Desert* for Currency); made several digital video instalments of a wide-ranging art history project, *Colour Me Dead*; produced many musical recordings and performances; launched a vast website documenting his career across media (www.philipbrophy.com); and worked as a singularly creative sound designer on the films and videos of others.

Brophy's interests (better to say, in his own preferred terminology, *obsessions*) have remained remarkably consistent for the past forty-five years, while evolving in their detail and depth. From his earliest, youthful manifesto, he has attacked the humanist, 'psychological' bias in the vast majority of cultural production (even in music, he prefers instrumentals to vocals!); he has stood up for the intrinsic value of 'trash and junk' genres; he has explored the materiality of media forms, and of the human form itself: the physical body.

The film

Body Melt is a catastrophe narrative. One sunny day in suburbia, a hideously dying man crashes his car into Pebbles Court, Homesville. He's been brought to the point of meltdown by an experimental drug marketed as 'Vimuville' vitamins, and he's arrived, too late, to warn the Court's inhabitants not to swallow the sample dropped in their mailboxes. So then the story scatters: a businessman (William McInnes), beset by increasing hallucinations, picks up a strange woman at the airport and takes her home; two rowdy 'wog' teenagers (Nick Polites and Maurie Annese) get waylaid at a run-down farm of a seemingly inbred family; a yuppie family journeys to a sinister health resort; an expectant woman (Lisa McCune) at home begins to feel mighty queasy.

It's a crucial aspect of the headlong momentum of the film that the scattered lines of its narrative catastrophe become blurred and elliptical. The teens, for instance, are left at the scary high-point

of their tale. The pregnant woman's husband (Brett Climo) is taken away by the police at a point in the film where you instinctively decide to forget all about him – until he explodes like a time bomb at the cop shop. This pervasive sense of a terrifying and magical narrative space that gets away from you, that is littered with booby traps, forgotten possibilities and surprises, is as central to *Body Melt* as it is to contemporary horror-fantasy cinema generally – a genre on which, in his critical writing, Brophy is a world-renowned (and encyclopedic) expert.

A fanatically precise fantasia about space and topography, and the way that people perceive these realms, informs every stylistic level of *Body Melt*. Early on, a shot sweeps us around the entirety of Pebbles Court, closing in on and then getting absorbed by the black interior of a letter box. Spaces and places, like the narrative with its off-shooting lines, constrict and then explode. Vimuville hastens these hallucinations, which the film humorously refers to as 'mind-enhanced' and 'intra-phenomenological'. And Brophy's sound design recreates this fantasia, powerfully reinforcing it on the aural plane, in soundscapes that blur the distinction between strictly musical accompaniment and a fictive swirl of burning, breathing, pulsing, stirring, melting, ringing action-sensations, soundscapes that swallow the ambient noises of a space (such as an airport) and transform them into psycho-acoustic chambers of deranged, subjective experience.

Brophy is among those practitioners of the *film fantastique* – like George Romero, Kathryn Bigelow or Larry Cohen – fond of a certain form of allegory that is specific to popular art. Narrative situations provide a prism whereby a series of variations on a central premise are illustrated, demonstrated, explored, contradicted, synthesised. In the popular-allegorical mode, characters are conceived of as variable bundles of traits, tics and appearances that are exemplary in

relation to the chosen field of inquiry. In Brophy's work, pop-allegory meets the speculative ruminations of the essay-film.

His key subject has long been the body and our experience of it: life seized as a calculus of bodily effects, stimuli, drives, mechanisms. Horror cinema offers an expressionist statement of what is, for him, a base, physical reality: bodies that devour and decay, consume and expel, peel and ravage. The dialogue reminds us (in its pop-allegorical mode) of such daily realities: a baby inside its mother is 'the ultimate parasite'; everyone's hooked on one drug or another.

Brophy's cinema is properly anti-humanist, but there is a lively and engaging model of character, characterisation and performance evident in Body Melt. This comes in part from Brophy's vigorous work with actors (such as 1960s TV icon Gerard Kennedy) who have no qualms about throwing around their bulk, altering their voice tone or contorting their facial features for an appropriately visceral, generic effect.

The people in *Body Melt* are, at once, extreme, primal apparitions – exploding wombs, cataclysmic orgasms, stressed-out, derailed express-trains of mind, skin and hyper-stimulated desire – and also the height of acculturation: wearing, absorbing and reflecting every consumer fad that shapes everyday behaviour, from Heavy Metal music and skateboard riding to aerobics and New Age diets.

The phenomenon of *family* – with all its impossible, in-built ties, binds, symmetries and asymmetries, attractions and repulsions – is for Brophy the ultimate mystery or puzzle, indivisibly social and human, natural and cultural. As in the work of David Cronenberg, Lynne Ramsay or David Lynch, family resemblance gives a special, cruel twist to the philosophical agony of living within a body, that 'monstrous and obscene membrane' (as René Crevel called it) which provides the fragile basis for our fraught, human community *Body Melt* worries on this paradox in a memorable fashion – especially in the immortal moment when Pud (Vince Gil from *Stone* and *Mad Max*) reflects on his own, far-gone mutant clan: 'Families sure are ... strange things'.

Film notes by Adrian Martin

The restoration

2K restoration from 35mm interpos by Roar Digital for Umbrella Entertainment. 5.1 DTS HD surround sound. Aspect Ratio 1.77:1

Director: Philip BROPHY; Production Company: Dumb Films; Producers: Rod BISHOP, Daniel SCHARF; Script: Philip BROPHY, Rod BISHOP based on a story by Philip Brophy; Photography: Ray ARGALL; Editor: Bill MURPHY; Production Design: Maria KOZIC; Art Direction: Peta LAWSON; Casting: Greg APPS; Sound Design: Craig CARTER, Philip BROPHY; Music: Philip BROPHY; Costumes: Anna BORGHESI; Special Makeup Effects Supervisor: Bob MCCARRON // Cast: Gerard KENNEDY (Sam Phillips), Andrew DADDO (Johnno), Ian SMITH (Dr Carrera), Vince GIL (Pud), Regina GAIGALAS (Shaan), William MCINNES (Paul Mathews), Suzi DOUGHERTY (Kate), Nick POLITES (Sal), Maurie ANNESE (Gino), Brett CLIMO (Brian Rand), Lisa MCCUNE (Cheryl Rand)

Australia | 1993 | 81 mins | 2K DCP | Colour | English | MA15+

La captive / The Captive

The most important thing we have in life is time and duration. It's very important that you feel the duration, because when the duration is given to you and you feel that you are living. When you see a film and then at the end you say "Hey, I didn't feel the time passing by", I really feel that you have been stolen.'

Chantal Akerman

Chantal Akerman

The name Chantal Akerman has become synonymous with that of Jeanne Dielman, from her film *Jeanne Dielman, 23, quai du commerce, 1080 Bruxelles* (1975), made when the director was only 24 years old. It's not possible to unlink the two; when you think of one name it immediately conjures up the other. Whilst Jeanne Dielman is not Akerman's alter ego, she is a character that took on an existence that is larger than life, and over the years has grown in presence and status, so much so that the film topped the recent 2022 *BFI Sight and Sound Critics' Poll*. When it first screened in the Director's Week at the 1975 *Cannes Film Festival*, people walked out. Akerman recalled the loud 'clacking' sound that could be heard as the seats flipped up one by one. Marguerite Duras, who was at the festival for her own film, *India Song* (1975), which also starred Delphine Seyrig, allegedly stood up in the middle of Akerman's screening to loudly declare, 'This woman is crazy', before exiting the theatre.

The following morning however, Akerman received fifty offers to screen her film at festivals. This was how she became an overnight sensation – suddenly hailed as a successful filmmaker, and not just that, but a 'grand cineaste', at just 24 with her third feature film. So, where to from here? Perhaps we need to start at the beginning.

Chantal Akerman was born in 1950 in Brussels. She came from a family of Polish Holocaust survivors; her mother, whom she was very close to, was sent to Auschwitz. The horrors of the war never left her family.

When she was young, she'd thought films were too traditional and rather boring until she saw Godard's *Pierrot le Fou* (*Pierrot the Fool*, 1965) when she was 15 years old. She always said that this was the film that propelled her to becoming a filmmaker. She spurned conventional schooling; having enrolled in the Belgian film school, INSAS, she left before even finishing the first semester in 1967; and she repeated the same disappearing act at Université Internationale du Théâtre in Paris later. She simply wanted to make films her own way.

Smart, savvy and self-confident it was manifestly clear that Akerman already knew her own mind and had her own style when she made her first short film, *Saute ma ville* (*Blow Up My Town*, 1971), when she was only 17: a rather violent parody of Jeanne Dielman's housewife. She funded the film by making a stock book with which she sold certificates on the Diamond Bourse at $3 a page, and she subsequently used this short film to promote her work. It mattered little that she was untrained as a director, and even less when no one wanted to act in her films; she acted in her own film and even jauntily hummed-sang the entire soundtrack as a displaced non-diegetic insert (Ed: diegesis refers to the fictional world), whilst at the same time providing the film with a slightly odd but affecting internal voice.

In 1971 Akerman moved to New York for a couple of years, and hung out with experimental filmmakers like Michael Snow and Stan Brakhage before returning to Belgium in 1974. She cemented her partnership with Babette Mangolte, a French cinematographer living and working in New York at that time with *Hotel Monterey* (1972). This beautifully conceived and gorgeously shot silent documentary explored the transient nature and otherness of a cheap Manhattan hotel and its occupants. Although Mangolte was uncredited in the doco, they went on to shoot *Jeanne Dielman* together. The theme of transience and the inability to take root was reprised and evolved into a feature film, *Les rendez-vous d'Anna* (*Meetings with Anna*, 1978).

Early films like *Je tu il elle* (*I, You, He, She,* 1974) on the one hand can be seen to be an exploration of female sexuality; but in fact, her subject matter was often aligned with the idea of exile, where there is no 'home' but only an interiority. In the documentary, *News From Home* (1976), its pulsing and always moving images of the Big Apple are juxtaposed with Akerman's voice-over reading letters she's received from her mother, the contents of which seem trivial and of the everyday, but nonetheless provide a rudder in the sea of 'otherness'. In *Là-bas* (*Down There*, 2006) Akerman filmed most of the film inside the Tel-Aviv apartment she was living in, and often through the same window. For Akerman, 'là-bas' is also a metaphor for 'down memory lane', as well as the literal 'down below' of the street, of reality and a country she at once feels a sense of 'belonging' to, but has been exiled from. While it is necessary to 'los[e] everything that made you a slave',

Akerman also realised the difficulty of getting out of a prison of your own making (1). In search of her roots, this haunting documentary made her a 'ghost' – we can hear her, but we can't see her. We hear footsteps, Akerman brushing her teeth or tinkering in the kitchen.

Akerman was prolific; in her 44 active years, she made 46 films, 15 installations and 9 books. She regularly moved from documentary to feature films and back again, interspersing these with shorts – it's as though she never wanted to miss an opportunity to express herself. She was a rare director who could also be regarded as an artist, and many of her collaborators saw her as a writer above all. Regardless of genre, her films were avant-garde in terms of filming style and her use of sound. Her shots are always about durée and she has always maintained that a scene has to go through your own body to have been lived, because it is only then that it becomes your own music.

Akerman liked working instinctively. Even though operating by intuition can sound a little haphazard, she was singular in her vision and conception of scenarios, gestures, movement, sound and text, so that thinking and feeling for her were entirely conjoined. She would often use little known actors, because she hated the idea of making 'idols' or 'gods' out of their images, preferring the notion that when she shoots an actress they are the 'other' to be approached by the viewer (who is also and equally 'other'). Akerman didn't want anyone to bow down to screen images; hence Seyrig had to be reduced to performing mundane household tasks in *Jeanne Dielman*. She also refused any attempts at labelling her films; she called this being 'ghettoised' if they were deemed 'intellectual', or was told they should be shown in feminist or gay film festivals.

Chantal Akerman ended her own life on October 5th, 2015; a month after the premiere of her film, *No Home Movie* (2015), at the *Locarno Film Festival*. This documentary is an intimate portrait of her relationship with her mother, Natalia, the only person who, Akerman always maintained, understood her films best and, by the director's own admission, was 'the centre of my oeuvre'. In some sense, this film contains all the elements Akerman loved putting on screen: making an 'invisible woman' visible; to really feel time passing, so that as a viewer you're confronted with your own sense of being; and the displacement of sound and image (the first words uttered in the film by Natalia are, 'It's displaced'). This encounter with time and its subsequent displacement was evident in her signature shooting and editing style – many of the shots had the camera set up inside her mother's apartment but without any direct interaction within the frame. Sometimes we'd catch Akerman walking away from the shot, or directly into the camera until all is blurred. Voices and conversations with her mother seemed halting and at times difficult to hear. Some shots looked out of focus or too dimly lit to make out the image. These are not idolised images, but personal ones; and that is what makes this very intimate film Akerman's elegiac finale.

The film

The opening shot of *La Captive* is of a beach, where a group of young girls (Sirens? Nereides?) can be seen frolicking in the waves. The footage has the quality of a home video, and the images are fragmentary and without sound – laughing faces with no laughter; and yet, the sound of the ocean with its thrashing waves can be heard. As a viewer, you begin to notice that this is not the sound from the filmed footage. Rather, the origin of the sound of the waves is displaced and not locatable within the frame; it slowly becomes mixed in with a ticking sound created by the film spools of a projector where Simon (Stanislas Merhar) is standing. He's watching, interpreting, and lip-reading the footage. 'Je', 'je', 'je', he stutters whilst repeatedly rewinding the spool to decipher the soundless message that Ariane (Sylvie Testud) is saying to camera.

Within these first few minutes we are already plunged into a complex space of the 'dreamic': where Proust's desired but fictional lover, Albertine, the feminine manifestation of Albert (Proust's chauffeur and companion), is transformed to become Ariane; and Marcel has become Simon, a name that bears the half-recalled name of Simonet, Albertine's surname. We find ourselves in a double game where an ever so subtle transfiguration or displacement of characters and authors, sound and image, come together to challenge traditional narrative conventions.

The Captive is a very loose adaptation of *Book V: La Prisonnière* (*The Prisoner*) of Marcel Proust's À la recherche du temps perdu (*In Search of Lost Time*) where Albertine/Ariane is held captive in Marcel/Simon's apartment. Sure, there is an element of control where Simon seems to plan Ariane's routine and selects her companion for outings. But let us not forget that, in the mythic realm, it is Ariane who has the thread that would eventually lead Theseus out of the labyrinth.

Here, Ariane's thread is a sonic strand: the sound of her heels tapping along Place Vendôme; her humming; the duet she sings with another woman (unseen by her), and even through the mute opening sequence; it is *she* who leads Simon, but this time, she leads him further into a labyrinthine web of desire and intrigue. The hand has been reversed, so that it is Simon who is held captive – captivated and transfixed by Ariane. Akerman perfectly inverts the relationship of the captive and the captor.

In Akerman's cinema, the sonic and visual worlds form a complex relationship. The repetition and variation of music and especially song, and the diegetic and non-diegetic use of vocalisation or humming, all form a direct correlation to Jewish cultural and liturgical traditions. Other sonic elements, like the rhythmic tapping of footsteps that vary and recur, are used to create a web of metronomic patterns that not only guides the characters, but the audience too.

As with her other films, Akerman favoured windows or partitions, seen in the famous bath scene. This liminal space separating the us and them is also the sacred space of a confessional chamber,

within which we only ever tell our inner desires and our admissions to ourselves – even though the act is interpreted as two-way. Akerman talked about how, as a child, she would always look out of her window, watching the world go by, and how at that moment of observation she came to realise that she was already an 'old' child. So too are the characters in *The Captive*; they are situated in the modern day but do not act as though they are of their time. Their actions and gestures and their manner of speech all seem to be from another time, as does the mise-en-scène. Simon's apartment is cloistered, anachronistic, more like relics from an antique shop than the lodgings belonging to a young man.

Akerman has always worked intuitively and that's why she cast two relative newcomers, Merhar and Testud, and handed them precise directions: the volume of their voice, their silence, the pace of their footsteps (Merhar had to take walking lessons with a choreographer to learn how to walk like a jealous lover). For Akerman, it is emotions and what they evoke from gestures and body language that were crucial to the texture of the narrative. The closing scene that seems so grave and virtuosic was, in fact, completely ad lib. Set against Sergei Rachmaninoff's symphonic poem, *Isle of the Dead*, Akerman said that they just kept the boat moving very slowly towards the camera; sometimes there would be talking and then lulls of quiet; the sound of the river was sometimes heard and the actor would look at the camera from time to time without shifting his position. The whole filmed sequence lasted ten minutes, and only a segment was used. This scene bears an uncanny echo to Swiss Symbolist artist Arnold Böcklin's painting of the same name, *Isle of the Dead*; but in reverse – situating *us* on the island…and perhaps this interpretation opens up an alternate ending to the narrative.

Notes

1. Élisabeth Lebovici, 'No Idolatry and Losing Everything that Made You a Slave: Chantal Akerman', Marian Goodman Gallery, 2022.

Film notes by Janice Tong

The Restoration

Restored in 4K in 2022 by courtesy of Cinémathèque Royale de Belgique in collaboration with Fondation Chantal Akerman, from the original 35mm negative. Grading supervised by director of photography Sabine Lancelin. Funding provided by Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles.

Director: Chantal AKERMAN; Production Companies: Gemini Films, Arte France, Paradise Films; Producer: Paolo BRANCO; Script: Chantal AKERMAN, Eric DE KUYPER from the novel *La Prisonnière* by Marcel Proust; Photography: Sabine LANCELIN; Editor: Claire ATHERTON; Production Design: Christian MARTI; Set Decoration; Jannou SHAMMAS; Sound: Valerie DELOOF, Thierry DE HALLEUX, Nicholas BECKER; Musicians: Imogen COOPER, Sonia WIEDER-ATHERTON; Costumes: Nathalie DE ROSCOÄT // Cast: Stanislas MERHAR (Simon), Sylvie TESTUD (Ariane), Olivia BONAMY (Andrée), Liliane ROVÈRE (Françoise), Françoise BERTIN (Grandmother), Aurore CLÉMENT (Léa), Anne MOUGLALIS (Isabelle)

Belgium/France | 2000 | 118 mins | 4K DCP | Colour | French with English subtitles | UC15+

La carrozza d'oro / Le carrosse d'or / The Golden Coach

This programme is presented with the generous support of the Italian Cultural Institutes of Sydney and Melbourne

Jean Renoir

A key influence on François Truffaut, Robert Altman, Jacques Rivette and many others, Jean Renoir (1894–1979) is widely regarded as the greatest of French filmmakers. Growing up in Paris and the south of France, Renoir served as a reconnaissance pilot in World War I before turning to low budget filmmaking in the mid-1920s, often collaborating with his then wife, Catherine Hessling. Renoir's breakthrough came in the early 1930s with the release of such influential films as *La chienne* (1931), and *Boudu sauvé des eaux* (*Boudu Saved from Drowning*, 1932). He then moved onto the series of movies – often revealing leftist Popular Front sympathies – that established his lasting reputation as one of the great chroniclers of the mores and manners of French society: *Le crime de Monsieur Lange* (*The Crime of Monsieur Lange,* 1935), *La grande illusion* (*The Grand Illusion*, 1937), *La bête humaine* (*The Human Beast*, 1938) and the legendary *La règle de jeu* (*The Rules of the Game*, 1939).

But Renoir was also a significant transnational filmmaker. Fleeing to the United States after the German invasion of France in mid-1940, he established a peripatetic career working across various studios and independent production companies, before returning to Europe and international filmmaking in the 1950s. Over time, a reassessment of the extraordinary series of colour films he made between 1951 and 1956 – including *The River* (1951) and *Le carrosse d'or* (*The Golden Coach*, 1952) – has helped create a more complex and varied image of Renoir's extraordinary legacy.

An equal favourite of filmmakers and critics, he was also the second son of the great Impressionist painter, Pierre-Auguste. Inventive, moving and pictorially striking, Renoir's cinema betrays the influence of his father's lively and colourful work but also transcends it, taking many of its thematic and stylistic preoccupations to a higher, more deeply felt and explicitly modern level. Brilliantly mixing comedy and drama, pathos and cruelty, theatre and everyday life, Renoir's wistfully philosophical cinema is fully alive to the possibilities of the medium, to the actors, locations and experiences encountered by the camera, whether on location or on the soundstages of Hollywood or Europe. He is also a director fascinated by the beauty of failure, the melancholy, equivocal nature of humanity perhaps best summed up by the heart-breaking words of Renoir's Octave in *La règle de jeu*: 'You see, in this world, there is one awful thing, and that is that everyone has his reasons.' This oft-quoted line of dialogue reveals the deep feelings, concern and understanding characteristic of Renoir's cinema, but also the darkness and terrible knowledge that lies within and behind such equivocation.

The film

Called 'the noblest and most refined film ever made' by François Truffaut (1), and 'a radiant … easy going masterpiece' by David Thomson (2), *The Golden Coach* is a pivotal work in Renoir's career and the first in a series of three meticulously coloured films (alongside *French Cancan* [1955] and *Elena et les hommes* [*Elena and her Men,* 1956]) built around an iconic star – Anna Magnani, Jean Gabin and Ingrid Bergman, respectively – that joyously explore the porous boundaries between performance and reality, tradition and modernity, theatre and everyday life. Although it is now commonly regarded as one of the great triumphs of Renoir's career, and was even celebrated at the time by a small coterie of now influential critics including Truffaut, André Bazin and Rivette – who reportedly watched it from 2:00pm to midnight on its day of release and whose subsequent work betrays its legacy – *The Golden Coach* mostly met with an indifferent and even negative reception from critics and audiences when released in France, Italy, the United States and elsewhere between late 1952 and early 1954.

The Golden Coach marked Renoir's full return to Europe, but those expecting the celebrated filmmaker to revert to his realist 'roots' were unsettled by the surface lightness of the material, its fascination with the forms and archetypes of the centuries old Italian tradition of *commedia dell'arte*, and the relentlessly self-reflexive use of doorways, frames, curtains, masks, veils and the theatre's proscenium arch to create a self-contained world where nothing

escapes the formal, playful, though sometimes improvisatory parameters of performance. This is announced by the forward and backward movement of the camera across the space of the theatre in the opening and closing shots. The elaborate stage-bound set we see in this opening – as well as the series of curtains which must part to finally grant us access – seamlessly transitions into a much larger, endlessly compartmentalised, though truly cinematic space. As in the famous quotation from Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, 'all the world's a stage', but the sympathetic, flawed and deeply human characters that Renoir creates are something more than 'merely players'. Even here, within the expressly studio-bound *The Golden Coach*, Renoir creates a world that is profoundly open to air, life, the complex motivations of character, and the small idiosyncratic details of gesture, expression, voice and décor.

After working and setting up his home in the United States in the 1940s, Renoir first moved away from Hollywood and American independent production with his initial experiment with colour and shooting in India, *The River*. *The Golden Coach* takes many of these experiments with expressionist and impressionist colour further and each element of décor, costume and set design is carefully calibrated to create a fully synthetic world that perfectly matches the rhythms, timing and sense of tone, liveliness and order provided by the music of Vivaldi. Renoir often spoke of Vivaldi as his key collaborator on this film – though he also credited the patience and openness of his Italian producers and Magnani's extraordinarily committed performance as Camilla – the music providing inspiration for both the scripting and the filming itself.

But the confusion of many critics and even audiences at the time of release is also related to the film's hybridity. Although it is set in the Spanish colonies of Peru in the first half of the 18th century – the use of Vivaldi is, in some ways, contemporaneous with that period – and made within the newly booming Italian film industry of the early 1950s, it is a consciously transnational work. It was designed to be shown in various languages (Renoir favoured the English-language version, particularly for Magnani's accent and pronunciation), features a range of English, Italian and American actors, and was shot entirely on the soundstages and stock exteriors of Cinecittà in suburban Rome. Nevertheless, it is unsurprising that audiences and critics expected a more earthy, consciously realist film. These expectations would have been set by the memory of Renoir's celebrated films of the 1930s as well as the presence of Magnani – a key symbol of neo-realism due to her celebrated roles in films including Roberto Rossellini's *Roma città aperta* (*Rome Open City*, 1945). But this set of expectations also relied on a misreading of Renoir's 1930s films. Although works like *Le crime de Monsieur Lange*, *La grande illusion* and *La règle de jeu* are noted for their realist humanism, they also incorporate elements of theatre, play-acting and performance. In truth, many of the Italian neo-realist films also introduced these 'conflicting' elements.

The Golden Coach is also a loose adaptation of Prosper Mérimée's 1829 play, *La carosse du Saint-Sacrement*. Although Renoir clearly admired the

play, he nevertheless considered it – due to its highly formal and precise narrative, as well as its carefully calibrated dialogue – as not well suited to the cinema. The brilliance of Renoir's adaptation is in how he combines the essence and elements of Mérimée's play with core aspects of the Italian cultural tradition, including its music, the structured and improvised forms of *commedia dell'arte*, and its synthetic, often studio-based modes of filmmaking. In the hands of many other filmmakers, this restless and self-conscious movement between theatre and life, on and offstage, would have undermined the 'reality' of the fiction as well as our emotional engagement with the characters' predicaments. But *The Golden Coach* insists that, while there is a special alchemy, nobility and feeling for life expressed in theatrical performance, the boundaries between the 'play' and life, and between cinema and reality are profoundly porous and never undermine our emotional or intellectual engagement. This is brilliantly displayed in those moments where Camilla's three suitors, the viceroy, the bullfighter and the soldier – and they are equally archetypes of each and something more – create their own theatrical worlds in the realm of the court, the ring and the battlefield. In *The Golden Coach*, the theatre is both a 'special case' and a refined iteration of the roles, situations and institutions that define and structure human society.

The symbol of the coach itself – imported by the viceroy, slept in by Camilla on her journey from Italy to the New World, given away numerous times in the narrative – provides a framework to help

understand the deeper emotions, feelings and material conditions of the characters. Like the earrings in Max Ophuls' *Madame de…* (1953), it is a symbol of exchange between characters that expresses their shifting material relation to class, society and each other. Camilla's final gesture – which I won't give away here – confirms her commitment and surrender to something more mercurial and lasting than the weighty exchange value of the coach. In the process, she both commits to her life in the theatre and recognises the emotional and material sacrifices she must continue to make. In its combination of deep feeling and self-conscious theatricality, it provides one of the most profoundly bittersweet and equivocal moments in all of Renoir's cinema.

Endnotes

1. François Truffaut, *The Films in My Life*, trans. Leonard Mayhew (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1985): 43.
2. David Thomson, *'Have You Seen…?': A Personal Introduction to 1,000 Films* (London: Allen Lane, 2008): 332.

Film notes by Adrian Danks

The restoration

A French–Italian co-production, *The Golden Coach* was filmed in English. A shoot in French was planned as well, but it had to be abandoned due to financial problems. Renoir let his assistant director Marc Maurette direct the dubbing in French. The French version was the first to appear in theatres. An Italian version was also made. Jean Renoir preferred the English version which screens at Cinema Reborn. It was the only one to be restored in 2012.

Director: Jean RENOIR; Production Companies: Panaria Film, Hoche Production; Producers: Francesco ALLIATA, Ray VENTURA; Script: Jean RENOIR, Renzo AVANZO, Giulio MACCHI, Jack KIRKLAND, Ginette DOYNEL. Inspired by the 1829 play by Prosper Mérimée, 'La Carosse du Saint Sacrement'; Photography: Claude RENOIR; Editors: David HAWKINS, Mario SERANDREI; Production Design: Mario CHIARI; Set Decoration: Gino BROSIO; Sound: Joseph DE BRETAGNE; Music: Antonio VIVALDI; Costumes: Maria DE MATTHEIS // Cast: Anna MAGNANI (Camilla), Duncan LAMONT (Ferdinand), Odoardo SPADARO (Don Antonio), Riccardo RIOLI (Ramon), Paul CAMPBELL (Felipe), Ralph TRUMAN (Duke of Castro), Elena ALTIERI (Duchess of Castro), George HIGGINS (Martinez)

Italy/France | 1952 | 102 mins | 4K DCP | Colour | English | M

Days of Heaven

Terrence Malick

An enigmatic, visionary filmmaker, Terrence Malick was born in 1943 in Ottawa, Illinois, USA, but moved at a young age to Oklahoma. The experience of growing up in rural Oklahoma, attending school in Austin, Texas, and working as a farmhand in small local communities and on oil fields, in the harsh landscapes of the American South and Midwest, had a profound impact on his film aesthetic.

Notwithstanding his agricultural upbringing and humble circumstances, Malick graduated in 1965 with a degree in philosophy from Harvard University. Upon the successful completion of his studies, he was awarded a Rhodes Scholarship at Oxford's Magdalen College. Due to a disagreement with his supervisor, Malick departed Oxford without completing his dissertation. Malick's deeply rooted academic interest in philosophy, especially in the phenomenological philosophy of Martin Heidegger, has permeated his intellectual development and profoundly influenced the narrative and thematic concerns of his cinematic works.

Transitioning from philosophy to the study of film, Malick returned to the United States and worked for a year as a philosophy lecturer at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), while also enrolling in a Masters of Fine Arts degree in film-making. Malick finally graduated in 1969 from one of the foremost film schools in the US, the American Film Institute Conservatory (AFI) at a time when American filmmaking was changing significantly with the rise of New Hollywood.

Marking the commencement of Malick's filmmaking career was his Masters short film, produced at AFI, the comedy western *Lanton Mills* (1969), starring Warren Oates and Harry Dean Stanton. Malick then moved to Hollywood to hone his film craft and finance his own film projects. A talented writer, he worked on the screenplays of films such as *Dirty Harry* (1971), *Deadhead Miles* (1972) and *Pocket Money* (1972).

It was, however, Malick's directorial debut *Badlands* (1973) – a film that he both wrote and directed on a shoestring budget, starring Martin Sheen and Sissy Spacek playing two young outlaws in the Dakotas – that heralded a breakthrough in his film career. The film was based on the true story of the infamous Starkweather-Fugate killing spree from the 1950s. A profound meditation on the American psyche, Badlands received critical acclaim, establishing Malick as a visionary auteur with a distinctive narrative voice of visual beauty, philosophical and lyrical depth.

Five years later, Malick returned with *Days of Heaven* (1978), a visually arresting examination of agrarian labourers in the Texas Panhandle, featuring Richard Gere, Brooke Adams, Sam Shepard and Linda Manz. The film – an exploration of human existence against a vast natural American landscape – was hailed for its exquisite cinematography, artistic sensibility and introspective tone. Deeply influenced by his philosophical background, *Days of Heaven* established

Malick as a unique storyteller in American cinema. He received the Best Director award at the Cannes Film Festival and the film won the Academy Award for Best Cinematography for its visually poetic imagery.

Following the success of *Days of Heaven*, Malick retreated to Paris under a self-imposed absence from filmmaking which lasted nearly two decades. He rarely made public appearances or took interviews and this period of prolonged hiatus only served to augment his enigmatic reputation. Malick finally re-emerged with the war masterpiece, *The Thin Red Line* (1998), a philosophical exploration of the existential dilemmas of war, based loosely on the 1962 autobiographical novel by James Jones about the Battle of Guadalcanal. *The Thin Red Line* won critical acclaim, earning the Golden Bear at the 49th Berlin International Film Festival and seven Academy Award nominations, including Best Director and Best Adapted Screenplay, for Malick.

Malick continued his filmmaking career, with *The New World* (2005), *The Tree of Life* (2011), *To The Wonder* (2012), *Knight of Cups* (2015), *Voyage of Time* (2016), *Song to Song* (2017) and *A Hidden Life* (2019). All of these films reflect his persistent thematic interest in our relationship with time, memory, and the natural world. *The Tree of Life* in particular, with its study of cosmic and existential motifs, explored this subject matter elegantly and garnered the prestigious Palme d'Or at the 64th Cannes Film Festival and three Academy Award nominations, including Best Picture.

Terrence Malick is one of the most respected directors of his generation; his oeuvre offers audiences a profoundly philosophical discourse on life itself. The visual poetry of Malick's images and his poetic reflections continue to mesmerise viewers with a sense of wonder. A testament to Malick's visionary talent, these aesthetically transcendent films have secured him a place in the film canon and continue to inspire and influence cinema today.

Biographical note by Helen Goritsas

The film

A pulse beats all the way through Terrence Malick's *Days of Heaven*. At the climax of the film, the pulse starts in the wind, rears into the foreground with the beating of a wind-cock, the volume ratcheted up so that it wrenches the sound out of any naturalistic frame and into the beat of intensity, passes it across to a heartbeat, amplified in an aural close-up, ripples it across a field of wheat swirling in the wind, across a clutter of ducks pecking frantically at locusts and shimmies it down the manes of a group of bucking horses. An apparent lull takes the pulse in to a close-up of a locust, but everything is wrong as the locust is inside, in the domestic space, poised on a cabbage, and this locust becomes many locusts in a frenzy of swatting that lurches back outside into the confusion of locusts jumping every which way and the chaotic milling of workers as they run in every direction, arms flailing blankets in the wheat in the attempt to ward off the plague. When the pulse passes the baton to human figures they have no priority, their gestures simply another chaotic kinetic energy. Sporadic fragments of dialogue break through the cacophony and recede again, drowned out by the clanging of harvesters as if they are mere peripheral flourishes in a musical phrasing. The film leaps from panorama to extreme close-up – from fields of wheat to a locust in close-up chewing its way mechanically, inexorably through a grain of wheat – and back out to the fields. As the pulse swells to an operatic crescendo, the fields are set alight, swarms of locusts churn in silhouette with the black billowing smoke that swirls with spewing sparks and flames through the darkened sky, and machines and horses run out of control as humans and nature run amok. The blackened stubble that is left as the chaos burns itself out is set against the red glow of a smouldering line of fire that cleaves the horizon.

In *Days of Heaven* it is not so much the narrative that moves but the intensity

that is transported across the different registers of the film. When the agitation of the wind transmutes into locusts, ducks and flames, it's like one impulse breaking out across multiple sites. The pulse that drives the film at times recedes into the background with the more prosaic narrative sequences, but rears back into the foreground as soon as the film has dispensed with the necessary linear segments. Sound figures prominently here. Each time the pulse surges forward it is cued in by sound – the mechanical beating, clanging of industrial machinery, the sudden amplification of bird sounds, the wind-cock that is always churning in the background – whipping, beating, pulsing, the jumpiness waiting to break out.

On one level *Days of Heaven* subscribes to many of the conventional plot tropes of melodrama – the focus on emotional relationships among a small family group, a triangular love situation, a series of missed encounters, glimpses of redemption that arrive too late for consummation, a tragic ending, the epic archetypal dimension of hidden values emerging through the events of daily life. But the more linear, quotidian segments of narrative that focus on the interpersonal interactions in the classic manner of family melodrama are only fragments of the whole, just one element in the ensemble that is dropped in only where necessary. Malick gives us just enough to know what is going on – no more. The film is not weighed down by the demands of a linear narrative structure, plodding, weighty, predictable. Narrative threads briefly come together as the elements coalesce into elliptical moments, and are then dispersed again, deflected across the registers of the film. Narrative is less like an anchor than like driftwood that occasionally hits the bank, snags in a branch, swirls around in an eddy before it takes off on another current. When the voice-over comes in, it's often cut in to the rhythm of Ennio Morricone's score like a vocal accompaniment, more like a parallel thread than an explanation. On the level of character, the staging of the melodrama is restrained, pared back; nothing is laboured. The intensity is not in the characters, it is in the sensory density that's splayed across the whole environment; the plot structures of impossibility and thwarted love are a framework for this orchestration of operatic intensities. The final showdown of death and grief-stricken wailing cuts to a long shot of people watching impassively on a river bank, to a group of mounted police, and then dissolves into the moving keys and up-beat music of a pianola, segueing seamlessly, economically, into the next sequence in another time, another place. The narrative slips away at the end of the film as easily as it came together and as elliptically as it moves from scene to scene and within each scene – just one inconclusive fragment – a dot on the landscape of the poverty, exploitation and aspiration of the 1916 Texas Panhandle.

How to capture what it is that is so amazing about this film? It's partly about choreography – the way Malick choreographs, orchestrates every element of sound and image with consummate skill. It is also about the way a moment is articulated: how a moment comes alive for the viewer. In *Days of Heaven* this is largely about structure. The film

moves not by linear causality but by details, by fragments of sound and image that lodge themselves under the skin as moments of sensory-affective intensity. The film inverts what are normally understood as the hierarchies between narrative progression and this register of embodied experience. Rather than these intensities being deployed in the service of the narrative, the inverse is true – sensory-affective moments are the film, they are the stuff through which the film unfolds.

Malick works with a radical conception of what narrative is – what its place is and how it progresses – that turns conventional understandings of narrative on their heads and exposes how clunky and archaic they are in their conception and realisation. Jean-Louis Comolli, writing of John Cassavetes' film, *Faces*, claims that 'the characters in *Faces* […] are not […] put there once and for all, arbitrarily, at the beginning of the film; rather, they define themselves gesture by gesture and word by word as the film proceeds'.(1) Malick seems to work from a similar principle of how to build a scene moment-by-moment, but this understanding is extended beyond simply the gestures and words of actors; the actors form only one fragment of the performative dimensions of the scene. It proceeds, rather, through a series of intense encounters with sound and image, moments of experience that accumulate layer upon layer to build the film. It is this accretion that carries the ongoing movement through the narrative field. The film works from a structural principle that is conceived from the outset, not on the basis of the linear chains of cause and effect conventionally understood as the building blocks of narrative, but on the basis of sensory intensity – how to put together a scene that unfolds, moment-by-moment, as an energetic charge that cycles across the sensorium of the viewer.

This structure moves like a score across a number of instruments: at times the plot has its solo moments, only fragmentary. At times the sound is the virtuoso performer, as it takes off in a montage of aural perspectives and layers. At times the image takes centre-stage as Malick plays with the way the wind animates the environment, giving it a haptic density, stirring up the fields, scraping and corroding the smooth surface of a pond, or with the texture of sheaves of wheat flailing into the lens of the camera or the lush painterliness of the pastoral landscape. At times narrative transitions are articulated through other solos – more conventional performative moments, such as a tap dancer showing his skill and a violinist playing. Almost in the manner of a Bollywood song and dance sequence, these key narrative turning points are given an energetic charge that breaks out through the carnivalesque energy of the performances, in lieu of any blow-by-blow detailed plot information.

At the climax of the film, this energetic charge is focused on the locusts. This intensity is not about emotion: how can you claim an emotional response to the texture of the segmented exoskeleton of a locust, the lateral position of its eyes, the angle of its elbows as it grasps a grain of wheat and the relentless mechanical motion of its mandibles as its chews? It is more about the way the motion, texture and sound stir up the viewer, hook them

into the moment on a level of heightened embodied awareness, out of the habitual, into the senses, into the materiality of the image. It is a sensory-affective encounter. Whereas conventional melodrama is often described as the orchestration of emotion, *Days of Heaven* works rather with the orchestration of this material pulse, often sidestepping a conventional emotional series and registering the feeling of the moment through the senses.

Malick works with dramatic shifts in scale – from an extreme close-up of wheat stalks to an extreme wide shot of the horizon, from a long shot of harvesters slashing the crop to a close-up of birds scattering, in a sudden flip from the human scale to the other life that lurks underneath. He uses the aural and visual close-up to bring forward another dimension: the wind is always there but it suddenly breaks out into the aural foreground; the rabbits are there lurking in the wheat field but they suddenly come forward into a tremulous hypervigilant presence. The close-up is like an exclamation mark, like a deflection onto a gestural moment of intensity.

The separation of human and natural world is at best partial, transitory; the dramatic action co-exists on the plane of the animals and the environment as if the human world is punctuated by or filtered through it. Birds recur at almost every transitional moment, responding to and commenting on the dramatic action. Human figures in the landscape are often on a par with animals, obscured by or blending into the wheat. The black and white speckles on the breasts of the peahens are echoed in the costumes of the main characters.

Malick is a master of affective wind – a haptic register that captures everything in its sway, subjecting everything to the same restless energy – human figures, animals, fields. These moments are not entirely disconnected from the narrative dimension – Malick plays with the narrative expectations. On one level the scattering birds take on the intensity of human interactions, but the deployment of the natural world in the film is much more than a simple anthropomorphic gesture. At one point the pulse passes momentarily from the linear dramatic action – a domestic scene – to a leaf in close-up glistening wet in the moonlight, and then back to the action. The momentary suspension of the leaf, poised between two actions, is a certain way of hooking the spectator in to a register of intensity that is not explained. The leaf is not given an emotional coding, it is given a material presence.

Siegfried Kracauer attempts to explain a particular type of film experience, in which film 'puts the material world into play'. (2) He says that the image speaks: 'And I? says the leaf which is falling. And we? say the orange peel, the gust of wind …'. (3) Kracauer gives us a key to understand how Malick does what he does: a way of working that starts from the materiality of the image and sound to generate a particular kind of film experience, to engage the spectator in a fully embodied affective encounter.

Excerpt from Anne Rutherford, *What Makes a Film Tick?': Cinematic Affect, Materiality and Mimetic Innervation*. Bern: Peter Lang, 2011. Reprinted with permission of the publisher.

Notes

1. Sylvie Pierre and Jean-Louis Comolli. 'Two Faces of Faces.' In Jim Hillier (ed.), Cahiers du Cinéma: Volume 2. The 1960s: New Wave, New Cinema, Re-evaluating Hollywood. London: Routledge & Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1986: 326.
2. Hansen, Miriam Bratu. 'With Skin and Hair': Kracauer's Theory of Film, Marseille 1940.' Critical Inquiry 19 (Spring 1993): 457.
3. Kracauer, Siegfried. Theory of Film. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1997: 45.

Film note by Anne Rutherford

The restoration

Restored by The Criterion Collection with support of Paramount Pictures and Park Circus

Director: Terrence MALICK; Production Company Paramount; Producers: Bert SCHNEIDER, Harold SCHNEIDER; Script: Terrence MALICK; Photography: Nestor ALMENDROS; Editor: Billy WEBER; Art Direction: Jack FISK; Set Decoration: Robert GOULD; Sound: Michael GALLOWAY, Colin MOUAT, John REITZ, George ROCONI; Music: Ennio MORRICONE; Costumes: Patricia NORRIS. // Cast: Richard GERE (Bill), Brooke ADAMS (Abby), Sam SHEPARD (The Farmer), Linda MANZ (Linda), Robert WILKE (The Farm Foreman)

USA | 1978 | 94 mins | 4K DCP | Colour | English | M

Il grido / The Cry *aka* The Outcry

This programme is presented with the generous support of the Italian Cultural Institutes of Sydney and Melbourne.

Michelangelo Antonioni

Antonioni was born in 1912 to a wealthy family of landowners in Ferrara, in north-eastern Italy. After studying economics and commerce at the University of Bologna he made his first connection with cinema as a film critic for the local newspaper. Two years later he almost made a documentary about a mental asylum but the inmates were so traumatised when he switched on the lights that the would-be director was himself too traumatised to start filming.

Moving to Rome in the late 1930s Antonioni wrote for the official Fascist film magazine but was soon sacked. He briefly enrolled in the national film school where he made a short film about a prostitute who blackmails a bourgeois woman. He then collaborated on the screenplay for Roberto Rossellini's patriotic drama, *Un pilota ritorna* (*A Pilot Returns,* 1941), a film of which neither felt proud.

Drafted into the army, Antonioni initially avoided combat by going to Paris as an assistant to the poetic realist filmmaker, Marcel Carné. Antonioni stayed only a week as Carné didn't much like him, as he later recalled:

'… it was 1942 and France had been occupied by the Italians, and therefore we weren't very popular. Carné who belonged to the left…would not even

give me the chance to explain to him that, more or less, my political views were no different to his. Therefore it was very difficult to get along with him, and… I didn't even like his way of filming or of directing the actors. I don't believe I learned much from him…. I think I learned from him how to use the camera at a certain angle.'

In 1944 Antonioni made his first film, the short documentary *Gente di Po* (*People of the Po Valley*), a strongly realistic and intensely poetic film of which he later said: 'Everything I did after, good or bad as it might have been, started from there.' After the war, he worked as a translator, film critic and scriptwriter and made another short documentary, N.U. (aka *Nettezza urbana*, 1948), a study of streetcleaners and rubbish collectors in Rome that won an important critics' prize. This was followed by several more shorts and a treatment for a romantic comedy *Lo sceicco bianco* (*The White Sheik,* Federico Fellini, 1952).

In the 1950s Antonioni made several shorts and five feature films with varying degrees of commercial and critical success, culminating in *Il grido* (1957), which was especially successful in France, although less so in Italy where he was criticised for casting an American, Steve Cochran, in the lead male role. With *L'avventura* (1960) starring Monica Vitti, his muse and lover, Antonioni gained international recognition, although not everyone loved his rejection of contemporary filmic codes and conventions: the decision of the Cannes Jury to award the film the prize for best film was greeted by boos and catcalls. Later that night, a group of influential filmmakers (including Roberto Rossellini) released a statement expressing their admiration for Antonioni: the trend was set for boos at Cannes to be a badge of honour.

His next films, *La notte* (*The Night*, 1961), *L'eclisse* (*Eclipse*, 1962), and *Il deserto rosso* (*Red Desert*, 1964), cemented his reputation as an art-house filmmaker, with their coolly intense fascination for exploring emotional fragility in the modern world, one in which women ache for emotional connections that are no longer possible and men are oblivious to their pain. Antonioni then took his concerns about a world dominated by a preoccupation with money and status in a different direction. With the hugely successful *Blow-up* (1966) and the less successful *Zabriskie Point* (1969), he depicts his vision of the prevailing youth counter-culture with its dope-smoking, swinging hipsters and would-be revolutionaries. Antonioni was then invited by the Chinese government to make a documentary, *Chung-kuo – Cina* (*Chung Kuo -China*, 1972), on contemporary life in China. Chinese officialdom denounced it (as did the Italian Communist Party); they banned it and threatened to break diplomatic relations with any country that showed it.

Back in Italy, Antonioni made *Professione: Reporter* (*The Passenger,* 1975), a moody, neo-noir starring Jack Nicholson. This did poorly at the box office but was critically acclaimed and particularly admired for its astonishing, seven-minute, tracking shot that took eleven days to set up and film. In his subsequent films, Antonioni continued experimenting – exploring

the electronic treatment of colour for example, and, perhaps perversely, rejecting his trademark slow pans and long tracking shots.

In the late 1980s a stroke left Antonioni partially paralyzed. Unstoppable, he made a feature, *Al di là delle nuvole* (*Beyond the Clouds,* 1995), for which the investors hired the German director Wim Wenders to step in if Antonioni proved unable to direct. Wenders says he simply watched in awe as Antonioni put his vision on film. He made his final film, a short entitled *Il filo pericoloso delle cose* (*The Dangerous Thread of Things,* 2004), for the anthology *Eros* with Wong Kar-wai and Steven Soderbergh. Three years later Antonioni died, aged 94. After lying in state at City Hall in Rome, he was buried in his hometown of Ferrara.

Antonioni's films didn't please everyone. Pier Paolo Pasolini joked meanly: 'I don't like Antonioni, abstract art, or electronic music.' François Truffaut thought him 'solemn and humourless.' Ingmar Bergman accused him of being 'suffocated by his own tediousness.' Orson Welles didn't 'get' Antonioni, commenting:

'I don't like to dwell on things. It's one of the reasons I'm so bored with Antonioni—the belief that, because a shot is good, it's going to get better if you keep looking at it. He gives you a full shot of somebody walking down a road. And you think, 'Well, he's not going to carry that woman all the way up that road.' But he *does*. And then she leaves and you go on looking at the road after she's gone.'

His admirers, however, are legion: Martin Scorsese, Francis Ford Coppola, Brian De Palma, Steven Soderbergh, Pedro Almodóvar, Sofia Coppola and Guillermo del Toro are among those who acknowledge the debt they owe to Antonioni. Gus Van Sant, Carlos Reygadas, Kelly Reichardt, Andrey Zvyagintsev, Apichatpong Weerasethakul, Lav Diaz and Jia Zhangke are some of the notable directors who have adopted a cinematic approach that Antonioni largely pioneered. As the critic Stephen Dalton notes, his influential aesthetic of extremely long takes, striking modernist architecture, painterly use of colour and depictions of tiny human figures adrift in empty landscapes, 'often felt more like modern art than cinema.'

The film

The subject of Il grido came to mind while I was looking at a wall …this is a mystery to me…

Michelangelo Antonioni

After a seven-year relationship with refinery mechanic Aldo (Steve Cochran) in a small rural town near Ferrara in the Po Valley, Irma (Alida Valli) learns that her husband, one of the many Italian migrant workers to Australia in the 1950s, has died. Aldo is happy: at last he and Irma can marry and provide legitimacy for their young daughter, Rosina (Mirna Girardi). But Irma has fallen in love with another man. She tells Aldo their relationship is over. He tries to make Irma stay, even resorting to violence and public humiliation. This only makes Irma all the more determined to end their relationship.

An inconsolable Aldo leaves town, taking Rosina with him. He wanders this way and that, half-heartedly trying

to find work. He is as emotionally empty and flattened as the landscape which is unremittingly grey…grey…grey. The scene where he waves goodbye to Rosina as she returns to her mother is unbearable for him—and for us: she was his last remaining link to Irma. Travelling aimlessly on (the film has become a road movie of sorts) Aldo meets women with energy, resilience and resourcefulness, all of which he sorely lacks. Some offer him a home and love, or the possibility of it, but nothing can ward off Aldo's soul-destroying certainty that Irma no longer loves him.

Aldo returns to the town where he once lived with Irma, who is now happily married with a young baby. Hearing he's in town, Irma goes to find him. But Aldo knows there is no chance of a future with Irma. Indeed, there is little chance of any future at all. He climbs up the tower in the refinery where we first met him. As Irma looks up, Aldo looks down. We are left with the sound of Irma's *grido* (cry) ringing in our ears.

Il grido was awarded the Golden Leopard at the 1957 Locarno International Film Festival. In 1958 the Italian National Syndicate of Film Journalists awarded it the Silver Ribbon and Gianni Di Venanzo won the prize for Best Cinematography. In 2008, it was included on the Italian Ministry of Cultural Heritage's list of 100 films that changed the collective memory of the country to be saved for posterity.

Neorealism, landscape, women and casting

As the last of Antonioni's early period films, *Il grido* has often been regarded as an aesthetically inferior work in the neorealist mould, and little more than a transition to his internationally acclaimed 1960s films. Critics described it as neorealist and stressed the psychological symbolism of the film's bleak landscape and of the protagonist's aimless journey at the expense of what else is going on in this remarkable film.

Neorealism: As well as focusing on the lives of working-class people, a key

characteristic of Italian neorealism, *Il Grido* also uses the neorealist strategy of using actual locations. The Po Valley has likely never looked quite so bleak: it is mistily and depressingly, yet lovingly, filmed by Gianni Di Venanzo whose credits would include *La notte* and *L'eclisse* for Antonioni, Francesco Rosi's *La sfida* (*The Challenge,* 1958), and Fellini's *8½* (1963) and *Giulietta degli spiriti* (*Juliet of the Spirits*, 1965). But while Antonioni's filmic awakening coincided with the height of Italian neorealism, his inclination lay in the direction of poetic expressiveness. If neorealism was obsessed with the visible, Antonioni was always at least as interested in the not-seen as in what is realistically there.

Landscape: The extraordinary, unforgettable landscape in *Il grido* can't be allowed to obscure the fact that the film is also a depiction of 'a working-class rural milieu experiencing the rapid encroachment of modernisation.' There are misty, foggy, freezing, soggy, sodden landscapes and land aplenty. But we also see a new, highly mobile lifestyle – speedboats, dredgers, petrol stations, gas trucks and expensive cars: modernity involves displacing the traditional, rural life of small farmers and an emerging economically powerful, industrialised urban middle class hand in glove with the state to suppress any workers' revolt.

Women: *Il grido* is often described as the story of the aimlessly drifting Aldo: 'the tragic search of a man for a lost love… realistically bereft of hope…', as the *New York Times* critic wrote. But a masculinist focus on the main male protagonist, Aldo, can't be allowed to obscure the crucial, and crucially active, role that women play. The first character we meet is the sexually independent Irma who sets everything in motion. It's because of her determination to pursue her own desires that we get to meet the other strong, resilient and resourceful women whom Aldo encounters and who provide the film's moral strength. As critic A.O. Scott writes, Antonioni's 'fascination with women is inflected by a sympathy that might be called feminist. The main characters pursue their desires and ambitions under constraints imposed by custom and by the brute impossibility of men.' The very last sound we hear is Irma's cry: she cries not for herself, nor, I suspect, for Aldo, but for the inability of men like Aldo to overcome their apathy in order to survive.

Asked 'Where did all [your] lively and unusual interest in portraying female characters come from?', Antonioni replied:

'Probably from my personal history. I have always been around women…the problems that are common to women have always filled my house and my life. I would like to make a film called 'Identification of a Woman' to express my love for and interest in women through the relationship of one male character with many women. Women provide a much more subtle and uneasy filtering of reality than men do and they are much more capable of making sacrifices and feeling love. While living around women, I have often had moments of complete exasperation, and I have felt locked in, suffocated, with a strong urge to escape, and sometimes I did leave. The truth is I still like women very much.'

Not that Antonioni let his love and interest in women interfere with the need for realism. Criticised for portraying a factory worker in an unrealistic manner he replied:

'Well – I went to tell the story of *Il Grido* to factory workers around Ferrara and also in Rome. They made some comments and I took notes of them. For example, in the scene where Aldo slaps his wife [it takes] place in their house. As a good bourgeois I thought that these things should be resolved at home, I was wrong, the workers told me that a man who acts in such a way is foolish—he should slap his wife in public to prove he is a man. So, I followed their advice and shot the scene in the village's piazza. I think it came out much better that way.'

Casting: Steve Cochran was not the only foreign actor in the film. The Academy-nominated American, Betsy Blair, plays Elvia, Aldo's former girlfriend who eventually pushes Aldo away upon learning he only returned to her because Irma had left him. The British actor Jacqueline Jones (as Lyn Shaw) plays Andrena, a spirited prostitute who has no time for Aldo's spinelessness. His casting choices caused the director some headaches:

'That excellent actress Betsy Blair wanted to go over the script with me, and she would ask me for an explanation of every line. Those hours I spent with her going over the script were the most hellish hours of my life, since I was forced to invent meanings that weren't there at all. However, they were the meanings she had wanted me to give her, so she was satisfied.

With Steve Cochran I had to do something quite different, he – who knows why – had come to Italy expecting to find a directing job – which was just absurd! Therefore every once in a while he would refuse to do something, saying that he didn't feel it was necessary. So I was forced to direct him with some tricks – not letting him know what I wanted from him, but trying to get it through means that he absolutely didn't suspect.'

The distributors, Antonioni explained:

'... definitely wanted a foreigner, they thought that an American name would be more appealing to the public. But I must say that I did like Steve Cochran in the film. If no one knew he was American, if his name had been 'Sergio Michelini', no one would have objected to him.'

Conclusion

Il grido's ambiguous ending always engenders intense debate. Do we know what really happens? But there are two things that can be said with certainty: that Aldo is lost to himself, as film historian Noa Steimatsky writes, is all too clear; as is Antonioni's love of ambiguity It is this ambiguity that makes the ending all the more devastating.

Presenting Antonioni's honorary Academy award in 1995, Jack Nicholson expressed what so many feel about this great filmmaker:

'While most films celebrate the way we connect with one another, the films of Antonioni mourn the failure to connect…. In the empty, silent spaces of the world, he has found metaphors that illuminate the silent places in our

hearts, and found in them, too, a strange and terrible beauty: austere, elegant, enigmatic, haunting.'

Acknowledgments & sources

I acknowledge the Bidgigal and the Gadigal peoples of the Eora nation and the Wiradyuri people, the traditional owners of the unceded land on which I work and live. Always was, always will be, Aboriginal land.

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Film notes by Jane Mills

The restoration

Restored by The Film Foundation and Cineteca di Bologna at L'Immagine Ritrovata laboratory, in association with Compass Film. Funding provided by Hobson/Lucas Family Foundation.

Director: Michelangelo ANTONIONI; Production Companies: SPA Cinematografica, Robert Alexander Productions; Producer: Franco CANCELLIERI; Script: Michelangelo ANTONIONI, Elio BARTOLINI, Ennio DE CONCINI; Photography: Gianni DI VENANZO; Editor: Eraldo DA ROMA; Art Direction & Set Decoration: Franco FONTANA; Sound: Vittorio TRENTINO; Music: Giovanni FUSCO; Costumes: Pia MARCHESI // Cast: Steve COCHRAN (Aldo), Alida VALLI (Irma), Dorian GRAY (Virginia), Lyn SHAW (Andreina), Gabriella PALLOTTI (Edera)

Italy | 1957 | 117 mins | 4K DCP | B&W | Italian with English subtitles | UC15+

I Know Where I'm Going!

Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger

Michael Powell (1905–1990) and Emeric Pressburger (1902–1988) were filmmaking partners under the name of their shared production company, The Archers. Although they began their careers separately, each displaying his unique talents – Pressburger as a screenwriter in Berlin and later, having fled the Nazis, in Paris and London, and Powell, chiefly, as a stills photographer working in the British film industry – it is as a pair that they made their most adored works. Their collaborative period began in 1939, with Powell as director and Pressburger as screenwriter for the British submarine drama *The Spy in Black*, and spanned 33 years to 1972. During that period, they produced 24 films together, including the Australian comedy, *They're A Weird Mob* (1966).

Yet it is for the films made during wartime and through the postwar years that they are most well known. With Pressburger's talent for story and screenwriting and Powell's aesthetic command of visual dynamics bringing out the best in each other, this period produced their finest works as collaborators.

Among their most beloved films are *The Life and Death of Colonel Blimp* (1943), *Black Narcissus* (1947), *The Red Shoes* (1948), and the operatic masterpiece *The Tales of Hoffman* (1951), all celebrated for their Technicolor flair. The black-and-white romance, *I Know Where I'm Going!*, famously appreciated by Martin Scorsese, is also on that list. In the second volume of his autobiography, *Million-Dollar Movie* (he tells a slightly different version in his first volume), Powell remembers writers in the Paramount story department telling him that, whenever they had a 'spiritual flat' and needed inspiration, they would watch *I Know Where I'm Going!* It certainly is one of their best.

The film

'It's the sweetest film we ever made,' wrote Michael Powell in *A Life in Movies*. Many people would agree. In a short documentary made by Mark Cousins in 1994, included on the film's Criterion DVD release, Nancy Franklin says, 'It sounds silly to say it, but *I Know Where I'm Going!* really did change my life.' In my opinion, it's not silly but very nearly the most sensible thing to say in the world. It's a film so full of pleasures, its character and narrative so urgent and yet its spirit so freewheeling, there are almost no words to adequately describe it.

Perhaps these three words could help: dreams, wind, oceans. Joan Webster (Wendy Hiller) confronts all three of these elements in her journey from Manchester to the Scottish Hebrides to meet the man she loves. I've written elsewhere on this film for a *Senses of Cinema* dossier on nostalgia and the cinema, and in that piece I addressed its appeal with these three subheadings.[1] They are three phenomena that hint at this film's power over me, and in some ways define the long time I have spent in love with it, but they are not terms that provide any simple answers. What does? The film changed my life, too, and I think that gets across some of its uniquely influential power. Early on in *I Know Where I'm Going!* – and that exclamation mark in the title is integral to Joan's impetuous drive, to the film's forward rush – Joan's father (George Carney) asks her if she has ever been to the island of Kiloran she's determined to reach. Joan replies, 'In my dreams.' It is a perfect example of the ineffable magic of the cinema.

I Know Where I'm Going! – affectionally condensed to *IKWIG* on the clapperboards shown during the film's opening credits sequence – was written quickly and filmed at the end of 1944, when The Archers were stalled by camera shortages during the making of *A Matter of Life and Death* (1946). These two wartime pictures share more than just the historical coincidences of production. For one thing they are both irrepressibly romantic, and although the story of two people falling in love without realising it is not uncommon, here they are entirely distinct. In the former film, the romance of the lovers, Joan and Torquil (Roger

Livesey), is woven into every fabric of every frame, in the warm fog and the singing seals that encircle them, the sound of the gale that surrounds them, in the cigarette that passes between their hands and the dense smoke that draws them together. The latter film has a richness provided by its Three-Strip Technicolor, and although Powell later expressed regret that IKWIG was not filmed in colour, its black-and-white poetry adds a spellbinding allure, leaving room for the potential of the imagination.

When Pressburger initially proposed the story – of a determined woman who wants to go to an island, but when she gets close enough to it she realises she no longer wants to get there – Powell asked him what this character's initial motivation was. Pressburger gave his now legendary response, 'Let's make the film and find out.' Named for the traditional folk song, sung for the film by members of the Glasgow Orpheus Choir, some of whom appeared in the ceilidh scene (the scene of traditional Scottish music and dancing), *I Know Where I'm Going!* is as much entwined with its romantic atmosphere as its remote location in Scotland's Inner Hebrides.

Apparently, it required a lot more work in postproduction than was anticipated. The story was tightened – the film rushes through its opening scenes, as hurried as Joan is to travel by rail and sea to her island, playfully translating her sense of urgency – and some sound and dialogue had to be re-recorded. The memorable sequence where a small boat is nearly pulled into the whirlpool at Corryvreckan was assembled from location and studio footage, including some filmed around the islands of Scarba and Jura. Livesey's scenes were all filmed at Denham Studios in London, but Wendy Hiller and the rest of the cast, including Livesey's stand-in, spent time on the Isle of Mull, with the nearby Colonsay representing the unreachable Kiloran. This casting trick, of which Powell and cinematographer Erwin Hillier were rightfully proud, was worked around with the edit.

Over the years I have shown this film to people – some cinephiles, some not – who started off wary, whether unused to a 1940s style or put off by what might seem like a stuffiness. Each time, my viewing partner has been won over by its easy charm. Like the film's lovers they too were falling in love without realising it.

Notes

1 www.sensesofcinema.com/2018/stardust-memories

Film notes by Eloise Ross

The restoration

Restored by the BFI National Archive and the Film Foundation in association with ITV. Restoration funding provided by the Hobson/Lucas Family Foundation. Additional support provided by Matt Spick.

Directors, Producers and Script: Michael POWELL & Emeric PRESSBURGER; Production Company: The Archers; Photography: Erwin HILLIER; Editor: John SEABOURNE SR; Production Design & Art Direction: Alfred JUNGE; Sound: C C STEVENS, T BAGLEY; Music: Allan GRAY // Cast: Wendy HILLER (Joan Webster), Roger LIVESEY (Torquil MacNeil), Pamela BROWN (Catriona Potts), Finlay CURRIE (Ruairidh Mhór), Duncan MACKECHNIE (Captain of Lochinvar), George CARNEY (Mr Webster)

United Kingdom | 1945 | 92 mins | 4K DCP | B&W | English | PG

Ishanou

Aribam Syam Sharma

Aribam Syam Sharma, the acclaimed filmmaker from Manipur, has done it all. Actor, singer, composer, theatre director, filmmaker and champion of Manipuri cinema – he is a true Renaissance man who displayed a mastery over every genre of filmmaking, from blockbusters to arthouse cinema to documentaries. In a career spanning close to fifty years, Syam Sharma has directed 15 feature films, over 40 documentaries and scored the music for 25 films. He also played a key role during his three-year stint at the Manipur Film Development Council and as the first Managing Director of the Manipur Film Development Corporation towards improving the infrastructure for film production and the creation of avenues for the appreciation of cinema in Manipur.

'I believe that as filmmakers, we need to return to our roots again and again to make films, which stand as works of art', said Aribam Syam Sharma, whose films put Manipuri cinema on the world map. Known for his simple, poetic narratives about ordinary people, rooted in the culture of Manipur, Aribam Syam Sharma's body of work has stayed true to this belief.

Born in 1936, Syam Sharma came to the world of cinema through music and drama. He composed and sang songs and acted in plays right from his school days. In college, he formed the Amateur Artistes Association along with some friends, which became the forerunner of Roop Raag, the oldest musical association in the state founded in 1960 to promote modern Manipuri music. Syam Sharma graduated with a Masters in Philosophy from the storied Vishwa Bharati University in Santiniketan, where he also studied Rabindra Sangeet [Tagore songs]. His time at Santiniketan had a profound impact on his artistic outlook and creative philosophy.

Syam Sharma's first foray into film was as an actor and composer in the first Manipuri feature film, *Matamgi Manipur* (1972). His debut feature was *Lamja Parshuram* (1974), which became the first film to run in the cinemas for over 100 days in Manipur. His second film, *Saaphabee* (1976), won him the first of many National Awards. The film *Olangthagee Wangmadasoo* (1979) marked the beginning of a long and successful creative collaboration between Syam Sharma and M.K. Binodini Devi, one of the daughters of Maharaj Churachand of Manipur and one of the greatest writers in the history of Manipur. The result was a film that continues to hold the record as the longest running Manipuri film so far in the history of Manipuri cinema, with the record run of 32 weeks. Having directed a blockbuster and feeling confident that he had done his part in Manipuri cinema making a mark at the box office, Syam Sharma decided to leave the mainstream behind. The result was *Imagi Ningthem* (1981) that made the world sit up and take notice. With *Imagi Ningthem* (1981), Syam Sharma became the first Indian recipient of the prestigious *Montgolfière D'or* at the *Festival des Trois Continents*, Nantes. His film *Ishanou* (1990) was selected in the *Un Certain Regard* section at the 44th *Cannes International Film Festival*. He has won multiple National Awards over the years for his films, *Saaphabee, Olangthagi Wangmadasoo, Imagi Ningthem, Ishanou, Sanabi* and *Leipaklei.*

Each of his documentaries explored an aspect of the rich Manipuri culture. His National Film Award winning documentaries are: *Deer on the Lake* (1989), *Indigenous Games of Manipur* (1990), *Meitei Pung* (1991), *Orchids of Manipur* (1994), *Yelhou Jagoi* (1995), *Thang-Ta: Martial Arts of Manipur* (1991), *The Monpas of Arunachal Pradesh* (2001), *Guru Laimayum Thambalngoubi* (2006) and *Manipur Pony* (2012). *Sangai: The Dancing Deer of Manipur* was declared as the 'Outstanding Film of the Year' in 1989 by the British Film Institute and won five awards at the *12th International Wildlife Film Festival* in Montana, USA.

A doyen of Manipuri cinema, Syam Sharma was honoured with the Padma Shri [civilian award] in 2006 by the Government of India. Two years later, he was awarded the Dr. V. Shantaram Lifetime Achievement Award for his contribution to documentary filmmaking. His works have been screened at several international forums, like the British Film Institute, the Museum of Modern Art and *Yamagata International Documentary Film Festival*. In 2015, Syam Sharma was conferred with the Jewel of Manipuri Cinema award by the Manipur State Film Development Society and the *International Film Festival of India* held a special retrospective of his works.

Biographical note from *Cannes Film Festival* press release, 2023.

The film

A bus arrives on a village market street. A young couple and their daughter get off and the wife's mother, a vendor in the women's market, greets them affectionately. They discuss preparations for the child's ear-piercing ceremony which is imminent. Aribam Syam

Sharma's *Ishanou* (*The Chosen One*, 1990) opens thus, to the quotidian rhythms of a Manipuri village, with a deceptive quietude that belies the eddies of grief and turmoil that await this family and, thus, the viewers. As Tampha, the young wife, is drawn to the 'sacred feminine', her family initially seeks medical treatment for what appear to them as strange and inexplicable symptoms. They eventually realise that she must follow her divine calling and leave the family to become a *Maibi*, a priestess with shamanic powers. The family is rent asunder, with Tampha joining her Maibi guru-mother, leaving her husband and daughter behind. This quintessentially Manipuri narrative, where Tampha is torn between her will to feminine power and her love for her daughter, has no happy ending. Suffused with the lyrical and poignant beauty of the sacred music, dance and rituals performed by the Maibis, *Ishanou* represents a significant milestone in Manipuri cinema.

Manipur, in the north-eastern part of India, bordering Myanmar, is on the margins of the national imaginary and, like many other states in this region, has been historically in conflict with the post-colonial Indian State. In recent times, it has been riven apart by politically instigated internecine conflict between the majority Hindu Meitei community in the valley and the Christian hill tribes such as the Kukis. This tumultuous history coexists with the composite culture of the Meiteis, which is an amalgam of indigenous beliefs and Vaishnav Hinduism.

As a filmmaker, Syam Sharma is deeply inserted into Meitei cultural and social life, and his remarkable *oeuvre,* represented by *Ishanou* and other films such as *Saaphabee* (1976) and *Imagi Ningthem* (My Son, My Precious, 1981), seeks to affirm these precarious and marginal modes of being. *Ishanou* was the outcome of his long-standing collaboration with the acclaimed writer M.K. Binodini Devi. Her close association with the Maibis, along with Syam Sharma's previous work on *Lai-Haraoba* (a festival celebrating the gods through music, dance and rituals performed primarily by the Maibis) shaped this narrative that explores the Maibi lifeworld. In a recent film, *Aribam Syam Sharma: Laproscopic Cinemascapes* (dir. Joshy Joseph, 2023), Syam Sharma points to how Manipuri forms, whether the *Raas* dance style, the flower arrangements, or the costumes, are very subtle. His project is to explore the 'Manipuriness' in all these forms, for he fears their increasing marginalisation: 'Once it is lost, it is lost forever,' he says. Along with this, he speaks of his search for an indigenous language of cinema that embodies the minimal, almost invisible expressive energy of Manipuri dance, and in parallel brings out the beauty of the everyday 'dusty Indian scenes', as he calls them.

Closeups are used sparingly in the film and sometimes in counter-intuitive ways. There is a climactic scene towards the end of the film, when Tampha returns home from her guru and looks for her daughter Bembem, going from room to room and calling out to her. When she fails to find her, she falls on her bed, face down and sobs bitterly; the camera focuses on the back of her head and as viewers we are pulled back from invading her grief. This shot is characteristic of the quiet dignity,

equanimity, and grace with which Syam Sharma handles liminal moments in the film. In many other instances, he pays scant attention to the face/head of the performer, thereby decentring the human subject away from the head to the corporeal — the bodily performance of the protagonist. As he points out, this is in keeping with the stylistic registers of classical Manipuri dance: 'In Manipuri dance (…) there's no expression on the face. That is not allowed. There's even a veil. With a veil how can you express?' *Ishanou* is an invitation to go beyond the obvious, the spectacular, and to enter the realm of the unspoken, the veiled and yet deeply affective space that Syam Sharma creates through the layers of his own music compositions, dance and embodied performances of the protagonists.

Film note by Anjali Monteiro and K. P. Jayasankar

The restoration

Presented and restored by Film Heritage Foundation at L'Immagine Ritrovata laboratory and Prasad Corporation Pvt. Ltd.'s Post – Studios, Chennai, in association with the Producer and Director, Aribam Syam Sharma and Manipur State Film Development Society. Funding provided by Film Heritage Foundation with the support of Dr. Richard Meyer and Susan Harmon.

Director, Producer and Music: Aribam Syam SHARMA; Production Company: Aribam Syam Sharma Productions; Script: M K Binodini DEVI; Photography: Girish PADHIAR; Editor: Ujjal NANDI; Sound: Durgadas MITRA // Cast: Anoubam KIRANMALA (Tampha), Kangabam TOMBA (Dhanabir, Tampha's Husband), Baby Molly (Bembem, Tampha's Daughter), Manbi (Tampha's Mother), Soraisam DHIREN (Tampha's neighbour)

India | 1990 | 93 mins | 4K DCP | Colour | Manipuri with English subtitles | UC15+

Film Heritage Foundation, India

Film Heritage Foundation is a non-profit organisation based in Mumbai, set up in 2014. It is dedicated to supporting the conservation, preservation and restoration of the moving image and to developing interdisciplinary programmes to create awareness about the language of cinema.

A member of the International Federation of Film Archives (FIAF) since 2015, Film Heritage Foundation is the only non-governmental organization in the country working in the field of film preservation.

The foundation preserves a growing collection of about 700 films currently on celluloid and has an archive of about 200,000 objects of film-related memorabilia, including cameras, projectors, posters, song booklets, lobby cards, books, magazines, etc. The foundation's programmes span the entire gamut of film preservation activities, from preservation of films and film-related memorabilia, film restoration, training programmes, children's workshops, oral history projects and exhibition to festival curation and publication. Film Heritage Foundation has built an international reputation for excellence. It has been restoring forgotten gems of Indian cinema, including Aravindan Govindan's Kummatty (1979) and Thampu (The Circus Tent, 1978*)* and Aribam Syam Sharma's *Ishanou (The Chosen One,* 1990*)*. The restored films have been screened at festivals, museums and universities around the world. The foundation's most recent restorations, *Thampu* and *Ishanou*, were selected for red-carpet world premieres at the *Cannes Film Festival* 2022 and 2023. Since 2015, in association with FIAF the foundation has been conducting annual film preservation workshops across India that have become the template for FIAF's global training and outreach programme. Until 2022, these workshops were open to applicants from India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Bhutan and Myanmar, while the most recent one was open to participants from across the world. These workshops have had a tremendous impact, training close to 400 participants over the years. They have created a movement for film preservation in India and the subcontinent and built a worldwide community of film archivists.

FILM HERITAGE
FOUNDATION

Journey to the End of Night

Peter Tammer

Peter Tammer was born in Melbourne in 1943. From an early age he made films. He worked at Eltham Films, the Commonwealth Film Unit, and also produced some extremely low-budget commercials. During the 1960s and 1970s he made a number of short films that ranged across documentaries, narratives and experimental work. He also collaborated on two low-budget independent films with Garry Patterson, *Here's to You Mr. Robinson* and *How Willingly You Sing*, and another with Monique Schwarz.

In the early '70s Peter was a founding member of the Melbourne Filmmakers' Co-op and between 1973 and 1975 he was employed as a tutor in a film course for teacher training at Melbourne State College, Carlton.

In 1977 he was approached by Brian Robinson to take on part-time teaching at Swinburne Film and Television School. From 1979 to 1998 Peter was a Lecturer, and later Senior Lecturer in Film at Swinburne, which later merged into the Victorian College of the Arts.

Throughout his time as a teacher Peter continued producing very personal films, including, in 1982, *Journey to the End of Night*. The film had its premiere at the Melbourne Film Festival that year and received the TEN Award for Documentary Excellence. Among the key works in his filmography are *Mallacoota Stampede* (1981), which won the Erwin Rado Award for Best Australian Short Film at the 1981 Melbourne Film Festival, the experimental triptych *My Belle*, *Hey Marcel* and *Queen of the Night* (1983–85), *Fear of the Dark* (1985), *Flausfilm* (2009) and *The Nude in the Window* (2014). *The Nude in the Window*, subtitled *How Paul Cox Became a Film-maker*, was screened as part of Cinema Reborn's inaugural season in 2018.

Peter continues to make films.

The film

Back in 1982, Peter Tammer invited me to a private showing of his latest film. He wanted to screen it at the forthcoming Melbourne Film Festival. I watched *Journey to the End of Night* with an increasing sense of awe. For starters, it was so completely different to his previous film, *Mallacoota Stampede*, a tangled narrative of a group of mostly kids holidaying at the beach

I said back then that the new film represented a significant development in Australian documentary filmmaking, an opinion backed by Phillip Adams in *The Bulletin*, who described it as, 'as vivid as any chronicle of war you'll ever see. The film records a soliloquy that evokes the past with a clarity rarely equalled in any autobiography or novel.'

In the film, Bill Neave, a World War 2 veteran, recounts his wartime experiences direct to the camera. Some forty years after the war, these are as vivid to him as they were when he lived through the violence, brutality, death, torture and cold-blooded murder. Neave does a one-man re-enactment of them and, alone in his home, discusses them with his long-dead friends.

Back in the day all this was quite a

shock. Documentaries rarely poked beneath such surfaces. And this film raised a whole host of questions, as the MFF catalogue said, 'about the nature of documentation, memory and its effect on the present, the recreation of events and the border between fiction and truth.'

In a subsequent conversation published in the December 1982 edition of *Cinema Papers*, Peter and I talked about how he had chosen to tell Bill Neave's story. I wondered about how much this was a performance for the camera and how much of it was recording a deeply felt experience. It is a film in which truth and reality and fiction and performance all come together to create a unique portrait.

One thing that does warrant comment is the film's interspersing throughout of quotations and titles. I saw them as providing some commentary on Bill Neave's state of mind. Peter saw them as much more:

'They are meant to have multiple functions. The first level was to break up the story and to throw events into a separate relief. There are, as you know, two separate sets of quotes, from the *Book of Job* and from Céline's *Journey to the End of the Night*, which was written after World War 1.

Now, that brings me to the second layer of intentions. Céline's *Journey* and the *Book of Job* are about characters in the same style as Bill Neave, human beings who have been tested beyond the normal level of endurance. They are about their attempts to come to terms with it in different ways.

Now I see Job's way, the biblical way, being essentially different from Bill's. And Céline's way is altogether different from both. But, then, all are similar at some level. They are all basically asking: 'What is the purpose of existence? Why do I want to live? Why do I carry on through this shit, this vale of tears?' They all come up with different answers. Bill's answer is very religious because he believed that God was a personal God looking after him.

I don't share that view. I am more inclined towards Céline's atheism and his sense of everything in this world taking us through nightmares beyond comprehension. They have no meaning, no justification.

According to Céline, we are going through a terrible existence which is difficult for us to understand. But at least we can be honest about that and acknowledge it.

Someone like Bill takes the other approach and says, 'I can't understand it therefore it is bigger than me. It must have been ordained by God that it should come to pass but I can't even really believe that.' So, therefore, he is in despair. 'How could I have been saved by God and then gone back and become a murderer?' Céline says, 'It's normal, mate! It is just the way it is. Accept it!'

Notes by Geoff Gardner

Biographical notes drawn from Bill Mousoulis's website: www.innersense.com.au/mif/tammer.html

Notes on the film drawn from an interview with Peter Tammer published in *Cinema Papers*, December 1982.

All information presented with permission of the publishers.

Highly recommended further discussion: Adrian Martin's recorded video introduction to the film: www.youtube.com/watch?v=P4K5OODpjBI

The restoration

Restored by Peter Tammer in 4k using Topaz Video Ai. Funded entirely by the film-maker.

A film by Peter Tammer produced with the assistance of Film Victoria.

The following credit information is included at the express request of Peter Tammer.

A film by Peter Tammer produced with the assistance of Film Victoria.

The main characters who appear in this film are Bill Neave, Connie Neave, and Bill's eldest son, Bill Neave Jr. This film originated with Ruben Mowsowski who made first contact with the central 'character' Bill Neave. Initially Ruben researched all background material for a prospective feature film before handing the project over to Peter Tammer. That transition came about after Ruben had been seriously injured in a car accident. Their mutual friend Garry Patterson was also involved in some of that original research. Bill Neave accepted the change of plan from Ruben's original idea for the film. Peter Tammer then made the film as a 'one man band' except for one weekend when he was assisted by his friend Russell Hurley who sound-recorded two important scenes.

Australia | 1982 | 71 mins | 4K DCP | Colour | English | M

Light Years

Kathryn Millard

Kathryn Millard is a writer and award-winning filmmaker. As writer and director, Kathryn has made ten films – documentaries, feature dramas and essay films. Screened at major festivals, they have been broadcast and streamed around the globe.

Millard writes on film, art and culture. Her published and produced writing encompasses screenplays, essays, criticism and audio features.

Millard began her career in Adelaide, working for film culture organisations, and as an independent filmmaker. From 1993 she lectured in screenwriting at Sydney's Macquarie University and became a Professor in Screen in 2010.

Awarded Best Australian Documentary at the Antenna Documentary Festival, *Shock Room* (2015) dramatises Stanley Milgram's famous obedience to authority experiments, to ask: Are we really programmed to obey?

In *The Boot Cake* (2008) Millard is asked to bring the cake to Charlie Chaplin's birthday party in a small desert town in India where Chaplin is revered as a saint. *The Boot Cake* was nominated for the Gold Hugo at Chicago International Film Festival.

Millardt's feature *Travelling Light* (2003) was nominated for four Australian Film Institute Awards (Feature) and won Best Supporting Actress for Sacha Horler. Her one-hour drama *Parklands* (1996) featured Cate Blanchett in her first film role.

Light Years, Millard's film about modernist Australian photographer Olive Cotton, produced in 1991, has recently been restored.

Millard regularly presents talks for festivals and galleries. She also curates, assesses, dramaturgs and script edits. In 2022 she was the Director of the Rose Scott Women Writers' Festival (Sydney).

As well as numerous research awards and nominations for her film work, Millard has received fellowships and residencies from Varuna Writers' House; the National Film and Sound Archive of Australia; Screen NSW; the Tyrone Guthrie Centre (Ireland) and Yale University (USA).

Millard is Emeritus Professor in Screen and Creative Arts at Macquarie University.

She lives and works on unceded Gadigal land in Sydney's inner west.

Biographical note provided by Kathryn Millard

The film

To make a film about 'one of Australia's most significant modernist photographers' (1) would be a challenge to any filmmaker: how to do justice, cinematically, to someone with such an acute sensitivity to the gradations and nuances of light and such an exquisite sense of composition? And how to draw out the significance of an artist whose work has been the subject of several major retrospectives and is collected in the National Gallery of Australia, but whose life story, as critic Martin Edmond writes, bears none of the heroic qualities that animate the myths of the great artist. Photographer Olive Cotton's work of over sixty years stems from astute, patient observation, often over long periods and, at the time of *Light Years*' release in 1991, she is in her 80s, quiet, shy, and has lived most of her adult life on an isolated farm in regional New South Wales.

For Millard, it was imperative to show Olive Cotton as a working photographer, to see her walking the property outside Cowra with her Rollieflex camera that was 'like an extension of her', and to stage the film around Cotton showing and talking about her images.(2) Throughout the film the photos serve as prompts to evoke memories for Olive, as she discusses key photos, such as her famous *Teacup Ballet* and *Shasta Daisies*, and her enduring fascination with light: 'light brings a subject to life … That's the main thing about all my photographs, the light no matter what it's of. That's what draws me to take a photograph.'(3)

A key scene in *Light Years* brings Olive together with her first husband, photographer Max Dupain, as they view and discuss Olive's prints and how she accomplished the complex tonality and layering of light and shadow in images such as *Orchestrations in Light*. In another scene, National Gallery of Australia curator, Helen Ennis, whose acclaimed biography of Cotton has contributed greatly to our contemporary appreciation of her pioneering work, reviews with Cotton some of her most significant work. Ennis has written of Cotton's extensive 'previsualisation' before she exposed a negative, and her enduring engagement with the technical and aesthetic aspects of photography and printmaking.

Millard sees film as 'a medium of place', and the documentary 'emplaces' Cotton in the environment that generated much of her work: the property where she had lived for forty years with her second husband. The director says, 'there's a river of images running through this place', and the film layers images, stories and landscapes. At times editor Tony Stevens

sets up a kind of mirroring device to reveal correspondences between Olive's exquisitely composed photographs and the place where they were taken. A photo of birds flying into the wind to roost on a dead tree is juxtaposed with footage of a flock of galahs similarly perched (on the same tree?) and then flying away; a stand of winter-bared poplars photographed from an extreme low angle so that they reach in toward each other is echoed in live footage of poplars framed and shot in the same way. With this associative montage, Olive's images are grounded in her relationship with the landscape that she walks over constantly with her lens.

Cinematographer John Whitteron gives viewers a sense of Cotton's photographic attunement to the natural world around her, as his own camera explores the quality of light and colour in this natural world. The team used AGFA film stock because they wanted the warm colour cast and the deep blacks it could produce from landscape and monochrome photographic prints. The images are accompanied at times by a score by contemporary Australian composer, Richard Vella – his first film score – that produces an interesting, slightly disjunctive counterpoint to the pastoral elements of some of the footage.

You can tell a lot about a documentary maker by the kind of interaction they elicit from their subject. There's a gentleness and restraint in the way Millard approaches Olive Cotton (helped by the small crew), giving her space to speak in her quiet, contemplative way: a rapport built over a number of years of getting to know the artist as the development of the film went through many iterations. In the 1980s, the Women's Film Fund partnered with the National Film and Sound Archive to fund interviews with underrepresented women in public life and this scheme gave Millard her first opportunity to work with Cotton. The sound recordings from this project also formed the basis of a program Millard made for ABC Radio, called *Orchestrations in Light*. Eventually, the director was able to make *Light Years*

with funding from the Australian Film Commission and some sponsorship from AGFA. Throughout these years, Millard says, Olive was enthusiastic and felt enormous pleasure to see her work once more in the public eye. *Light Years* is an intimate encounter with an artist at a particular moment of her life, and a valuable record of the photographer and her work for the future.

Notes

1. Helen Ennis, *A Life in Photographs*. Sydney: HarperCollins Publishers, 2019, cover.
2. All quotes from Millard are from a personal interview with the author in January 2024, with permission from the filmmaker.
3. Cited in Helen Ennis, 'Olive Cotton', in *Know My Name* (exhibition publication), National Gallery of Australia, 2020.

Film note by Anne Rutherford

The restoration

Light Years was restored by the National Film and Sound Archive who transferred the original negative. Macquarie University provided technical assistance. Cutting Edge post-production house colour-graded the files and produced digital masters. The restoration was funded by the National Gallery of Art, Washington (in conjunction with *The New Woman Behind the Camera* exhibition) and Charlie Productions.

Director, Writer: Kathryn MILLARD; Production Company: Lexicon Films, Produced in Association with the Australian Film Commission; Producers Kathryn MILLARD, Patricia L'HUEDE; Photography: John WHITTERON; Editor: Tony STEVENS; Composer: Richard VELLA; Sound Designers: John DENNISON, Tony VACCHER; Sound Recordist: Leo SULLIVAN; Stills Photographer: Sandy EDWARDS // With: Olive COTTON, Gillian JONES (Narrator)

Australia | 1990 | 47 mins | 1080p DCP | Colour | English | UC15+

Olive Cotton

Olive Cotton (1911–2003) has been acknowledged as 'one of Australia's most accomplished photographers with a portfolio spanning sixty years' (Ronin Films catalogue). Cotton began taking photos with a Kodak Box Brownie at age eleven, often with childhood friend, Max Dupain, and joined the Photographic Society of NSW and the Sydney Camera Club in 1929. Her photographs were exhibited at the London Salon of Photography in 1935.

Olive was briefly married to Dupain as a young woman and she and Dupain ran a photographic studio in the early 1940s in Sydney, where they were deeply immersed in the artistic milieu of the city and closely engaged with international developments in photography. After divorcing Dupain, Cotton lived for many years with her second husband on a farm near Cowra, raising children in a tent and then a cottage that had no running water, electricity or telephone, but always maintaining her passion for photography.

In the 1960s Cotton opened a photographic studio in Cowra and was finally able to print the negatives she had carefully stored, albeit with very limited equipment. National Gallery of Australia curators Ennis and Shaune Lakin both emphasise what a superb printmaker she was. Her interest was always in the technical and aesthetic qualities of photography as a medium. Cotton was a high school maths teacher and there's something of the systematic rigour of mathematics in her dedication to exploring the qualities of light and form.

It was only in the 1970s and 80s, with attempts in the context of feminism to acknowledge the many significant artists who had been forgotten or neglected because of their gender, that Cotton's work began to resurface. Her images were included in several anthologies and, in 1985, a retrospective of her work was held at Australian Centre for Photography. Olive's work was noted in *Australian Women Photographers 1840–1960*, written by Barbara Hall and Jenni Mather and published in 1986. In 1991 Kathryn Millard's film, *Light Years,* brought her to further attention. The Art Gallery of New South Wales staged a major retrospective of her work in 2000. Cotton is included as one of the key modernist artists in The National Gallery of Australia's 2023 exhibition, *Know My Name,* that aims to improve gender equity in the gallery's exhibitions. The NGA holds forty of her prints in its collection.

The burgeoning recognition of Cotton's contribution to photography has been boosted by a highly-acclaimed biography written by NGA curator, Helen Ennis, in 2022: *Olive Cotton: A Life in Photographs* (Sydney: Harper Collins).

Al-Makhdu'un / The Dupes *aka* The Duped / The Deceived

This program is presented with the generous support of Adrienne Davidson

Tewfik Saleh

Alternatively titled *The Duped*/*The Deceived*, *The Dupes* is the masterpiece of Egyptian filmmaker Tewfik Saleh, whose reputation in the Arab world as one of its greatest auteurs stands in contrast to his virtual invisibility in Anglophone film writing beyond a handful of academic publications. Though his films are difficult to find with English subtitles, what is available reveals a filmmaker of unique historical consciousness, whose oeuvre spills over with complex, contradictory individuals exposed to the prevailing cultural, moral and political winds. Saleh himself was no stranger to historical weather events. After pursuing cinema in Alexandria against his father's wishes, he went to Paris to complete his studies, returning just after the 1952 Egyptian Revolution that overthrew the monarchy and installed Pan-Arab socialist icon Gamal Abdel Nasser. Though his first film, *Darb al-mahabil* (*Fool's Alley*, 1955), was made within a few years of the debut of his much more widely recognised and celebrated countryman Youssef Chahine, and though he, like Chahine, was similarly inspired by Italian neorealism's raw approach to social issues and tendency toward internal moral critique, Saleh was unable to achieve the same consistency of output. He had no interest in manufacturing the glib melodramas that dominated the Egyptian box office in that period, but his work was morally uncompromising enough to also be viewed with suspicion by the Egyptian government. As a result, Saleh struggled for both private and public finance, and his films, once completed, were typically censored. After difficulties with the release of *Yaumiyat na'ib fi-l-aryaf* (*Diary of a Country Prosecutor*, 1968), a withering critique of low-level government corruption, Saleh travelled to Syria to pursue *The Dupes*, a project he'd unsuccessfully sought to get off the ground in Egypt in 1964. The film was an adaptation of *Men in the Sun* (1962), a short story by revolutionary Palestinian Marxist, politician, novelist and poet Ghassan Kanafani about four desperate Palestinian refugees. Kanafani would be assassinated along with his 17-year-old niece by the Israeli intelligence service, Mossad, within months of the film's release.

Biographical note by James Vaughan

Adapted excerpt from an article originally published as 'Was I thinking of death?: The 61st New York Film Festival', in *Senses of Cinema*, January 2024. Reprinted with permission from the publisher.

The film

My father once said: a man without a country will have no grave in the earth.

Mahmud Darwish

Al-Makhdu'un (*The Dupes/ The Duped*), the 1972 masterpiece that Egyptian filmmaker Tawfiq Saleh* adapted from the novel published nine years earlier by the Palestinian writer Ghassan Kanafani, begins with this quote by the Palestinian world-renowned poet, Mahmud Darwish. This is no coincidence: Saleh, Kanafani and Darwish are three giants in the space that I name 'The Arab Republic of the Arts', a transnational network of writers, artists, intellectuals, and filmmakers who, throughout the 1960s, flourished across the Arab world and its diasporas (mostly in Russia and Eastern Europe). Bound by the commitment to questioning the state-centered narratives of progress and modernity encouraged by the postcolonial state's institutions, these authors brought the lives of poor, defeated and marginal people to the world's attention, producing politically committed and modernist art, of which cinema was a key component because of its inherent capacity to transcend national borders.

The cultural orientation of Arab filmmakers in that period, especially after the 1967 Arab defeat in the Six Day War against Israel, is closely aligned with Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino's anti-imperialist *Towards a Third Cinema* (1969), the Manifesto inspired by the Marxist imperative to transform rather than merely interpret the world. In this context, Tawfiq Saleh's work stands out for its capacity to look, in a manner that is simultaneously sharp and empathetic, at the consequences that state politics have on individuals, especially the most vulnerable. While *Al-Makhdu'un* is a film about Palestinian people – their exile, their suffering – it is different from other films produced after 1967; it is far more than a mere celebration of the then intensified Palestinian resistance. It is equally, if not more so, an excruciating meditation on the suffering that war, occupation, displacement, poverty, and migration impose on poor people. In sum, it is a pioneering effort to relate the Palestinian condition to a universal human condition.

Al-Makhdu'un was produced in Syria by the National Film Organization – a body created after the 1963 coup, dependent upon the Ministry of Culture

but financially and administratively autonomous – whose mission was to promote cinematic culture in Syria. It is the thirteenth film (among them both short and full-length films) directed by Saleh, at that time a well-established filmmaker who had already realised adaptations of novels into films, particularly novels by Naguib Mahfouz, who was his close friend.

Saleh was a big admirer of Kanafani (to whom the director gifted a 60mm print of *Al- Makudu'un*, which is now preserved by Kanafani's Foundation in Beirut). Saleh worked on this film from 1964 to 1971 (Cheriaa, 1971), almost eight years, and, when he finally had the opportunity to realise it, he diligently followed the thread of the novel, often using the same phrasings and words chosen by Kanafani. Saleh dedicated long sequences with close headshots to digging into the biography and psychology of each one of the four main characters: the old peasant Abu Qais, nostalgic for his youth and his lost land; the young Assad, who wants to escape an arranged marriage and make his own life; the little Marwan, forced to leave school and find a job, after both his eldest brother and father abandoned the family to selfishly find their own individual way out of misery; and Abul Khayzaran, a driver disillusioned with life and only obsessed with the desire to make money. They are four Palestinian men from different generations facing the long-term consequences of the 1948 Nakba (the Palestinian 'catastrophe', when 750,000 Palestinians were forcibly displaced from their homes, following Israel's Declaration of Independence). Each one of them pursues his own dream of redemption, all motivated to overcome the misery of the refugee camps in the West Bank, where they don't belong and are seen as just a burden. Charmed by the rumours about other migrants' success, Abu Qais, Assad, and Marwan resolve to put their lives in the hands of Abul Khayzaran, an unscrupulous driver who negotiates with them a price to hide them in the water-tank of his truck and smuggle them through the

desert to Kuwait, where they long for a better future. Although the cruellest destiny awaits the three migrants, Abul Khayzaran is no less tragic than they are. Frustrated by the loss of his virility on a battlefield, he tries to compensate for his loss with money, only to turn into the unfortunate executor of an unpronounced death sentence for the migrants. Some critics have interpreted this character as a metaphor for the Arab political leaders, recklessly driving their people towards the abyss (Taha, 2023). It is plausible that this is how both Kanafani and Saleh judged the relationship between the Arab political leadership and the people, especially after the 1967 defeat, and their artistic work might reflect these political views.

Filmed in Syria and Iraq, the story is not set in Palestine and is different to other Arab films dedicated to Palestine at that time: neither the land nor the national struggle is at the center of the narration. However, both lie in the background as a memory: be it the memory of a sensual object of desire ('whenever I'm lying on the ground, I can smell the scent of my wife's hair when she's just had a cold bath. The same fresh, dewy scent', says a young Abu Qais in one of the numerous flashbacks that characterise the plot of both the novel and the film); or as a traumatic memory (in the flashback about the battle where Abul Khayzaran was injured and he laments: 'what's the benefit? I have lost both manhood and nation'). As with the novel, with the exception of these passages, which prepare the scene for the real subject of the story, it is the people rather than the land or the struggle who are at the core of the filmmaker's interest. They are refugees who, in a successful attempt to blur the borders between history and fiction, appear in archival footage early in the film.

An aspect of the film that deserves more attention is the then still rare deconstruction of the link between heroic masculinity and war. There are no war heroes in this film. War does not glorify men, it emasculates them. In this film women (who are mothers and wives) remain in the background, yet they are always active: they bake, sing, give birth, breastfeed and observe with apprehension the decadence of their men. None of the women in the story encourage their sons or husbands to leave. On the other side, none of the male characters present the stereotypical traits of hegemonic masculinity. On the contrary, they are fragile, teary, nostalgic, and destined to be defeated.

Tawfiq Saleh's distinctive perspective makes the film unique in its own genre, and it is not surprising that Martin Scorsese listed *Al-Makhdu'un* among his first priorities when, in 2007, the Martin Scorsese Foundation launched the World Cinema Project, with the specific aim to try to safeguard, protect, restore, and disseminate films that for various reasons were not protected or safeguarded. The whole restoration process took years, especially due to the challenges encountered in locating the best material (ideally the original camera negative) for restoration. It was a long journey that, over three years, took the curators from Bologna, where L'Immagine Ritrovata laboratory operates, to Damascus, where the original negative is preserved, and where a series of legal restrictions, combined with the ongoing civil war and

dictatorship in the country, did not even allow the restoration team to ascertain the condition of the film; then to Paris, where a printed copy was located, only to discover that it was partially out of focus; and, eventually, to Bulgaria. The director of the team that curated the restoration of the film for L'Immagine Ritrovata, Cecilia Cenciarelli, said in an interview (Cenciarelli and Sorbera, 2024), 'I launched a search through FIAF (a network of world films archives) to find the element [the negative]. The Bulgarian National Film Archive had a 35mm negative in their storage. This is very symbolic of how cinema works.' Months after the completion of this project, the tone of her voice still revealed the excitement at this finding, which determined its success: 'It was not an original camera negative but a deep negative. This deep negative was very good.'

The journey of the film mirrors that of its director, who had a migrant life and a transnational career, living most of his productive years away from Egypt, his home country, and mostly in Syria and in Iraq. It is true that, as remarked by the critics, Saleh was a social realist, and an uncompromising filmmaker, whose style is very heavily influenced by Russian montage. However, as Dr Cenciarelli observes: 'He was a social realist in a different way to other social realists at the time ... this is evident even to the audience. During the projection in Bologna, a member of the audience noted that the film is a sort of 'Alfred Hitchcock meets Eisenstein' (2024).

The style of the film is extremely powerful in its juxtaposition of the wide shot landscapes of the desert and the Shatt al-Arab (the point where the Tigris and the Euphrates merge), and the close ups when the film zooms in on the shanties where the protagonists live with their families, zooming into their faces when the narrative moves towards psychological introspection. This

technique brings the viewer intimately into the lives of the refugees, whose fate is not narrated through a nationalist lens, and not even as an Arab political problem, but rather as a universal human defeat. This is perhaps what Saleh wants to convey through his candid and brutal representation of the migrants' corpses, abandoned in the desert, with their mouths open and the limbs stiff. It is a macabre representation that has numerous precedents in art history, from the medieval 'Triumph of Death' genre of painting during plague outbreaks, to Goya's *The Disasters of War*, to the multiple representations of war by Picasso.

If one had to choose a word to describe *The Duped*, the one I find the most appropriate is 'humanist,' because, besides the specific story, the film places the human experience of displacement at its center and it is a profound meditation on the position of human beings in history, its scandalous violence, and the impossibility of individual salvation.

Notes

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The author would like to thank Dr Cecilia Cenciarelli for sharing information about the restoration process and Cineteca di Bologna for making available a copy of the restored film for preview.

Film note by Lucia Sorbera

*Editor's note: The transliteration of Arabic names into English varies in different contexts. We have retained each author's preferred transliteration for director and actors' names.

The restoration

Restored in 2023 by The Film Foundation's World Cinema Project and Cineteca di Bologna in collaboration with the National Film Organization and the family of Tewfik Saleh. Special thanks to Mohamed Challouf and Nadi Nekol Nas. Funding by the Hobson/Lucas Family Foundation. The 4K restoration used a 35mm dupe negative preserved by the Bulgarian National Film Archive (Bulgarska Nacionalna Filmoteka) and was completed by L'Immagine Ritrovata laboratory

Director: Tewfik SALEH; Production Company: National Film Organisation (Syria); Script: Gassan KANAFANI, Tewfik SALEH from Kanafani's 1963 novel *Men in the Sun*; Photography: Baghat HEIDAR; Editors: Farin DIB, Saheb HADDAD; Sound: Zoheir FAHMY; Music: Solhi EL-WADI // Cast: Mohamed KHEIR-HALOUANI (Abou Keïss), Abderrahman ALRAHY (Abou Kheizarane), Bassan Lofti ABOU-GHAZALA (Assaad), Saleh KHOLOKI (Marouane), Thanaa DEBSI (Om Keïss)

Syria | 1972 | 107 mins | 4K DCP | B&W | Arabic with English subtitles | UC15+

Saleh's cinema as a political act

A leader without followers, a master without disciples, Tewfik Saleh represents a unique case in Egyptian cinema. With nine films to his credit (in addition to material shot in India that the Egyptian censors forbade him to edit), Saleh's work, which has always been uncompromising, today constitutes a coherent corpus that cannot be completely ascribed to the social realism so dear to Egyptian critics. The points of contact between his films and those of [Youssef] Chahine, [Salah] Abu Seif, [Henry Antoun] Barakat, [Ahmed] Kamel Morsi, etc., are sometimes more apparent than anything else; certainly all these filmmakers tell the stories of the common people, of the *fellah* (farmer) who bravely works the land in an expanse of mud, of the under-proletariat that survives in the miserable neighbourhoods of Cairo or Alexandria. They certainly look at the destitute and marginalised with humanity, arousing empathy in the viewer. But these directors, almost all of whom belong to the middle class, still lack the lucidity and commitment that come from a true social and political consciousness. This is where Saleh stands out; he is, like Sembène, a true Marxist filmmaker for whom making a film is a true political act.

Here is what he himself told me about *The Dupes*: 'I worked on the adaptation of *Men in the Sun* by Ghassan Kanafani – a militant of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine assassinated on 9 July 1972 in Beirut by the Zionist secret services (Mossad) – from 1964 to 1971. My intentions and my interpretation of the novel and its characters changed in light of the tragic events that took place in the region in June 1967 and September 1970. In the latest version, I wanted to emphasise the element of escape that characterises the Middle East at this time. Three characters from three different generations, representing three phases of the same collective problem, decide to flee their situation in search of what each considers or hopes to be their individual salvation. But the end is very different from their expectations; there is no individual salvation from a collective tragedy. And this is the lesson that history teaches us every day.'

Note by Tahar Cheriaa.

Reprinted from *Il Cinema Ritrovato* catalogue, 2023. Originally published as Tahar Cheriaa, 'Tewfik Saleh', in *Dossiers du cinéma: Cinéastes*, edited by Jean-Louis Bory, Claude Michel Cluny, Casterman, Paris 1971.

Saleh's formal strategies

In *The Dupes*, Abou Keïss (Mohammed Kheir-Halouani)*, a self-described peasant, is taunted by another older character for his lack of proactiveness in improving his family's economic prospects. This shaming leads to a conversation with a slimy people smuggler, Abu Al Khaizran (Abdul Rahman Al Rashi). During this shot/reverse shot negotiation over prices, we are introduced to one of the film's most interesting formal strategies. Saleh cuts from Abou Keïss to a single shot of the smuggler but, when he returns, a new character, Assad (Bassan Lofti Abou-Ghazala, a Palestinian refugee) is in his place – though the conversation continues seamlessly. By the same mode of transition, we meet the third refugee, Marwan (Saleh Kholoki), a 16-year-old with aspirations to become a doctor, who is compelled to abandon school and search for work to support his mother and siblings.

The imbrication of present and past, and of one character's lived experience with another's, is also a feature of Kanafani's original text. We have to be active in tracking when the point-of-view changes; this daisy-chaining of perspective happens without warning and with almost hallucinogenic frequency as the film picks up momentum. It's a beautiful acceleration of cinema's tendency to drift between individual subjectivities and it also has a political function: it sharpens our sense of the collective nature of the trauma experienced in the Nakba ('the catastrophe', in which tens of thousands of Palestinians were killed, and three quarters of a million expelled so that their villages could be rebuilt as Jewish-only settlements), without forgoing any sense of the texture of individual experiences within that trauma.

Abu Al Khaizran's fishy offer for Abou Keïss, Assad and Marwan involves getting inside the steel water tank on the back of his vehicle while they cross a Kuwaiti border checkpoint in searing desert heat. Unable to afford the previous smuggler, they agree to take the risk, and from here the film shifts gears. Time and space have, until now, veered, with the synaptic rhythms of individual subjectivities, but as the truck gets closer to the border, the phenomenological horizon narrows to the width of the bumpy road and the lethal seconds it takes Al Khaizran to clear the checkpoints. Saleh's black and white images convey an uncanny sensation of extreme desert heat. This unexpected formal shift towards something of a thriller, makes visceral the existential binary of the outcast – the psychological injury caused by that which is lost, and the physical injury of its intermittent repercussions. *The Dupes* vibrates with anger and moral intelligence. Saleh critiques the temptation to abandon the collective struggle for Palestinian liberation, without losing any empathy for the individual refugee whose circumstances may lead them to such a point. As Israel's genocide continues to receive support from Western governments, including Australia, the film's call to recognise the victims of the Nakba as human beings worthy of consideration feels more urgent than ever.

Note by James Vaughan

Adapted excerpt from an article originally published as 'Was I thinking of death?: The 61st New York Film Festival', in *Senses of Cinema*, January 2024. Reprinted with permission from the publisher.

Midnight

This programme is presented with the generous support of David and Leith Bruce-Steer

Mitchell Leisen

Mitchell Leisen was one of those journeyman directors, like W.S. Van Dyke at MGM and Michael Curtiz at Warner Brothers, whose work exhibited what has been called 'the genius of the system.' In their expert hands, the most mannered performance achieved at least occasional dignity and a bedraggled sow's ear of a screenplay yielded a purse that could at least pass as silk. Trained as an architect, Leisen failed as an actor but became costume designer to Cecil B. DeMille. At Paramount in the early 'thirties, he was its resident expert in light comedy, his films models of elegance at a studio that set the standard in sophistication of content and style.

Under the title *Careless Rapture*, *Midnight* was originally slated to star Marlene Dietrich as Eve, with Fritz Lang directing. However, after hostile exhibitors in late 1938 labelled Dietrich 'poison at the box-office', the film went first to Barbara Stanwyck, with Ray Milland as Tibor, then to Claudette Colbert, for whom it was given a new title to remind audiences of her success in *It Happened One Night*. Milland, not for the first time, declined to play a part where he wasn't the centre of attention, so Don Ameche came from Twentieth Century-Fox, alternating work on *Midnight* and *The Story of Alexander Graham Bell*.

In Arthur Hornblow Jr., the film was fortunate to have a producer accustomed to the flexible morality of Europe. (He had translated the sensational lesbian drama *La prisonnière,* and mounted a Broadway production so scandalous that the cast were briefly jailed for obscenity). Billy Wilder was less pleased with Leisen, whom he dismissed as 'a window dresser,' protesting in particular the casting of gay actor Rex O'Malley as the waspish Marcel. 'Rex was a wonderful comedian,' said Leisen defensively. 'I made him play his part in *Midnight* as straight as he could; it's about the straightest part he ever did.' Leisen and Wilder clashed again on *Hold Back the Dawn* in 1941, after which Billy vowed never to write another screenplay unless he could also direct it – an ambition realised a year later with *The Major and the Minor.*

The film

Midnight stars Claudette Colbert and Don Ameche but the film's stand-out performance is by neither. And while its director is the always competent and occasionally inspired Mitchell Leisen, his work is not what makes the film of such unique interest. For that, one must look to the appearance in a supporting role of cinema and theatre legend John Barrymore, and to the screenplay, one of the first in his Hollywood career to exhibit the wit and intelligence of Billy Wilder.

Late in his career, Wilder was asked if there was a film he regretted not having made. 'Yes,' he replied. 'It's set at the time of the Crusades. The knights secure their wives in chastity belts and leave for the Holy Land. The rest of the story revolves

around the town locksmith, played by Cary Grant.'

Those who know Wilder's work could fill in the blanks. Cary, of course, would be an amiable boob, around whom the lady of the manor (Shirley MacLaine) runs rings, while a devious court jester (who else but Walter Matthau?) plots for profit. As in *Ace in the Hole, Sunset Boulevard, Double Indemnity* and *The Apartment*, every action would illustrate Wilder's conviction that duplicity, treachery and betrayal are part of life's portion. If Wilder's work in general and *Midnight* in particular have a message, it is that we are our own worst enemies, and the instrument with which we inflict the greatest damage on ourselves and others is love.

Within a few weeks of *Midnight*'s release, Hitler invaded Czechoslovakia and Spain fell to Franco, but neither war nor rumours of war were allowed to penetrate the hermetic world of *mittel European* wit and cynicism characteristic of Paramount. Co-written with Charles Brackett, from a story by Edwin Justus Meyer and Franz Schulz, the script probably began as a Ferenç Molnar anecdote overheard in the men's room of Budapest's New York Café. (It really seems to be true that a sign in the writers' office at Paramount warned 'Here you must work. It is not enough just to be Hungarian.')

In depression-era Paris, penniless American showgirl Eve Peabody (Claudette Colbert) is rescued by

wealthy Georges Flammarion (John Barrymore), who offers to maintain her in luxury if she agrees to distract suave Jacques Picot (Francis Lederer) from the affair he's conducting with Madame Flammarion (Mary Astor). Picot, wheedles Flammarion, 'makes a very superior income from a very inferior champagne,' and is ripe for plucking. But Eve's gold-digger ambitions are derailed by true love in the person of Hungarian cab driver Tibor Czerny (Don Ameche). No prizes for guessing which one she prefers.

The conflict is resolved at one of those luxury weekend house parties in which Paramount specialised between the wars. In the intricacy of Wilder and Brackett's comic invention, backed by Leisen's suave direction, the sequence is a *tour de force.* As guests conga through the marble halls, led by gossip columnist and occasional actress Hedda Hopper, Helene Flammarion, with co-conspirator Marcel Renard, played with malicious glee by Rex O'Malley, prepares to unmask Eve, only to be trumped by Tibor's arrival masquerading as a baron, an imposture Eve forestalls by explaining

that insanity runs in the Czerny family. 'I should have been warned when his grandfather, as an engagement gift, sent us one roller skate covered in Thousand Island dressing.' Flammarion backs her up with a tale of once mistaking a Czerny aunt for an Indian because she powdered her face with paprika.

Lederer and Ameche are early manifestations of the Wilder Dope, a character embodied over the next half-century by, among others, Gary Cooper, Cary Grant, Ray Walston, Tom Ewell and Jack Lemmon. Wilder films also often included a scheming observer (his alter ego?) concerned only to add to the confusion and profit from it. In *Midnight,* this precursor of Barbara Stanwyck in *Ball of Fire* and *Double Indemnity,* and of Walter Matthau in *The Fortune Cookie* and *The Front Page,* is played, in the last coherent role of a distinguished career, by John Barrymore.

Barrymore's next appearance on Broadway was in a play called *My Dear Children.* From a description of that performance – 'clowning, mugging, grunts, snorts, rumbles, yawns, bleats, leers, smirks, ogles, roars, squirts, eye rolling, eyebrow-twitching, strutting, mincing, pouncing, staggering, hip-skipping and jumps, profanity, obscenity and general horseplay' – it's likely that his *Midnight* character came out of the same box (or, rather, bottle). Leisen cast Barrymore's wife, Elaine Barrie, as fashionable milliner Simone, hoping her presence on the set would curtail his alcohol intake, but so ravaged was his memory that dialogue had to be written on boards and held up for him to read. Even in terminal decline, however, Barrymore retained the power to enchant. 'He made me unashamed of the natural,' said Barrie, fifteen years his junior. 'He made me glory in my sensuality. My head still whirls from the memories.' It's a glory of which *Midnight* offers a late but lasting glimpse.

Film notes by John Baxter

The restoration

World premiere of the 4K restoration. For this restoration, Universal Pictures primarily used a 35mm nitrate comp fine grain. The picture element was dry gate scanned in 4K on an ARRI film scanner for a 4K workflow. Universal applied digital processes to improve flicker and stability, address diagonal streaking issues, and clean up film damage, dirt, scratches, and stains. Audio was restored from the 35mm comp fine grain. Digital audio restoration tools were applied to reduce optical anomalies, noise floor, hum, rumble, and sibilance where possible. Restoration services conducted by NBCUniversal StudioPost.

Director: Mitchell LEISEN; Production Company: Paramount; Producer: Arthur HORNBLOW JR; Script: Charles BRACKETT, Billy WILDER, based on a story by Edwin Justus Mayer, Franz Schulz; Photography: Charles LANG JR; Editor: Doane HARRISON; Art Direction: Hans DREIER, Robert USHER; Sound: John COPE, Charles HISSERICH; Music: Leo SHUKEN (uncr); Costumes: Irene LENTZ // Cast: Claudette COLBERT (Eve Peabody), Don AMECHE (Tibor Czerny), John BARRYMORE (Georges Flammarion), Francis LEDERER (Jacques Picot), Mary ASTOR (Helene Flammarion), Elaine BARRIE (Simone), Hedda HOPPER (Stephanie), Rex O'MALLEY (Marcel)

USA | 1939 | 93 mins | 4K DCP | B&W | English | UC15+

Rio Bravo

This programme is presented with the generous support of John and Hazel Sullivan. The programme is dedicated to the memory of Cinema Reborn Foundation Committee Member Eddie Cockrell.

Howard Hawks

Howard Hawks (1896–1979) was a tough-knuckled American director who made movies centred on chivalry, masculinity and the moral binary of good and evil. Hawks studied mechanical engineering at Cornell University before serving as a lieutenant in the Aviation Section of the Army Air Corps during World War 1. This provided him first-hand experience of the horrors of war and the trappings of masculinity.

During the war Hawks began working as an assistant for the silent film legend, Cecil B. DeMille, on a romantic war film, *The Little American* (1917). This experience proved beneficial when he directed his own projects, like his directorial debut, *The Road to Glory* (1926). Hawks' films often featured tough-talking women, leading people to use the term 'Hawksian woman' for characters played by the likes of Lauren Bacall and Katherine Hepburn, who exerted confidence, speaking their mind and parlaying with their male counterparts in witty banter.

Hawks traversed genres with ease and ingenuity like a tight-rope walker, earning him the label of 'auteur' from his French counterparts. Hawks made 40 films, including westerns (*Red River*, 1948), war films (*Air Force*, 1943), films noirs (*The Big Sleep*, 1946), gangster films (*Scarface*, 1932) and screwball comedies (*His Girl Friday*, 1940), yet the imprint of his underlying stylistic traits were still present across this scattering of different genres. Throughout the 1960s Hawks' name served as a hyphenate with Alfred Hitchcock, used synonymously with the group known as the 'Young Turks.' This group consisted of film critics from *Cahiers du Cinéma,* like Francois Truffaut and Jean-Luc Godard, who self-identified as the 'Hitchcocko-Hawksians' (in contrast with the critics of their left-leaning rivalry magazine in Lyon, *Positif*). The label served to demonstrate the group's adoration of Hollywood and their focus on the director.

Biographical note by Digby Houghton

The film

For a cinephile, there can be no sweeter or more glorious moment in recent memory than the scene in Víctor Erice's *Cerrar los ojos* (*Close Your Eyes*, 2023) when an ageing filmmaker accepts the gift of an acoustic guitar and instantly serenades his friends with a near-faultless rendition of 'My Rifle, My Pony and Me' – a ritual they have obviously enjoyed many times previously. Just as they have, no doubt, together watched the movie it comes from, Howard Hawks' *Rio Bravo*, many times previously.

Nowadays, critics of film, literature and music love to evoke the concept of *late style* – that moment in an artist's trajectory when he or she has nothing left to prove, when they can go for broke, or simply do whatever they like. Luis Buñuel, Manoel de Oliveira, Agnès Varda and Clint Eastwood are among those film directors who managed to arrive at such a pinnacle of insouciant creativity. But late style sometimes triumphed even at the heart of Hollywood's studio system, and *Rio Bravo* is the proof of that. Hawks had enjoyed a long, illustrious and mostly commercially successful career since the 1920s. In 1959, he was 63 years old. His road was far from over – five further features followed, including two shameless variations on *Rio Bravo*, and he lived to the age of 81 – but '59 marked the moment when he truly relaxed into enjoying himself as a filmmaker.

Rio Bravo is what is known today as a *hangout* movie. Tarantino and P.T. Anderson, among many others, have reached for this Nirvana, but few get even half-way there. What do the characters in *Rio Bravo* do? For long, precious passages (it's 141 minutes long!), they just spend time with each other: talking, teasing, laughing, singing. They constitute (as the film itself proudly declares) a motley crew of law enforcers: an old guy with a limp (Walter Brennan), an alcoholic named Dude (Dean Martin), a rookie (Ricky Nelson), and the one incontrovertible hero-figure, John T. Chance (John Wayne). Along with, in a splendid plot tangent, a feisty woman (Angie Dickinson), able to flummox Chance in any situation. *Rio Bravo* is a film full of delightful tangents.

Of course, there is a plot pretext binding these characters together, enforcing (in a sense) their hanging out. And that pretext – the slow encroachment of a villainous gang upon the jail that houses one of their own, and that our heroes must guard – has its own filigree of tension and suspense, coaxed along by a superb *degüello* composed by Dimitri Tiomkin (see www.youtube.com/watch?v=AR-KbvXvBd8). In the

macho, homage-crazy hands of a John Carpenter (*Assault on Precinct 13*, 1976), that premise is turned into full-throttle, bloody action. Hawks' instincts, however, go elsewhere: to the redemptive arc of Dude beating the bottle ('Didn't spill a drop'), to a jolly game of hurling dynamite at the bad guys … and to that immortal round of communal singing (which also features 'Get Along Home, Cindy').

Just like for those folks around the table in *Cerrar los ojos*, *Rio Bravo* is a classic that – across time, across many different viewings in diverse times and places – weaves its way into the sentimental memories of many cinephiles. It certainly has worked that way for me. It was among my early-teenage cinema revelations, first glimpsed on the family's black-and-white TV set. Later, it became a tug-of-war token in the film theory wars of the 1970s: were you for or against the 'classical Hollywood fantasy' of *Rio Bravo*? Mellower times allowed for its rediscovery. Laura Mulvey and Peter Wollen placed it high on their lists of the Ten Best Westerns. Critics as different as Robin Wood and Serge Daney – both militantly gay – worshipped (and wrote copiously about) it. Young 'video essayists' such as Will DiGravio today devote their rapt attention to its every detail.

And I have a special memory, tied to what must have been the final projection of the extant print of *Rio Bravo* in Melbourne – at an outer-suburban matinee for little kids! It was, to put it mildly, not an ideal condition for the contemplative appreciation of this masterpiece: the children who were there got bored and started racing around the theatre screaming within the first five minutes. And at intermission (remember, this is a long film), they simply cleared out for good. Except for one very gentle lad who came up to me and meekly asked: 'Mister, do you like this film?' 'Yes', I replied, 'I sure do!' And then, after not many more words, he quietly sat beside me for the second half of the screening – *Rio Bravo* in 35mm, just for the two of us! And when it ended, this boy bid me a courteous farewell, and duly rejoined his mother waiting at the entrance of the cinema.

I wonder: is that child today sitting around a table, strumming a guitar and singing 'My Rifle, My Pony and Me' to his grown-up companions?

Film note by Adrian Martin

The restoration

Restored by Warner Bros. in collaboration with The Film Foundation.

Director, Producer: Howard HAWKS; Production Company: Armada Productions; Script: Jules FURTHMAN, Leigh BRACKETT, from the story 'A Bull by the Tail' by B H MCCAMPBELL; Photography: Russell HARLAN; Editor: Folmar BLANGSTED; Art Direction: Leo K KUTER; Set Decoration: Ralph S HURST; Sound: Robert B LEE; Music: Dimitri TIOMKIN; Costumes: Marjorie BEST // Cast: John WAYNE (John T Chance), Dean MARTIN (Dude), Ricky NELSON (Colorado), Angie DICKINSON (Feathers), Walter BRENNAN (Stumpy), Ward BOND (Pat Wheeler), John RUSSELL (Nathan Burdette), Pedro GONZALEZ GONZALEZ (Carlos Robante), Estelita RODRIGUEZ (Consuela Robante), Claude AKINS (Joe Burdette)

USA | 1959 | 141 mins | 4K DCP | Colour | English | M

Le samouraï / The Samurai

This program is presented with the generous support of Max Berghouse.

Jean-Pierre Melville

Jean-Pierre Melville's real name was Jean-Pierre Grumbach. He was born into a Jewish family from Alsace but changed his name during World War Two while working with the French Resistance. The surname was borrowed from his favourite writer, Herman Melville, author of *Moby Dick*. It was the first symptom of an abiding fascination with American culture that would find an outlet in Melville's movie-making and in a carefully-constructed persona. Wearing a Stetson and Ray-Bans he would drive around Paris in a huge American convertible. He had a passion for jazz and for classic Hollywood films of the 1930s.

Like French New Wave directors such as Jean-Luc Godard and Claude Chabrol, for whom he was an acknowledged mentor, Melville was a cinephile. In his younger days he would go to the cinema at 9 am and emerge at 3 am the following day. He had an encyclopaedic knowledge of American movies which allowed him to reel off lists of favourite films and directors. He knew who was responsible for the writing, the cinematography, the music and the set design.

I'm told that in film schools today it's hard to get students to watch anything in black-and-white, let alone from the 1930s. This may be one of the reasons for the prevailing ordinariness of so much contemporary cinema. In the Hollywood of the 1930s, audiences accepted that movies would transport us to a parallel universe: a world resembling our own, but more glamorous, more heroic, more rich in possibilities. A movie's artificiality was part of its appeal, not a reason for complaint.

Melville embraced that sense of artifice, planning his films with painstaking care. He was the ultimate control freak – the very definition of the French *auteur* who concerned himself with every aspect of a project, imposing a personal style upon the final product.

Melville would demand that an actor wore a hat or a collar with exactly the right tilt. They would be forbidden from moving their eyes freely, being obliged to look at the camera or a particular spot on the wall according to his instructions. He left no room for improvisation or any deviation from the script. Such dictatorial tendencies would bring about furious arguments with stars such as Lino Ventura and Gian-Maria Volonté.

In fact Melville was so 'difficult' he was said to have argued with everybody. He was, by turns, secretive and exhibitionist. Although he loved to shroud himself in mystery, he performed for the paparazzi with his American hats and cars. He was simultaneously an intellectual and a populist, making highly 'literary' movies that were also box-office hits.

His first feature, *La silence de la mer* (*The Silence of the Sea*, 1949), based on a respected novel of the French Resistance, by Vercors (aka Jean Bruller), took most of its dialogue directly from the book. The story of an old man and his niece

who are forced to play host to a German officer during the occupation, the film is filled with high-flown rhetoric, even though the hosts never say a single word to their unwelcome guest.

The play of silence and dense, involving dialogue is a trademark of Melville's movies. In *Le samouraï* (*The Samurai*) (1967), generally considered his greatest achievement, Alain Delon plays a hit man who never utters an unnecessary syllable. In *Léon Morin, prêtre* (*Léon Morin, Priest*, 1961), Jean-Paul Belmondo is cast against type as a dynamic young priest, while Emmanuelle Riva plays a communist widow beset with conflicting desires. The duo spend much of their time engrossed in theological discussions – which sounds deadly but makes for a series of gripping scenes, as the question of God's existence wrestles with rising sexual tensions. The movie was a huge popular success.

The Silence of the Sea and *Léon Morin, Priest* form a rough trilogy of films about the Second World War and the Resistance, along with *L'armée des ombres* (*Army of Shadows,* 1969), a movie that received mixed reviews at first appearance but is now an accepted masterpiece. Although shot in colour, it must be one of the gloomiest features ever made. Not only does most of the action take place in darkness or shadow, it paints a bleak, deeply fatalistic portrait of the times. The film technique exemplifies the 'minimalism' of Melville's late work, which employs an absolute economy of means.

Although *Army of Shadows* is a war story, it has stylistic affinities with the genre for which Melville is most famous:

his gangster movies. If the first of these, *Bob le flambeur* (aka *Bob the Gambler*) (1956), has the flamboyant style of a hard-boiled police story, by the time of *Le doulos* (the title refers to a hat, but is also a slang term for a police informer) (1963) and *Le deuxième souffle* (*Second Wind*, 1966), Melville's approach had become grittier and more brutal. The later crime movies, *Le samouraï*, *Le cercle rouge* (*The Red Circle*, 1970) and *Un flic* (*A Cop*, 1972), are as finely designed as a Swiss watch.

Melville's reputation waned following his premature death from a heart attack in 1973, but he has re-emerged as a major influence on directors such as Quentin Tarantino, the Coen brothers, John Woo and Walter Hill.

In the hyper-masculine world of Melville's films, a killer may have a stronger sentimental attachment to a police inspector than to a woman. The few women who appear in his movies, with the exception of Riva in *Léon Morin*, are mostly instruments to be manipulated by men, or weak-willed beings who can't be trusted. It's easy to call out the misogyny of these movies but this is so much a part of the director's pessimistic world view one can hardly imagine a different state of affairs. Ultimately the male characters in Melville's stories do no better than their female counterparts. We are led to sympathise with, and even admire, these thieves, gangsters and casual killers, but implacable fate always has the last say.

'The truth,' said Melville, in discussing *Army of Shadows*, 'is that man is always defeated.' This textbook existentialism threads its way through his meticulous depictions of Parisian nightlife, sordid hide-outs, elaborate heists, car rides, gun fights, fear and sudden death. It's a spectacularly dark vision that exerts a mesmeric power on the viewer. When the lights come up we know we have been in the presence of a master.

Biographical note by John McDonald

Adapted from an article published in the *Australian Financial Review*, 17 October, 2020.

The film

In 2020, Cinema Reborn presented a six-film retrospective of Jean-Pierre Melville restorations at The Ritz in Randwick.

Bruce Beresford introduced *Le doulos* (1963) wearing a trench coat and a fedora hat. His advice to those attending the retrospective:

'Tell nobody what you are doing. Even your loved ones – especially your loved ones – should be kept in the dark.

If it comes to a choice between smoking or talking, smoke.

Dress well, but without ostentation. Wear a raincoat, buttoned and belted, regardless of whether there is rain.

Any revolver should be kept, until you need it, in the pocket of the coat.

Finally, before you leave home, put your hat on. If you don't have a hat, you can't go.'

His advice applies to many male characters in Melville's gangster films. In *Le samouraï*, described once as 'the peak of his romantic and ritualistic gangster movies', it certainly applies to the lonely and austere contract killer Jef Costello (Alain Delon).

For the *Le doulos* screening in 2020, Bruce Beresford also brought his 9-year-old grandson who approached Cinema Reborn's Top Banana, Geoff Gardner, after the screening to plaintively ask: 'But where is *Le samouraï*?'

Four years ago, no suitable restored version of the film was available, but late last year Pathé produced an Ultra High Definition 4K restoration.

From its opening sequence in a dingy Parisian apartment, drained of colour and leaving only a palette of grey and blue, we watch as Jef Costello lies silently on a bed, smoking. The only sounds are rain, cars on wet roads, and the chirp of his pet caged bird (a female bullfinch chosen by Melville for its predominantly black and white feathers). It turns out even a small caged bird in film noir can serve as an early warning system of impending danger.

Multiple packets of Gitanes cigarettes and bottles of Evian water crowd the top of Jef's cupboard; his trench coat and fedora patiently wait on a stand by the door and there's the sense of spiritual devotion within this lonely man, bound by his personal code of honour and by the vision of his fate.

Melville wrote the film for Alain Delon. They spent time juggling schedules and there were periods of will-I-or-won't-I indecision from the actor. Melville finally sat in Delon's apartment and started reading him the script:

'Suddenly, [Delon] looked at his watch and stopped me: 'You've been reading the script for seven-and-a-half minutes and there hasn't been a word of dialogue … that's good enough for me. I'll do the film. What's the title?' *Le samouraï* I told him … and he then led me to his bedroom: all it contained was a leather couch and a samurai lance, his sword and dagger.'

Many writers have debated the veracity of Jef Costello's samurai, pointing out that the lines from *The Book of Bushido* quoted by Melville at the start of the film were, in fact, not from the *Bushido* at all, but entirely invented by the director.

The samurai in feudal Japan worked as a loyal vassal to a lord, but Jef in modern-day Paris works only for himself as a contract killer, loyal only to his own death. In this respect, he is unlike both the samurai whose death might be the result of his loyalty to a lord, and a modern-day yakuza gangster, who is more likely to die from other revenging gangsters or 'suicide by police.'

This suggests Jef Costello is closer to the feudal-era ronin: the lapsed samurai whose master has died or who has lost all social and cultural favour. These samurai were expected to commit harakiri and those that didn't were called ronin. They were cut off from relationships with family and clan and became 'drifters' or 'wanderers' alone in the world.

Written credits for *Le samouraï* often suggest the screenplay was based on an uncredited novel called *The Ronin,* by Joan McLeod. Despite extensive work by diligent researchers, it appears that Melville never claimed this, or any other novel, as a source and no-one has found any novels written by a Joan McLeod or any physical copy of *The Ronin*. Another Melville invention, perhaps?

Betrayal runs deep in film noir and in the wonderful *Army of Shadows* (1969), Melville's film made after *Le samouraï*, he drew inspiration from his experiences in the French Resistance. The wartime characters in that film also inhabit shadow worlds, unspoken codes, danger in every step, and fear of betrayers in their own ranks who must be eliminated. The gangster world in Melville's previous films resonates with the underworld practices adopted by the Resistance in wartime France.

In some ways, a similar fusion exists in Jef Costello's *bushido*-driven samurai or ronin. Reaching back into the past of feudal Japan, Jef finds a coda and a ritual to consume his contract killer life. It purposefully drives all aspects of his actions: his loneliness from the society around him; his fear of betrayal; and his fear of failure – falling into the arms of the French police.

There's fusion, also, in the roots of the film. Melville is often referred to as the father of the French New Wave, a film movement that venerated the previous film movement of German Expressionism; and the film movement it gave birth to, Film Noir. In the USA, it also fused with homegrown gangster and crime films. And in France, Melville fused it with Japanese gangster and samurai films.

The austere, poetic and minimalist beauty of the images in *Le samouraï*, accompanied by its languorous,

serpentine jazz score, are often at counterpoint with the subtle intricacies of the plot. There's a cat-and-mouse game between Jef and the police, but also a chess game of tangled relationships and motivations that asks question after question. Who is double-crossing whom? Why doesn't she identify Jef to the police? Is-she-or-isn't-she-a-femme-fatale? Isn't that the barman from Martey's nightclub and why is he collaborating with the gangsters?

And in a film that is almost entirely comprised of set-pieces, there's an exquisitely elaborate set-piece in the Paris Metro with Jef running to change lines, avoiding the male and female undercover police who seem to be on all the platforms and in every train carriage: a set-piece that inspired many thrillers made in its wake.

Le samouraï has been admired by many film directors and parts of this Melville film can be found in Scorsese's *Taxi Driver*, Coppola's *The Conversation*, Tarantino's *Reservoir Dogs*, Bertolucci's *The Conformist*, Michael Mann's *Heat*, Jim Jarmusch's *Ghost Dog: The Way of the Samurai*, and almost all of Takeshi Kitano films. Remakes include John Woo's *The Killer*, Anton Corbijn's *The American* and Nicolas Winding Refn's *Drive*.

Adulation for the film seems universal. Some examples:

'The film is unbearably perfect.' (Rui Nogueira)

'One of the most tense and absorbing thrillers ever made.' (James Berardinelli)

'Unmissable masterpiece.'(Victor Piñeyro)

'The closest to a perfect movie I have ever seen.' (John Woo)

'No-one, not even Huston or Hawks ever handled the mechanics of the thriller better than Melville.' (Tom Milne)

And my personal favourite:

'*Le samouraï* looks as abstract, yet as beautiful and as endlessly worthy of study, as the Giotto frescoes in the basilica in Assisi.' (David Thomson)

A French film noir about a ritualistic contract killer compared with a 14th Century Florentine master painter?

Even Jef Costello might have smiled.

But I doubt it.

Film note by Rod Bishop

The restoration

Restored in 4K by Pathé and The Criterion Collection at L'Image Retrouvée laboratory Paris, from the original 35mm negative.

Director: Jean-Pierre MELVILLE; Production Companies: Compagnie Industrielle et Commerciale Cinématographique, Fida Cinematrografica, Filmel, T.C. Productions (all uncredited); Producer: Raymond BORDERIE, Eugène LÉPICIER; Script: Jean-Pierre MELVILLE, Georges PELLEGRIN; Photography: Henri DECAË; Editor: Monique BONNOT, Yolande MAURETTE; Art Direction: François DE LAMOTHE; Sound: Alex PRONT; Music: François DE ROUBAIX // Cast: Alain DELON (Jef Costello), François PÉRIER (Le Commissaire), Natalie DELON (Jane Lagrange), Cathy ROSIER (The Pianist), Jacques LEROY (The Man on the Bridge), Michel BOISROND (Wiener)

France | 1967 | 101 mins | 4K DCP | Colour | French with English subtitles | PG

Le samouraï's Dispassionate Colour Scheme

Jean-Pierre Melville's *Le samouraï* (1967) is a pivotal film. Janus-like, it looks back to its heritage in American film noir and ahead to its inheritors in international neo-noir. It draws its stillness from a film like *This Gun for Hire* (Frank Tuttle, 1942), which it bestows, in turn, to John Woo's *The Killer* (1989) and Nicolas Winding Refn's *Drive* (2011). Jef Costello, its central character, embodies the earlier film's Philip Raven (Alan Ladd), while anticipating the unnamed get-away drivers of *The Driver* (Walter Hill, 1978) and *Drive*, men who live by personal codes that guide and protect them. These are dispassionate men eventually undone by irresistible passions. In its predominant colour palette of black, white, grey, and beige, *Le samouraï* stands between the black and white of film noir and the colours of neo-noir. Melville dreamed of reducing the film's palette even further: 'My dream is to make a colour film in black and white, in which there is only one tiny detail to remind us that we really are watching a film in colour.' To begin with, all the details of Jef's monochromatic apartment in the film's opening sequence, exquisitely rendered in the restored version of the film presented by *Cinema Reborn*, down to a drab female bullfinch chosen instead of an orange-chested male, and a handful of Xeroxed bank notes drained of their actual colour that Jef draws across the bird's cage, reflect Melville's absolute control of the room's colour palette. Later, when Jef returns to the apartment, the pink labels on a row of Evian bottles introduce the modest splash of colour into the décor that Melville mentions. Similarly, in the film's second sequence in which Jef steals a Citroën, Melville carefully restricts the colours of the cars on the street to shades of grey with a few brighter colours appearing on the store fronts in the background. Later, when Jef visits Martey's nightclub, a woman dressed in blue reads as a moving spot of colour as she walks through the otherwise monochromatic room. Given the film's restricted colour palette, it seems perfectly logical that, when we finally see the man who has double crossed Jef after hiring him for the hit, he should be surrounded by its opposite: brightly coloured paintings. Even though Melville's dream of absolutely controlled colour is only intermittently achieved, colour is restricted often enough so that *Le samouraï* lingers in our memory as largely monochromatic.

Measured in its pace and colour, *Le samouraï* achieves a still balance that lingers in our memories.

Note by Marshall Deutelbaum

The Suspect

Robert Siodmak

Born in Memphis in 1900 while his parents were on a business trip, Siodmak was brought up in Germany. He entered the film industry in 1925 as a translator of American inter-titles into German, but by 1926 he was engaged in making 'one from twos' (editing down already existing films to make new films). His first feature film as director was an independently produced silent feature, *Menschen am Sonntag (People on Sunday*, 1929), made with a non-professional cast in collaboration with Edgar Ulmer, Billy Wilder, Fred Zinnemann and the legendary cinematographer Eugen Schüfftan. Siodmak was put under contract with UFA, directing more than a dozen features between 1930 and '37. Being Jewish and having incurred Goebbels' displeasure with the critical portrayal of family life under the Third Reich in one of the films he directed, Siodmak left Germany for France, where he directed a *policier*, *Pièges (Snares*, 1939), before emigrating to the US in 1940. After directing B movies for various companies, Siodmak signed a long-term contract with Universal, where his brother Curt was already a screenwriter.

Between 1941 and '51 Siodmak directed at least 20 features in Hollywood, all as assignments, graduating to 'A' budgets with *Phantom Lady* (1944), the first of five generally recognised post facto as films noirs, including *The Killers* (1946), and *Criss Cross* (1948); the latter screened at *Cinema Reborn* in 2021. Five other features directed by Siodmak, including *The Suspect* (1944), are sometimes variously listed as 'films noirs' but more often as melodramas with some noir elements. His films helped define and shape the preoccupations and development of the noir cycle.

Siodmak's career in Hollywood ended about the time the initial manifestion of noir cinema had faded in the early fifties. Siodmak's penultimate American film, an action romp starring Burt Lancaster, *The Crimson Pirate* (1952), quite unlike his previous Hollywood films, was filmed in England and Spain. He directed more than a dozen features between 1951 and '68, mainly in Germany but also in Britain and France, plus *Custer of the West* (1966) an American production filmed in cinerama in Spain.

Siodmak, like other German emigré directors, quickly learned to blend the expressionism of melodrama in German cinema with the technical versatility of the big studios. He ranged freely over the noir spectrum, adjusting to the varying demands of the scripts that were mostly based, often imaginatively, on pulp writing, with an eye for detail within broad brush strokes of mood and plot complexity. All five noir melodramas, including *The Suspect,* were made entirely within the studio but Siodmak also showed how studio sets could be effectively blended with location filming in, for example, *Criss Cross* and *Cry of the City,* which form a noir gangster trilogy with *The Killers.*

Siodmak apparently had a photograph of himself he liked to sign 'see odd Mack', so referring, it seems, to what

critic and Charles Laughton biographer, Charles Higham, refers to as Siodmak's 'owlish appearance.' As Higham relates it, Siodmak was far from owlish on the set. In the final rehearsal period of The Suspect, Laughton 'suddenly felt his familiar and overpowering conviction that his interpretation of the role was wrong.' He charged at Siodmak, yelling that 'all we have done so far is rubbish!' Siodmak was ready for such displays of temperament. He angrily acted out the scenes as he had previously discussed them. Laughton went into reverse, trying to placate the director to avert a possible stroke. But Siodmak could not be easily placated, insisting they play it the way discussed, otherwise Laughton could 'get out. Get out anyway.' Laughton told people that Siodmak was 'the most hysterical director he had ever worked with' and had to be coped with every day. Off the set a friendship survived and grew, Laughton reading aloud to Siodmak 'every one of A.E. Houseman's one-act plays,' Siodmak reciprocating with his own readings from The Bible and Samuel Pepys' Diary (1).

The film

David Thomson, in his *A Biographical Dictionary of Film,* comments on the links he finds between the fatalism of *The Killers* and 'the irony and humour in *The Suspect* and [*The Strange Affair of] Uncle Harry*, rare studies of plain decency driven to break the law,' both made by Siodmak in the same year.

Described by Siodmak as 'the best story I have told,' *The Suspect* was adapted from a novel, *This Way Out*, by British writer James Ronald: 'a highly sympathetic account of an ordinary middle-aged man driven into committing murder which could have been made into an effective *film noir'.* (2) In his essay on five films noirs and five melodramas with noir elements directed by Siodmak between 1944 and '49, Walker speculates that 'Universal (perhaps struck by the potentially exploitable echoes in the story of the Crippen murder case) took the decision to set the film [in Victorian London] at the turn of the century.' Walker further notes that, 'the effect is to dilute the *noir* ambience of the story [granting] an aesthetic distance', further compounded by the casting of Laughton as Phillip Marshall, a hen-pecked husband long wishing to escape from his wife Cora's relentless shrewishness (2).

After a marriage crisis, Phillip Marshall meets a young woman, Mary (Ella Raines), rescuing her from the despondency of fruitless job-hunting. She comes to genuinely love the flabby middle-aged tobacco shop manager for his gentleness and kindness. By this time, Philip is established as a thoroughly sympathetic character.

When Cora (Rosalind Ivan) finds out about their relationship, she refuses to divorce Phillip. Furthermore, she vows to ensure that both of them lose their jobs. Phillip admits to Mary that he is married with an adult son and must give her up. Then, driven beyond endurance by his wife on Christmas eve, Phillip is finally driven to act.

The Suspect moves into film noir territory when an inquisitive police inspector, Huxley (Stanley Ridges), visits Phillip and informs him that he knows Cora was murdered. Huxley re-enacts the murder on the staircase viewed from

Phillip's point-of-view, Huxley speaking off screen. As Walker notes, in this scene the chiaroscuro of film noir comes fully into play.

After being confounded by a surprise move by the accused, not to be outdone Huxley persuades Phillip's neighbour, Simmons (Henry Daniell), a dissolute wife-beater, to supply evidence incriminating Phillip, who is now in the grip of 'uncontrollable impulses.'

Walker shows through comparative analysis how structurally similar *The Suspect* is to Fritz Lang's key film noir, *Scarlet Street* (1945). Both 'heroes' retain audience sympathy but Phillip cannot be considered a genuine 'noir hero': Chris (Edward G Robinson), in *Scarlet Street*, is punished by conscience while Phillip has no guilt for his crimes.

Apart from the already described re-creation by the inspector of the first murder, both structurally through a linear narrative and in terms of the mise en scene, The Suspect is the most classical of Siodmak's noir films in the unobtrusive deployment of camera movement and placement, depth of field in the compositions, and seamless editing. Siodmak's direction, combined with the subtlety of Laughton's performance, reinforces the script's propensity to avoid actual melodrama – not without irony, given the director-actor collision on the set. Laughton ultimately appreciated the opportunity

after too many typecast roles. Both he and his wife, character actress Elsa Lanchester, counted his performance as Phillip Marshall among the best of his prolific film career.

The Suspect was made soon after what is now generally regarded as the first film noir, *Stranger on the Third Floor* (1944), in parallel with several other unconventional period thrillers: John Brahm's *The Lodger*, Edgar G Ulmer's *Bluebeard*, and George Cukor's *Gaslight*, all 'quasi-romantic narratives accentuated by dark and sinister atmosphere' (3). In the following year Brahm made *Hangover Square* as a baroque set-piece, 'a melodramatic vision of controlled chaos and romantic destruction', which paralleled the conventions of '40s noir subjectivity (3).

The Suspect is also in a period setting but, as already noted, only one scene is unmistakably noir in dealing with the theme of maladjustment and murder from the point of view of the murderer rather than the victim. This provides the frame for developing the moral shadings and repressed violence behind a veneer of Victorian middle class gentility, treating the murderer as acting from commonplace motivation. The way that it breaches this veneer, more redolent of Hitchcock than of Lang, and the restraint in the playing, coalesces into the film's final image.

Notes

1. Charles Higham, *Charles Laughton: An Intimate Portrait*, Doubleday, 1976, pp. 128–9.
2. Michael Walker, 'Robert Siodmak', essay in *The Movie Book of Film Noir*, ed. Ian Cameron, Studio Vista 1992.
3. Alain Silver and Elizabeth Ward, 'The Period Film', Appendix in *Film Noir*, Overlook Press, third edition, 1992, pp. 327–331.

Film notes by Bruce Hodsdon

The restoration

Restored in 4K in 2021 by Universal Pictures at NBCUniversal StudioPost, from the original 35mm nitrate original negative and a 35mm nitrate comp fine grain. The picture elements were scanned in 4K on an ARRI film scanner for a 4K workflow. Universal applied digital processes to improve flicker and stability, address a jump cut and image lag, and clean up dirt, scratches, and gate hairs. Audio was restored primarily using the nitrate comp fine grain. Digital audio restoration tools were applied to reduce anomalies, noise floor, hum, camera noise, and overall level adjustments. Audio restoration services were provided by NBCUniversal StudioPost and Deluxe Audio.

Director: Robert SIODMAK; Production Company: Universal Pictures; Producer: Islin AUSTER; Script: Bertram MILLHAUSER, Arthur T HORMAN, from a novel *This Way Out* by James RONALD; Photography: Paul IVANO; Editor: Arthur HILTON; Art Direction: John B GOODMAN, Martin OBZINA; Set Decoration: Russell A GAUSMAN, E R ROBINSON; Sound: Bernard B BROWN; Music: Frank SKINNER; Costumes: Vera WEST // Cast: Charles LAUGHTON (Phillip Marshall), Ella RAINES (Mary Gray), Dean HARENS (John Marshall), Stanley RIDGES (Inspector Huxley), Henry DANIELL (Simmons), Rosalind IVAN (Cora Marshall), Molly LAMONT (Mrs Simmons), Raymond SEVERN (Merridew)

USA | 1945 | 82 mins | 4K DCP | B&W | English | M

Three to Go

Peter Weir, Brian Hannant, Oliver Howes

Peter Weir, Brian Hannant and Oliver Howes each directed one part of the portmanteau film, *Three to Go*.

Peter Weir was born in 1944 in Sydney. His first film, *Count Vim's East Exercise* (1967), was a 16 mm comedy made for the social club of Channel Seven in Sydney, where he was a studio assistant. In the following year he made another 16 mm fantasy, *The Life and Flight of the Reverent Buckshotte*, and began to direct film sequences for the channel's variety series, *The Mavis Bramston Show.* In 1969 he joined the Commonwealth Film Unit as a production assistant and soon directed a public service board training film, *Stirring the Pool*, from which he progressed to *Michael* (in *Three to Go*) and a career as an independent director. Weir had considerable success with five films made in Australia: *The Cars that Ate Paris, Picnic at Hanging Rock, The Last Wave, Gallipoli* and *The Year of Living Dangerously.* He then embarked on an international career which saw him make a further eight films, including *Witness, The Dead Poet's Society, Green Card, The Truman Show* and *Master and Commander: The Far Side of the World,* all of which were nominated for Academy Awards. He retired from film-making after making *The Way Back* in 2010. In 2022 he was awarded the Academy Honorary Award for his lifetime achievement.

Brian Hannant was born in 1940 in Brisbane. Working as a teacher in Queensland secondary schools, he taught filmmaking to pupils and spent his spare time making short films and running the Brisbane film underground. In 1967 he was accepted as a production assistant at the Commonwealth Film Unit and worked in various positions there until he resigned in 1978 to work as a freelance director in South Australia. His other work as director at the Film Unit included Indonesian and Thai episodes in the documentary series, *Our Asian Neighbours*, and a feature film, *Flashpoint* (1972). In 1982 he worked as co-writer and second unit director on *Mad Max 2* and in 1987 directed *The Time Guardian,* scripted by John Baxter.

Oliver Howes was born in 1940 in England. After graduating in English from the University of Sydney in 1963, he joined the Commonwealth Film Unit as a production assistant. His films after *Toula (*in *Three to Go)* included *Wakabout bilong Tonten* (1974), a feature sponsored by the Papua New Guinea government and filmed in Pidgin with an entirely local cast. He subsequently worked in the Papua New Guinea Office of Information and returned to Film Australia in 1976 to direct the children's feature, *Let the Balloon Go*, and a telemovie, *Say You Want Me* (1977), produced jointly by Film Australia and the Nine network. Howes' most controversial film is the documentary *On Sacred Ground* (1980), about the struggles of the Aboriginal people of the Kimberley in Western Australia to secure land rights and block mining on scared sites, which culminated in the Noonkanbah crisis. Political opposition to the film posed the question of whether Film Australia's National Program was independent of government. The film was sold to the ABC, but its screening was stopped and it was banned from sales overseas and from film festivals. Years later the ban was reversed. After leaving Film Australia Howes worked as an independent producer, making films on the environment, like *River Running out of Time*, and films on health and domestic violence. He now volunteers with an aid group supporting Ossu, a mountain town in East Timor. He has published articles on environmental-economic accounting and population policy.

The film

Three to Go consists of three stories: *Michael; Judy;* and *Toula*. The stories were placed in the hands of promising young talent in the Commonwealth Film Unit, each given his first chance to write and direct a narrative film with professional actors.

These three stories on the problems of youth were intended as discussion-starters for community and educational groups. Each story presents a young Australian at a moment of decision about his or her future life cycle. No answers are given, but the dilemmas are posed with sympathy for both sides of each problem. In the first story, *Michael* (dir. Peter Weir), a young man faces a choice between the life represented by his wealthy middle class parents and the alternative of a permissive pot-smoking group of radicals. In *Judy* (dir. Brian Hannant), a teenage country girl

persists, against the wishes of her parents and boyfriend, with her decision to go to the city in search of a more exciting life. *Toula* (dir. Oliver Howes), the third story, explores the culture clash between Anglo-Australian and traditional Greek communities in Sydney, with a young girl from a Greek family trying to reconcile her affection for an Anglo-Australian boy with the social restraint expected by her parents.

These case studies transcended their functional purpose to become the first major landmark in the new wave of enthusiasm and energy that swept the Commonwealth Film Unit in the late 1960s. *Michael* opened the trilogy flamboyantly with a film-within-a-film depicting Sydney under siege from young revolutionaries (filmed in the early mornings at Circular Quay with a liberal array of rubble, barricades and smoke) and the scene seemed to be a symbol both of the film's sympathy with the rebelliousness of youth and of the new spirit then felt to be storming the barricades at the Film Unit.

Of the trio, *Michael* was filmed first in 16 mm (later blown up to 35 mm) late in 1969, and the other two stories were shot on 35 mm early in 1970, with *Judy* staged primarily on location in Tamworth, NSW. Critics generally gave high praise to the trio when they were screened together on commercial television in March 1971. Each part was subsequently taken for theatrical distribution by B.E.F. and was screened widely in supporting programmes.

Each of the three stories in the film came in for individual praise. Weir's segment won the AFI's Grand Prix in 1970. The esteemed critic Keith Connolly praised Hannant's episode, describing it as a film which 'succinctly sifts urban-rural conflicts as it examines the pressures on a girl secretary'. Connolly also praised Howes' episode when he wrote: 'Through the protagonist, a girl in her early teens, Howes succinctly dramatizes the culture shock suffered by migrants, and the divisions between the two cultures are epitomized in traumatic confrontations between parents and children.' (1)

• The screening of *Three to Go* will also include a short film by Peter Weir:

3 Directions in Australian Pop Music. Australian Colour Diary 43 (Australia, 1972, 10 mins), a dreamy celebration of Australian rock, with Wendy Saddington, Captain Matchbox, and Spectrum.

Notes

1. Both quotations from the writing of Keith Connolly are taken from his essay 'Social Realism', included in *The New Australian Cinema* (Scott Murray ed), published by Nelson and produced by C*inema Papers*, 1980.

Much of the material published above is drawn from *Australian Film 1900–1977* by Andrew Pike and Ross Cooper (Oxford University Press, Australia) and is reprinted with the kind permission of the authors.

The restoration

The films in this program have been preserved by the National Archives of Australia. From the National Film & Sound Archive's Film Australia Collection.

Directors: Peter WEIR (Michael), Brian HANNANT (Judy), Oliver HOWES (Toula); Production Company: Commonwealth Film Unit; Producer: Gil BREALEY; Script: Peter WEIR (Michael), Brian HANNANT, Bob ELLIS (Judy), Oliver HOWES (Toula); Photography: Kerry BROWN; Editor: Wayne LECLOS; Sound: Julian ELLINGWORTH, Gordon WRAXALL; Music: The Cleves (Michael), Grahame BOND, Rory O'DONOGHUE (Judy); Music Editor: James MCCARTHY (Toula) // Cast: Matthew BURTON (Michael), Grahame BOND (Graham), Peter COLVILLE (Neville Trantor), Georgina WEST (Georgina), Betty LUCAS (Mother), Judy MCBURNEY (Judy); Judy MORRIS (Judy), Serge LAZAREFF (Mike), Mary Anne SEVERNE (Margaret), Gary DAY (David), Penny RAMSEY (Heather); Rina IONNOU (Toula), Ericka CROWNE (Assimina), Andrew PAPPAS (Stavros), Joe HASHAM (John), Gabriel BATTHIKA (Nick), Theo COULOURIS (Father), Kerry COULOURIS (Mother), Yaya LAVDEAS (Grandmother)

Australia | 1971 | 87 mins | 2K DCP | B&W | English | M

This film is accompanied by a short film:

3 Directions in Australian Pop Music. Australian Colour Diary 43

Director: Peter WEIR; Production Company; Commonwealth Film Unit.

With: Wendy Saddington & Teardrop, The Captain Matchbox Whoopee Band, Indelible Murtceps (Spectrum).

Australia | 1972 | 10 mins | 2K DCP | Colour | English | UC

Yeelen / Brightness *aka* The Light

Souleymane Cissé

Now in his mid-eighties, Souleymane Cissé is one of the giants who forged a modern African cinema in the last quarter of the 20th century. He was born in Bamako, Mali in 1940 and was a 'movie brat' from childhood. He went to Dakar for his secondary education and returned to Mali in 1960, after the overthrow of Lumumba. Several years later he won a scholarship to study filmmaking under Mark Donskoi at the film school in Moscow, then known as VGIK. Back home he first worked on documentaries for the Ministry of Information; he made his first mid-length film *Cinq jours d'une vie* (*Five Days in a Life*) in 1972 and his first feature *Den Muso* (*The Girl,* banned in Mali) in 1974. He served a jail term for the supposed crime of accepting French financing. His subsequent features, *Baara* (*Work,* 1978) and *Finyé* (*The Wind,* 1982), both won top prizes at the African film festival Fespaco.

Yeelen (1987, translated as either *Brightness* or *The Light*) was the first African film to ever win a top prize in Cannes and is often cited as one of the greatest African films ever made. He has made only a few subsequent features, plus the 2013 documentary *O Sembène*, in honour of the late, great Senegalese novelist and filmmaker Ousmane Sembène. *Yeelen* stands as his crowning achievement.

The film

Cissé has always been a politically aware filmmaker, but *Yeelen* prompted one of his few explicitly political statements about his filmmaking. He made it, he told the French magazine *Cahiers du cinéma*, partly in opposition to European

ethnographic movies made in Africa. He may have had the French ethnographer-filmmaker Jean Rouch in the back of his mind, or even someone like Werner Herzog, but there's little doubt that the main figure he was targeting was the Italian Pier Paolo Pasolini, who had filmed an explicitly autobiographical version of *Oedipus Rex* in Morocco in 1967, using largely invented 'ethnographic' conventions to read Freud's interpretation of Sophocles in neo-primitive terms. Cissé's film centres, like Pasolini's, on a tyrannical father and his confused son, but it has no trace of psychoanalysis or, indeed, any other western thought. *Yeelen* tells a tale of an urgently needed generational renewal, framed as a coming-of-age fable, with very specific implications for Mali and other sub-Saharan countries. Politics are never mentioned, but it's nonetheless a vehemently political film.

The story's roots, opening captions tell us, are in centuries-old Malian cultural myths, but the setting is deliberately timeless: the story is told in a pre-urban past, which could be either ancient or relatively recent. From the very start, naturalistic vignettes from everyday

life are juxtaposed with intimations of larger, cultural/supernatural realities: an intoxicating mixture which gives the film its unique character. The story itself is simple:

Sono, an elderly Bambara tribal leader with an inflated sense of his own power and importance, is seeking to track down and kill his own son, Nianankoro. He has already driven his twin brother Djigui into exile as a blind, hermit seer. Nianankoro, a young man, is under the protection of his mother, who gives him a sacred jewel and sends him on a quest to find his uncle Djigui. On his way, Nianankoro effects an accidental rapprochement with the Bambaras' traditional enemies the Peuls and equally accidentally acquires a Peul wife, the notionally barren Attu, who is soon pregnant with his child. Without even knowing it, Nianankoro's journey across west African settlements, deserts and mountains immerses him in the *komo*, the age-old wisdom of the Bambara which contains an understanding of the worlds around and within us. He and Attu find and learn from Djigui just before Sono arrives in pursuit, accompanied by his two bearers who stagger under the weight of the sacred pole he makes them carry. The long-feared confrontation is cataclysmic: it reveals why the film's title means *The Light*. But it is followed by the promise of a renewal.

Cissé suffuses the film in the heat of daylight, the darkness of night, the magic glow of dawns and dusks, yielding images of Africa unlike any seen elsewhere. In fact, the fantastically beautiful visuals carry as much of the meaning as the story itself: it seems likely that a west African viewer would find it no easier to draw clear-cut conclusions from the film than non-African viewers do. However elusive some of the inferences, however baffling some of the folklore, the overall thrust of the narrative is still explicit. Nianankoro, in his symbolic journey from adolescence to manhood, may be one and the same as the boy goatherd twice seen going about his daily business, and his ultimate confrontation with his 'evil' father may equate to a young lion encountering an old elephant. But, the film suggests, the ancient wisdoms teach us that some slates need to be wiped clean.

Film notes by Tony Rayns

The restoration

Restored in 2k by Les Films Cissé, the production company of Souleymane Cissé.

Director, Producer, Writer: Souleymane CISSÉ; Production Companies: Les Films Cissé Atriascop (Paris), Midas Film with the support of the Mali Government and la Ministère de l'Information et de la Culture of Burkina Faso; Photography: Jean-Noël FERRAGUT, Jean-Michel HUMEAU; Production and Costume Design: Kossa Mody KEITA; Sound: Michel MELLIER, Daniel OLLIVIER; Music: Saif KEITA, Michel PORTAL // Cast: Issiaka KANE (Nianankoro), Aoua SANGARE (Attou), Niamanto SANOGO (Soma), Balla Moussa KEITA (Rouma Boll), Soumba TRAORE (Mah), Ismaila SARR (Bofing), Koke SANGARE (Chief Komo), Youssef Tenin CISSÉ (Attou as a child)

Mali/Burkina Faso/France/West Germany | 1987 | 105 mins | 4K DCP | Colour | In Bambara and Fula with English subtitles | UC15+

The old and the new in *Yeelen*

In *Yeelen*, Cissé thematizes the classic conflict between the old and the new by pitting Soma Diarra (Niamanto Sanogo), a member of the feared Bambara secret society, the *Komo*, against his son, Ninankoro* (Issiaka Kane), who must use the wing of the *Kore* (a secret tablet that to the Bambara embodies the many levels of knowledge) to destroy the *Komo*. *Yeelen*'s structure is influenced by the oral tradition of the Mande population of West Africa, which includes the Bambara. Like that tradition's classics, *L'epopée de Soundiata (Epic of Soundiata), La dispersion des Kusa (The Dispersion of the Kusa)*, and *Kambili*, *Yeelen* depicts a stagnating and oppressive system (the *Komo* cult) as unacceptable, and calls for a new, prosperous era. Heroes in these narratives undergo a voyage of initiation where they acquire the knowledge and weapons necessary for important social transformation.

Thus in *Yeelen*, Ninankoro sojourns in Fuladougou (the land of the Fulah) where he learns to fight and, most important, he finds a wife who will bear a son who symbolizes the future. A crucial difference between *Yeelen* and its predecessors in the oral tradition is in Cissé's conception of the hero. Whereas Soundiata, Maren Jagu and Kambili represent the future as well as the present in their narratives, Ninankoro is part of the present only in *Yeelen*; his son is the future. Thus it is the son, not Ninankoro, who is named Nankama (destined for), a title also used in the praise songs of Soundiata and Kambili.

Yeelen is also concerned with the manner in which the camera looks at Africans and their customs. Bambara dialects are revealed through vital oppositions, such as the pestle of *Komo* and the wing of *Kore*, milk and water, father and son, life and death, etc. Cissé also shows the manner in which the Bambara manipulate time. In the film, the *Komo* leaders have the power to freeze time in order to make the origin and the end coincide. All Cissé's films end as they begin, but in *Yeelen* we are provided with a detailed description of time in Mande societies. The *Komo* ritual, for example, is filmed from beginning to end in long takes with minimal editing. The uninterrupted shots remind the viewer of Sembène's filming of the long sequence in the King's court in *Ceddo*. Cissé's camera, used more in an attempt to describe the "right image" than to reveal a psychological point of view, recasts the fundamental narrative issues of show and tell. What brings emotional feeling to the spectator in *Yeelen is* the way in which the film transforms Western cinema's stereotypes into human and complex subjects. It valorizes and humanizes Africans and their past systems. In other words, it elevates the *Komo*, which is just another barbaric ritual in anthropological films, to the level of science. Similarly, an old woman (Soumba Traoré) who plays Ninankoro's mother is beautiful, thoughtful, and resourceful. In Western films, such a woman would have looked repulsive with her bare breasts and ugly with holes in her nose and ears.

*The son's name is transliterated differently in English sources as either Nianankoro or Ninankoro.

Note by Manthia Diawara

Excerpt from Manthia Diawara, *African Cinema*, Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1992. Re-printed with permission.

The Cinema of Im Kwon-Taek

Im Kwon-taek

Born on May 2, 1936, in Changsŏng, Chŏllanam-do, Im Kwon-taek is the most important and celebrated filmmaker in South Korea. Amid the poverty and chaos of the aftermath of the Korean War, he moved first to Busan and then to Seoul, where he found work as a production assistant in the embryonic film industry. Having directed his first feature, *Farewell to the Duman River* (*Tuman'ganga Charitkŏra*), in 1962 and his most recent, *Revivre* (*Hwajang*), in 2014, his career spans more than half a century. During this time he has produced an astonishing oeuvre of more than one hundred films that have made him popularly known as the 'father of South Korean cinema.' Many of these films, especially the earlier ones, were formulaic genre quickies for small, usually short-lived, studios that were dependent on immediate market returns. He had already made fifty popular entertainment features of this kind when, in 1973, a crisis of conscience that he has described in several interviews set him on the path to the art film. 'One day I suddenly felt as though I'd been lying to the people for the past 12 years. I decided to compensate for my wrongdoings by making more honest films.' Generally funded by the continuing popularity of his action films, these 'more honest' art films brought him international acclaim, earning him the Best Director award at the Cannes Film Festival in 2002. Of them, a dozen concern nativist, premodern Korean culture.

Though various in their narrative strategies, *The Genealogy* (*Chokpo*, 1978), *Mandala* (*Mandara*, 1981), *Surrogate Mother* (*Ssibaji*, 1986), *Adada* (1987), *Come Come Come Upward* (*Aje Aje Para Aje*, 1989), *Sopyonje* (*Sŏp'yŏnje*, 1993), *Festival* (*Ch'ukche*, 1996), *Ch'unhyang* (*Ch'unhyangdyŏn*, 2000), *Chihwaseon* (*Ch'wihwasŏn*, 2002), *Beyond the Years* (*Ch'ŏnnyŏnhak*, 2007), and *Hanji* (*Talbin kirŏolligi*, 2011), all dramatise with ethnographic detail and accuracy ancient customs or art forms, and several also explore their precarious survival into the present. *Mandala*, for example, very beautifully dramatises the traditional customs and art of Korean *Sŏn* (Ch'an or Zen) Buddhism as it narrates the stories of two monks who differently attempt to reconcile their religious faith and insight with their desire to live in the modern world. These films sometimes include quasi-documentary interludes that interrupt the diegesis [the fictional world] and pedagogically elaborate the elements of the nativist culture in question, but more frequently they dramatise such material in popularly accessible and often spectacular narrative forms that exploit the conventions of film melodrama that Im had mastered during his earlier work as a journeyman director.

Their resistance to global capitalist culture's homogenising erasure of the past and cultural difference in its promotion of a totalised corporate postmodernism marks the overall importance of these historical retrievals. But, beyond this, their specifically

Korean significance can hardly be overemphasised, given the devastation inflicted on the nation and nativist culture in the twentieth century: the Japanese annexation that lasted until the end of World War II; the brief "day of freedom" before the division of the country between the subsequent U.S. neocolonial occupation of the South and the communist dictatorship in the North; the civil war; and then in the South the series of U.S.-maintained military dictatorships that endured until the free election of a civilian president in 1992. This history of trauma and chaos jeopardised the continuity of much of Korea's unique cultural heritage as it had coalesced during the half millennium of the Chosŏn dynasty (1392–1897), when, instead of being divided and ravaged by foreign intruders, Korea was unified, largely in isolation from the outside world. The rituals and customs of this period, its forms of civic organisation and judicial administration, and its architecture, pottery, music, painting, and dress matured into distinctive, integrated forms, a unique cultural economy. Preeminent within it was *Han'gungmal,* the singular Korean language that many linguists believe has no genetic relationship to any other, and *Han'gŭl*, the writing system designed exclusively for it – a unique visual language.

In respect to the renewal and reassertion of specifically Korean culture, Im's ethnographically oriented features had three main functions. First, their dramatisation of neglected and endangered cultural traditions pedagogically displayed their aesthetic value and affirmed their social function, reeducating a population on whom, for a century, the presumptive superiority of Japanese and then US capitalist culture had been imposed. Second, the domestic box office success of some of them (especially *Sopyonje*, whose acclaim ignited an extraordinary revival of popular interest in the traditional folk opera, *p'ansori*). The recognition they achieved in festivals abroad fostered the growth and international prestige of Korean cinema generally, opening the way for the younger filmmakers of the New Korean Cinema and for a revival of interest in neglected older ones. Third and most important, the narrative focus on art and artists provided the basis for Im's allegorical exploration of the present state of Korean culture and especially of his own filmmaking. The representation of a specific traditional artist, art form, or cultural practice in any given film generated reflexive patterns of similarity and difference between it and Im's film about it, providing him with a vocabulary through which the possibilities of his own art could be explored.(1) The possibilities and limitations of the artists he depicted, their artwork, and its social existence provided a model in respect to which Im himself, his films, and their social function could be imagined. He made them into allegories of cinema.

Such a reflexive allegorical use of the past to investigate the possibilities of contemporary Korean culture was not without contradictions. While their aural and visual exoticism made the spectacular elements in Chosŏn culture well suited for cinematic reproduction, other aspects complicated allegorical

use of it. Whether aristocratic or folk, Chosŏn's almost entirely artisanal mode of cultural activity differed fundamentally from the industrial mode of production of capitalist cinema and the specific forms of alienation intrinsic to its consumption. Other difficulties appeared in two recurrent motifs by which Im elaborated the cultural past: images of women and images of the natural landscape, most often brilliantly photographed by Im's virtuoso cinematographer, Chŏng Il-sŏng.
(2) Many of them, *Adada*, *Sopyonje*, and *Ch'unhyang* most notably, were thematically and visually pivoted on images of the violation and exploitation of beautiful women, often set in the context of the Korean Peninsula's mountains, valleys, and shores, variously enhanced by sunshine, mist, or snow. As figures for the nation, the women and their tragedies were offered as a vocabulary by which the suffering and the spirit – the *han* – of the distant past could frame, if not diagnose, the traumas of the present, while the beauty of the natural landscape conversely proposed an ideal to which the nation might be restored. Im has typically justified the cruelty inflicted on his heroines by pointing out that, in Confucian society, women were sequentially subjected to fathers, husbands, and sons, and so did indeed bear a disproportionate share of hardship and suffering. But in a period when feminists radically retheorised gendered visual codes, such representations, it was argued, also reproduced the conditions that allowed for the continued subjection of women. Similarly Im's celebration of Korea's uninhabited, unworked spaces mobilised an essentially touristic nostalgia that could hardly provide a generative metaphor for social renewal amid the rapid industrialisation of the late twentieth century and the state-enforced vicious exploitation of the working class. Severely hierarchical and without a middle class, the rural agricultural Chosŏn era could only vaguely parallel modern urbanised Korea, and the forms of resistance available to feudal peasantry bore little relation to the democratic mobilisations of the Minjung movement [Ed: the "common people's movement" for democratisation and inclusion]. Intrinsic to the disparities between Im's present and the received Confucian cultural heritage, such aporia in his project could never be fully resolved. But his great achievement was to work with and through them, setting them in different contexts and manipulating them in different permutations to make them the narrative, thematic, symbolic, and especially affective materials of his cinema.

Notes:

[1] The possibility of Im's critical cinema only emerged with the end of the military dictatorship. His nativist films began with *The Genealogy*, released the year before the assassination of Park Chung-hee and the end of the *Yusin* period. *Mandala*, the first film in which his new direction was widely recognised, and *Surrogate Mother* followed, separated by half a decade. The frequency of the new nativist films increased during the first years of the Sixth Republic, culminating in *Sopyonje* in 1993, the year after the election of the first civilian president. At the same time, the relaxation of censorship made possible the emergence of the Korean New Wave, including for the first time a radically contestatory political cinema, most importantly the work of Park Kwang-su; in the late 1980s and early 1990s his films' releases virtually alternated year by year with Im's: *Chilsu and Mansu* (Ch'ilsuwa Mansu, 1988), *The Black Republic* (*Kŭdŭlto Urich'ŏrŏm*, 1990), *To the Starry Island* (*Kŭ Sŏme Kago Shipta*, 1993), and *A Single Spark* (*Arŭmdaun ch'ŏngnyŏn Chŏn T'ae-il*, 1995). But in this period, Im maintained his distance from the new political radicalism: in *Come Come Come Upward* (1989), for example, one of the main protagonists, a Buddhist nun struggling to find redemptive meaning in her life, explicitly rejects association with the student activists of the Democracy Movement and with 'poor farmers and city laborers.' And, even though his own parents had joined the partisans after the liberation, Im's lack of any discernable endorsement of the leftist guerillas of this period in *The Taebaek Mountains* (*T'aebaeksanmaek*, 1994) contrasted markedly with Park's sympathy for them in the previous year's *To The Starry Island*.

[2] Beginning to work with Im on *Tears of the Idol* (*Usangŭi Nunmul*) in 1981, Chŏng Il-sŏng shot *Mandala*, *Adada*, *Fly High, Run Far: Kaebyok*, *Sopyonje*, *Ch'unhyang*, *Beyond the Years*, and many others of his greatest films of the 1980s and 1990s, including the blockbusters *The General's Son I*, *II*, and *III* (*Changgunŭi Adŭl*). Together with Im himself and his long-time producer at Taehung Pictures, Chŏng formed what was known as the 'Troika of Korean Film'; see Chŏng Sŏng-il, *Im Kwon-taek* (Seoul: Korean Film Council, 2006), p. 44.

Editor's note: this article uses the long-standing McCune-Reischer system for romanising original Korean characters into English. Since 2002 the South Korean government has officially adopted a new, Revised Romanisation system, but it is still not consistently used when translating from Korean (or used at all); other sources may use different spellings for the film titles referred to.

Biographical note by David E. James

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Korean Film Archive
한국영상자료원

Australia-Korea FOUNDATION

Ch'ukche / Festival

In a remote village, several hours south of Seoul, an aging woman (Han Eun-jin) is dying. Her eldest son, Jun-seop (Ahn Sung-ki), a Seoul-based novelist, who has made a comfortable life by writing about his family, returns to the rural backwater to act as coordinator for his mother's funeral. Even in the most congenial of families, such events provoke tensions. Black sheep return and resentments arise between those who roamed and those who stayed. Accordingly, emotions canvassed by prolific South Korean director, Im Kwon-taek, in *Festival* (1996) will be painfully recognisable to some. Other elements depicted in this scenario will be familiar only to those who have ever attended a traditional Korean funeral. That is to say, known only to a dwindling minority, even within South Korea.

Many of Im Kwon-taek's films aim to reacquaint Koreans with their own culture. *Sopyonje* (1992) and *Chunhyang* (1999) showcase the musical tradition of *pansori*, the latter by dramatising Korea's most-loved folktale. *Chihwaseon* (*Painted Fire*, 2002) focuses on painting. Most blatantly, *Hanji* (2011) finds drama while investigating the ancient art of papermaking. This is not mere nostalgia, nor just ethnographic enthusiasm. With each film there is a sense of Im immersing himself in the traditional roots that feed and sustain his own creative work. Throughout *Festival,* cultural knowledge takes the form of several superimposed titles that identify particular funeral rites. For the Westerner, the intricacy of the detail is fascinating, but for a Korean audience it is both a reminder of centuries-long tradition and also an admonition that these things must never be forgotten: These are the things that make us Korean. Remember them well.

Some have suggested that *Festival* was inspired by the international success that Juzo Itami had a decade before with *The Funeral* (1984). But *Festival* is not irreverent like the Japanese director's early work. True, there is a certain levity early on, with the ailing mother rallying after her first on-screen death, but overall Im's film is a much slower burn. In fact, *Festival* does not truly become comic, and even then sparingly, until after almost an hour's running time has elapsed. Nor is this traditional Korean funeral atypical. While the family, particularly the women, must perform their grief, and the chief male mourner, in this case Jun-seop, must remain stoic, the funeral guests also have their own duties. The drinking, the gambling, the eating, the light-hearted festivity are all welcomed as they — theoretically — ease the burden of the grieving family. As an invited mourner, to join them in weeping and wailing will only increase the agony of the family, so please dutifully stick to the festive script.

At its most manic, *Festival* nods towards a key scene in Lee Man-hee's revered *Road to Sampo* (1975) when a funeral is gate-crashed by that film's three itinerant protagonists. From the perspective of the family, *Festival* raises the problem of who is legitimately performing their role as a supportive funeral guest and who is expediently taking advantage of the gratis booze, the delicious food and the

free gambling money. And if it takes a village to raise a child, *Festival* certainly demonstrates that it takes a village – and then some – to bury an elder. As the mourners descend, Im's frame becomes densely populated but, masterfully, the visuals never feel unduly cluttered or confusing. Grounded by deep sadness, *Festival* is thus prevented from spinning off into Rabelaisian chaos. Yes, people get drunk, fights break out over games of chance, but Im keeps faith with the aching loss of a matriarch who reared a family through crushing poverty before South Korea's economic miracle arrived.

Holding that gravitas in place is not just the burning screen presence of Oh Jung-hae as Yong-sun, the resentful young glamour-puss from Seoul, but also the heartfelt performance by local film icon Ahn Sung-ki, who, as Jun-seop, gracefully creates a still centre within the funeral's emotional storm. Like the white, raw hemp cloth worn by Korean mourners that itches skin and scalp, Joon-seop pensively wears the responsibility for the circus the funeral becomes. It is an uncomfortable fit, but the grieving process must be adhered to and, ultimately, it also offers unexpected rewards, as demonstrated by the modern fairy tale that Im intercuts with *Festival*'s main story.

Film note by Russell Edwards

The restoration

Ch'ukche / Festival was preserved and digitally restored in 4K in 2022 by the Korean Film Archive KOFA.

Director: IM Kwon-taek; Production Company: Taehung Pictures; Producer: LEE Tae-won; Script: YONG Sang-hyo, from the novel by Lee Cheong-jun; Photography: PARK Seung-bae; Editor: PARK Soon-deok; Production Design: KIM Yu-joon; Sound: YANG Da-ho; Music: KIM Soo-shul // Cast: AHN Sung-ki (Lee Joon-sup), AHN Byeong-kyeong (Ajae), HAN Eun-ji (Mother), OH Jeong-hae (Lee Yong-sun), JEONG Gyeong-sun (Jang Hye-rim), PARK Seung-tae (Odong-daek)

South Korea | 1996 | 110 mins | 4K DCP (orig. 35mm) | Colour | Korean with English subtitles | U/C15+

Jagko / Mismatched Nose / *aka* Pursuit of Death

Jagko (1980) is positioned somewhere in between the 'ideological absolutism of anti-communist South Korean cinema of the 1950s–1970s and the more equivocal 'Division films' of the 1980s [see grey box], and harks back to the generic traits of Im's films of the 1970s.

Jagko begins deceptively, appearing to be an observational, docudramatic work of social realism, which it actually turns out not to be. A prowling police car gathers up an homeless man sleeping in a doorway. Under the opening credits, he's shipped off next morning to the 'Seoul Rehabilitation Centre', which, like many asylum institutions, does little rehabilitation. In long, economical shots, Im Kwon-taek has laid bare the inhumanity of institutionalisation, as men are processed more as prisoner than patient and have to give up any valuables. We also learn that our protagonist is Song Gi-yeol, and that he has an end-stage stomach cancer that probably no one has bothered to tell him about. Song's processing and the credit sequence end in his induction into the communal hospital ward from which, we already can guess, he's unlikely to leave alive. A roving close-up introduces western audiences to this different, unfamiliar kind of shock corridor: bed-less, the inmates sleep side by side on two raised pallets. The shot admits some hospitality: house plants, a small single TV up one end, a few personal items such as tea pots, toilet paper, and small *jangseung* totems warding off evil spirits. But as the voice of the ward's prefect intones the day's dull routine ('for a few hours we get some sunlight'), we get a visual roll call of the inmates coughing, rattling, scratching, prostrate in agony and foetally lying in various stages of despair and disengagement; in the words of one of Song's pallet mates: 'This is a waiting room for the dying and the angels of death'. We seem set for a docudrama about how the poor died in 1980s Korea. If Yilmaz Gurney suggested, in *Jagko*'s near contemporary *Yol* (1982), that all of modern Turkey was a prison, then Im is showing us a modern South Korea that's a prison pretending to be a hospital

But *Jagko* has already inserted a few quirks in the conventions of the anti-institutional narrative. Parting with his few valuables, Song only becomes agitated when they take away his cherished police-issue binding rope, the sort used on arrested suspects. Terrified by the realisation of his fate, Song pleads to leave. To that, an inmate in the diagonally opposite corner (in the first of many mirrorings), so far barely noticed, props himself up from a blanket and tells him to shut up. Peering through his spectacles Song sees a distinctive mole and asymmetric nose. He has a shock of recognition, not of an angel of death, but a ghost of his past: his old nemesis from his security police days, Baek Gong-san, who had fought as a leftist guerrilla leader. Hints Im has already planted in the film's prologue of Song's obsessive personality suddenly burst out. From a little black book he's managed to hide from the

custodians he reads back Baek's name, address, statistics, and criminal record from its first pages. 'Education: none…' but a blacksmith by trade, Baek had joined the communist partisan brigade at the start of the war in 1950, made weapons and led terror attacks under the nom de guerre, Jagko ('uneven nose'), been arrested soon after the armistices of 1953, but escaped during his prison transfer. Song then announces that Baek is under arrest, reaching instinctively for the police cord he was stripped of in the opening scenes. For the other inmates and the staff it's all paranoid fantasy. Anyway, they know Baek as Kim Sam-su, a fisherman from the south.

But Im has already planted enough intimate close-ups of Baek's trembling hands and eyelines to suggest Song is telling some sort of truth. And he won't let go of his obsession with 'Kim' as Baek as Jagko, confronting him in the meal room, stealing a knife, upsetting the fatalistic order both staff and inmates much prefer. We're not quite certain either, until a romantic scene in a K-soap opera screening on the tiny TV that night provokes the first of Song's many flashbacks, introducing us to what would become one of Im's favourite stylistic and narrative tools (and a recurrent, ambiguous interest in Korean pop TV as both a place of coarsened national emotions – yet also of Korean 'han', or painful feelings of national memory: something more deeply explored in 1986's *Gilsoddeum*. Although this is a film about contested and fading memories, Song was indeed once the man he says he is, even if he struggles to understand he's not that man any more: a rising young security police sergeant in the early 1950s, zealous enough to wear his sunglasses home to his village home town, taking enough pleasure in his red-hunting to bring home campaign stories

for his pretty young wife. Although in time the other intimates accept the truth that their Kim is in fact Song's Jagko, they mostly don't care: they're dying anyway. When Song corners Baek and finally gets an admission, Baek asks the same question: why bother? Baek at least understands that he's long since stopped being Jagko. Or even Baek.

In more generic anti-communist South Korean films of the 1970s, this would be a quest thriller; Jagko the terrorist would probably be villainously hiding out, or even embedded for future deployment by the North, fooling everyone but Song, whose waning anti-communist fervour would be reawakened at film's end. But that Song and Baek's conflict is played out as tragedy is one aspect of Jagko's break with Im's filmmaking past. So is the reveal of Song's true motivation for pursuing Baek; less ideological justice, more for personal and career reasons. As Im builds a chain of flashbacks (and in a typical Im narrative gesture, nested flash-backs within flashbacks, often from different characters' points-of-view) that recount Song's initial arrest of Baek on a post-war mopping up mission, and the desperation and genuine internecine, retaliatory crimes committed by Baek and his comrades as their ranks are hunted down, we also quickly realise that Song's own class origins are not that dissimilar from the ones he reads out from Baek's file. Both are underclass, self-made, and brutalised by the partisanship of the Korean War. Both lose their wife and children as much to their obsession as to the forces of that war. And both are cadres – and pawns – in South Korean class war, really differentiated only by the side that circumstances and the uniform put on them. Some sort of veteran instinctive recognition and 'frenemyship' seems inevitable; the seeds of mutual recognition date back even to when Song was marching Baek to prison in 1953 (bound in the white police cord that's a constant motif through the film).

Broken stomachs, broken noses and broken eyesight recur throughout the film. Song and Baek are men alone; their bodies seem to be eating themselves. But it is sight and insight that forms *Jagko*'s most recurrent motif.

Although the film is spearheading one of the most action-rich film genres of Korean action cinema, *Jagko* is itself largely actionless, at least on the chronological plane of the present in which it opens and closes. And at its end the whole film seems to lose consciousness, in an ending that for western audiences is reminiscent of and as open-ended as *Midnight Cowboy*.

Film note by Quentin Turnour

The restoration

Jagko / Mismatched Nose was preserved and was digitally restored by the Korean Film Archive KOFA.

Director: IM Kwon-taek; Production Company: Samyoung Films; Producer: KANG Dae-jin; SONG Gil-han, from Kim Jung-hui's short story; Photography: KU Jong-mo; Editor: KIM Hee-su; Art Direction: KIM Song-bae; Music: KIM Young-dong // Cast: CHOI Yoon-seok, (Song Ki-yeol), BAEK Gong-san (Kim Hee-ra), BANG Hie (Jeom-sun), KIM Jeong-ran (Hwasuk)

South Korea | 1980 | 112 mins | 4K DCP (orig. 35mm) | Colour | Korean with English subtitles | U/C15+

Sopyonje / Seopyeonje

Im Kwon-taek

It's often said that Im Kwon-taek is the one director still working in South Korean cinema who has experienced all eras of the peninsula's modern history. Im was born during the Japanese occupation; he was 16 years old when the Korean War broke out; made his directorial debut two years after the establishment of Park Chung-hee's dictatorship; and made his 1993 landmark film *Sopyonje* (his 93rd feature) as the fervour for democracy became a tangible reality for all South Koreans.

Compared to the glossy *Hallyu* trailblazers of Park Chan-wook, Kim Jee-woon, and Bong Joon-ho, Im's work can seem conventional, but his robust engagement with Korean history and arts (particularly from the pre-modern Choson era) provides a clear pathway for audiences – experts and novices alike – to enter South Korean culture and appreciate its richness.

The film

Sopyonje begins in the 1960s with Dong-ho arriving in a shantytown looking for his long-lost "sister", Song-hwa. His clothing is from the modern age: a trenchcoat to cope with harsh Korean winters and a moppish hairstyle that betrays the pervasive, inescapable Western influence. After the opening credits, with superb visual economy, Im thrusts the audience into the protagonist's journey to investigate the fragments of the past. Standing in the mucky dirt street, the truck from which Dong-ho has alighted passes by with its load of logs. Revealed by the truck's departure is a young villager in the traditional white clothing of the Choson era, who leads a cow and a cart loaded with bags of grain. Nearby, a stooped

old man, also wearing a white *hanbok* smock, sits on a traditional farmhouse verandah and contemplates Dong-ho, as if he were an invader from another world. As Dong-ho turns to get his bearings, the film cuts to a point-of-view shot of the log truck continuing its journey, with an imposing mountain dominating the frame. The Korean terrain signals, even more so than the white-garbed people and their pre-modern conditions, that the roots of this film are based in cultural traditions as old as the land itself.

This is the first of Dong-ho's arrivals in the film and the trigger for the first of the film's flashbacks, which reveals more of his relationship with his "sister". Dong-ho's search takes him along the muddy roads of South Korea's farming regions, through other desolate towns, and leads him to storytellers, often dressed in traditional garb, who stimulate more memories of his past. The towering figure amongst these recollections is Dong-ho's and Song-hwa's adoptive father, Yu-bong. While rearing his children single-handed, and instructing them in the art of *pansori* (Song-hwa on vocals and Dong-ho on the *soribuk* drum), Yu-bong is also tyrannical as he preaches absolute adherence to this classic Korean musical form.

The father figure of Yu-bong has been interpreted as a symbolic stand-in for former Dictator Park Chung-hee who came to power in 1963 and was assassinated in 1979 (as depicted in Im — no relation — Song-soo's biting 2005 satire, *The President's Last Bang*). Park ruled the country in a brutal military regime, but was also the architect of the 'Miracle on the Han River' which cleared the ground for South Korea to become an economic powerhouse. Accordingly, like many a father figure before him (including *Sopyonje*'s Yu-bong), Park Chung-hee was both admired and feared, fostering internal and external divisions on the peninsula.

Occasionally, Koreans embrace a film with near religious devotion, and *Sopyonje* is a case in point. Released

in 1993, in one small art cinema in Seoul, *Sopyonje* tapped into the collective grief of the Korean people emerging from decades of dictatorship that in many ways compounded the emotional damage caused by the Japanese occupation of the first half of the twentieth century. Despite never showing in more than three cinemas simultaneously, *Sopyonje* became a mega-hit. *Sopyonje*'s journey to become the most popular South Korean film ever (superceded by *Shiri* in 1999, and other films since) was a relentless soft parade. It was as if it was each citizen's national duty to see the film, like pilgrims seeking out a shrine. Im himself believes that the film would not have been as popular had it been released at a later time or in a different political climate. But the timeliness of a political parable would not and does not account for *Sopyonje*'s power. Drama dominates, but it is a film of joy as well as sadness. An extended five-minute static shot provides one of the film's most elated moments (no need to elaborate, you'll know it when it comes) signalling love, harmony, pleasure and triumph over past wounds. In contrast, during the film's emotional conclusion, the music taps into the grief of humanity: the wrongs done to us; the painful pursuit of perfection; and our tendency to punish others for our own shortcomings as we search for our authentic selves. The gruelling nature of that journey reflects *Sopyonje*'s identity as a spiritual road movie as well as a fable with political undertones.

The title *Sopyonje* comes from the name of the *pansori* sound, renowned for its deep sadness, that is native to the Western side of Korea. In Eastern Korea, the dominant *pansori* form is *dongpyeonje,* which is regarded as more free and open in style than the more elaborate *sopyonje*. The schism between the two musical styles is one

of many divisions alluded to by Im that he encourages his characters and his audience to overcome. Another division is the way that Korean everyman, Dong-ho, is caught between modernisation and the true spirit of Korea that has been left behind. To go further, there are other gulfs to overcome: (as almost always in South Korean cinema) the metaphorical expression of the unhealed rift between North and South Korea; the equally passionate battle between left and right-wing philosophies; and most literally, the ruptures of understanding that occur between father and child. The Korean word for the culture's core grief is '*han*'. Through the *pansori*, Im permits us, the audience, to connect our own losses with the pain — the *han* — of being Korean. It is both a wonderful and turbulent experience. Like all great art, *Sopyonje* puts us in touch with ourselves even as we connect with others. Hear the music. Feel the pain. Let your heart be touched and a part of you will be Korean forevermore.

Film note by Russell Edwards

The restoration

Sopyonje (*Seopyeonje*) is preserved and was digitally restored by the Korean Film Archive KOFA. This newly revised, 2024 version provides English subtitles for some of film's *p'ansori* song sequences absent in earlier versions.

Director: IM Kwon-taek; Production Company: Taehung Pictures; Producer: LEE Tae-won; Script: YONG Sang-hyo, from the novel by LEE Cheong-jun; Photography: PARK Seung-bae; Editor: PARK Soon-deok; Production Design: KIM Yu-joon; Sound: YANG Da-ho; Music: KIM Soo-shul // Cast: KIM Myung-gon (Yoo-oh), OH Jung-hae (Song-hwa), SIN Sae-gil (Geumsandak), KIM Kyu-chul (Dong-ho), AHN Byeong-kyeong (Naksan Geosa Choi), CHOI Jae-hyun (Song Dong-ho)

South Korea | 1993 | 112 mins | 2K DCP (orig. 35mm) | Colour | Korean with English subtitles | U/C15+

Tiket / Ticket

The film

The middle-aged Ji-sook, owner of the Johyang Cafe, visits a licensed job agency, looking for new recruits. The room is filled with young women who are smoking and playing cards, but they fall silent when she walks in. Looking through the group, she chooses three pretty faces, and drives them back to the cafe, where they will prepare for their first day of work.

They are located in a seaside town filled with fishermen. Throughout the day and night, men call the cafe and order coffee, which the women deliver and serve to them in person. But they are selling more than just coffee. Prostitution is a booming part of the local economy, and very much above ground.

Ticket is a portrait of five women who make their living in a difficult profession. Several of them are struggling with debt, and have to fend off creditors who come to the cafe looking to get paid. Se-young, the youngest (who is given the nickname 'Rookie'), supports her disabled brother and father back home, while trying to find time on the side to see her boyfriend. The women are also vulnerable to being cheated, though Ji-sook keeps a tight rein on them, and looks after them with a stern maternal eye.

Although shot in the middle of South Korea's 1980s heyday for softcore erotic films, *Ticket* mostly avoids sensationalising its subject, and devotes much of its screen time to more mundane aspects of the women's lives. One of the strengths of director Im Kwon-taek, who at this time was being hailed as the 'national director,' is a persistent humanism that runs through all of his work. Here he draws sympathetic, three-dimensional portraits

of each of his characters, particularly the figure of Ji-sook, brought to life by veteran actress Kim Ji-mi.

In many ways *Ticket* can be seen as a collaboration between director Im and the legendary Kim Ji-mi, who had just launched her own production company. The two had worked together in the 1970s on the now-lost film *Weeds*, but had re-connected in the mid-1980s to shoot *Bhiksuni* (which remained unfinished due to pushback by the Buddhist community) and *Gilsotteum* (1985), a poignant allegory of national division.

Kim explains that she had been on a location scouting trip with director Im and cinematographer Jung Sung-il near the city of Sokcho, when a woman who delivered them coffee began telling them stories of her life and the lives of the other women she worked with. Kim says (quoted on the Korean Film Archive's online database), 'There may have been some particular aspects to that fishing village, but I was shocked to see for the first time the lives of such underprivileged women. I thought to myself, "This just shouldn't be," and I felt a kind of mission to expose the absurdity of this situation through film, and to restore the humanity of these women. I made the film because I wanted to present scenes where a person's human rights are sold for the price of a ticket.'

With Kim as executive producer and taking the leading role, Im Kwon-taek directing and the renowned Song Kil-han writing the screenplay, the project moved forward quickly. But to make a film on this subject matter proved to be complicated. Under the authoritarian president Chun Doo-hwan, South Korea's film industry was still in the grip of fierce censorship, even for a director as celebrated and respected as Im Kwon-taek. *Ticket*'s sexual content was less of an issue, but the filmmakers ultimately had to contend with the censorship board's objections over the originally conceived ending, which was seen as too pessimistic, and numerous lines of dialogue. Arguing that the film depicted South Korean society in too negative a light (and referencing the all-encompassing ideological battle that continued to play out on the Korean peninsula), the head of the censorship board reportedly exclaimed, 'They would love this movie up in North Korea!' Ultimately the filmmakers were not able to place as much overt social criticism in *Ticket* as they might have wished, but the finished product does nonetheless present a bracing depiction of economic hardship and exploitation.

Ticket occupies a distinctive place in Im Kwon-taek's filmography. At this stage in his career he was primarily focused on films that wrestled with the tragic outcomes of Korean history, as well as the ideological and artistic roots of Korean culture, so at first glance *Ticket* might seem to be an outlier. Like many of Im's works, it plays off the Korean film industry's tradition of melodramatic storytelling, while at the same time refusing to smooth out the story's emotional arcs. Naturally attracted to the rough edges of lived experience, Im includes many details that pull viewers' emotions in unexpected directions. In this way it is a sometimes awkward, but often unconventional approach to a social issue film. It also succeeds in

telling a story that resonates far beyond its particular setting and characters, thanks in part to the performances of the cast.

In South Korea *Ticket* was critically acclaimed, winning four awards including Best Director and Best Screenplay at the 25th Grand Bell Awards. It also received a Best Actress award for Kim Ji-mi from the 23rd Baeksang Film Art Awards, and a Best Film, Best Director and Best Actress Award from the Association of Korean Film Critics. Internationally, it failed to secure a prestigious festival premiere like many of Im's other films of that era, but was nonetheless picked up by distributors in West Germany, Japan and India.

Looking back on *Ticket* today, the specific community it presents may have long since vanished, but the struggles and frustrations of its protagonists remain easy to recognise. More than anything, it is the filmmaker's efforts to tell a truthful and honest story that has made this work continue to feel relevant.

Film note by Darcy Paquet

The restoration

Ticket is preserved and was digitally restored by the Korean Film Archive KOFA.

Director: IM Kwon-taek; Production Company: Jimi Films; Producer: JIN Seong-man, KIM Ji-mee (uncredited); Script: SONG Gil-han; Photography: KU Jung-mo; Editor: PARK Sun-deok; Art Direction WON Ki-ju; Sound: Tullo PARMEGIANI; Music: SHIN Byeong-ha // Cast: Ji-mee KIM, (Ji-suk), AHN So-young (Miss Yang), Hie Myeong (Miss Joo), LEE Hye-young (Miss Hong), JEON Se-young (Yun Se-yeong)

South Korea | 1986 | 108 mins | 2K DCP (orig. 35mm) | Colour | Korean with English subtitles | U/C15+

Writers and Presenters

Lynden Barber is a Sydney-based freelance journalist specialising in film and a former lecturer in screen studies at TAFE Randwick and Sydney Film School. Born and raised in the UK, Barber moved to Australia in 1985. His professional journalism has appeared in many publications including *Limelight* magazine, where he has reviewed both film and television productions; *The Australian*, where he was the staff film writer for a decade, and before that, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, where he was staff film critic for five years. His roles have included curating Australian Screen Online (a National Film and Sound Archive website) and being artistic director of the Sydney Film Festival. His work has also been published in T*he Guardian*; *Lumina* (journal of AFTRS – the Australian Film, Television and Radio School); *The Drum* (at the ABC website); *New Matilda*; *Melody Maker*; *NME*; *Meanjin* and *Rolling Stone* (Australia).

John Baxter is an Australian-born writer, scholar, critic and film-maker who has lived in Paris since 1989. The many books he has written include the first ever critical volume devoted to the Australian cinema as well as studies of Ken Russell, Josef von Sternberg, Stanley Kubrick, Woody Allen, Federico Fellini, George Lucas, Robert De Niro, Luis Bunuel and a number of studies of Paris. His most recent book is a biography of Charles Boyer. He writes a blog about Paris and other things French at johnbaxter.substack.com/

Bruce Beresford was born in Sydney and graduated from Sydney University. He worked for the British Film Institute and directed his first feature film, *The Adventures of Barry McKenzie*, in the 1970s. Since then, he has directed over 30 more feature films, including *Breaker Morant, The Getting of Wisdom, Don's Party, The Club, Puberty Blues, Tender Mercies, Crimes of the Heart, Driving Miss Daisy, Bride of the Wind, Paradise Road, Black Robe*, *Mao's Last Dancer*, *Mr Church* and *Flint.* His latest is *Ladies in Black*. Bruce was nominated for an Academy Award for the script of *Breaker Morant* and the direction of *Tender Mercies*. *Driving Miss Daisy* won the Academy Award for Best Picture in 1990. *Black Robe* won the Canadian award for Best Film and Best Director in 1992. In 2009, his feature film *Mao's Last Dancer* was nominated for nine AFI awards including Best Director. It failed to win anything! In 2013 he directed an acclaimed three-hour *Bonnie and Clyde* for TV. Bruce has also directed a number of operas, including *Rigoletto* for Los Angeles Opera, *La fanciulla del West* for the Spoleto Festival, *Elektra* for State Opera of South Australia, *Sweeney Todd* for Portland Opera, *The Crucible* for Washington Opera, *Cold Sassy Tree* for Houston Grand Opera and *A Streetcar Named Desire, Of Mice and Men,* and *Die Tote Stadt* for Opera Australia. *Macbeth f*or Melbourne Opera*, Otello* for Melbourne Opera, and *Albert Herring* for Brisbane opera.

Rod Bishop has worked as an educator, film critic, film maker and film producer. He co-wrote and produced *Body Melt* (Philip Brophy), was Director of the Australian Film Television and Radio School from 1996 to 2003 and a member of the committee that set up NITV. He is a foundation member of the Cinema Reborn Organising Committee.

Richard Brennan has been in love with cinema since he was ten. At various times in the last 60 years he has worked at the ABC, the Commonwealth Film Unit, the Australian Film Institute and Screen Australia. His producer credits include *Homesdale*, *Mad Dog Morgan*, *Love Letters from Teralba Road*, *Long Weekend*, *Newsfront*, *Stir*, *Starstruck* and *Cosi*.

Philip Brophy has made a few films and has written a lot about other films. www.philipbrophy.com

Tahar Cheriaa (1927–2010) a Tunisian film critic and the founder of the Carthage Film Festival in 1966, the first Panafrican and Panarab film festival. Cheriaa was involved in the translation of Arabic poetry and he was a writer and spokesperson for Arab-African film culture. He was awarded the Grand Cordon of National Merit.

Dr Ross Cooper is a film historian and secondary school teacher. He is now retired from teaching and devotes most of his time to painting.

Adrian Danks is a teacher, editor, curator, and award-winning critic. He is Associate Professor, Cinema Studies and Media, at RMIT University, co-curator of the Melbourne Cinémathèque, and was an editor of *Senses of Cinema* between 2000 to 2014. He is the author of the edited collections, *A Companion to Robert Altman* (2015) and *American-Australian Cinema* (2018), with Steve Gaunson and Peter Kunze, and the monograph, *Australian International Pictures* (2023, with Con Verevis).

Marshall Deutelbaum is Professor Emeritus in English at Purdue University in the U.S. His research interests as a film historian include the widescreen American films of the 1950s and 1960s and the films of the South Korean director Hong Sangsoo. His most recent essay is 'The Play of Parallel Editing in Hong Sangsoo's *The Day After*'.

Manthia Diawara is a Professor in the Martin Scorsese Department of Cinema Studies at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts. A native of Mali, he is the author of *We Won't Budge: An African Exile in the World* (Basic Civitas Books, 2003), *Black-American Cinema: Aesthetics and Spectatorship* (ed. Routledge, 1993), *African Cinema: Politics and Culture* (Indiana University Press, 1992), and *In Search of Africa* (Harvard University Press, 1998). He has published widely on film and literature of the Black Diaspora. He collaborated with Ngûgî wa Thiong'o in making the documentary *Sembène Ousmane: The Making of the African Cinema*, and directed the documentary *Rouch in Reverse*.

Shivendra Singh Dungarpur is an award-winning filmmaker, producer and archivist. He has produced and directed close to 1200 advertising films as well as short films and documentaries under the banner of his production house D'ungarpur Films'. His first feature documentary *Celluloid Man* (2012) won two National Awards. His second documentary *The Immortals* (2015) premiered at the Busan International Film Festival and won the Special Jury Award for the Best Film at MIFF 2016. His third documentary *CzechMate – In Search of Jiri Menzel* is a seven-

hour epic in-depth exploration of the Czechoslovakian New Wave that has won critical acclaim from cinephiles around the world. British Film Institute and Sight & Sound Magazine voted the film amongst the top five releases of 2020. Passionately committed to film preservation and restoration, he established Film Heritage Foundation (FHF), a not-for-profit organization dedicated to preserving and restoring India's film heritage. FHF is the only non-governmental organization working in the field of film preservation in India. Shivendra is a member of the Executive Committee of the International Federation of Film Archives (FIAF), the Artistic Committee of the Il Cinema Ritrovato Festival in Bologna as well as of the Honorary Committee of the Nitrate Picture Show, George Eastman House's Festival of Film Conservation. He is also a member of the Board of Trustees of MAMI (Mumbai Film Festival) and of the Advisory Council of the India International Centre in New Delhi.

Russell Edwards currently teaches Film Studies at Monash University. A professional film critic since the early 1990s, Russell reviewed for *Variety* (2003–2012) and served as President of the Film Critics Circle of Australia (2004–2006). A former advisor to the Busan International Film Festival, Russell recently contributed to Edinburgh University Press' book *The Films of Kim Ki-young*.

Sandy Edwards is an Independent Photography Curator based in Sydney, Australia. She founded *Arthere* in 2008, a new gallery model that provides services to photographers – consultation, mentoring, curating, venue procuring, and exhibition production. *Arthere* has mounted over a hundred exhibitions across a wide range of art spaces in Sydney, including public and private gallery spaces exhibiting new and established photographic artists. From 1991 until 2017 Sandy was Curator at *Stills Gallery* where she was Co-director for fifteen years, with Director Kathy Freedman.

As a curator and photographer Sandy has a long history of supporting documentary photography in Australia. She has been focussed on women and gender issues in photography and is actively vigilant in Indigenous issues. She has a long history as a photographer, starting her career specialising in portraiture and the arts.

Her interest in cinema is longstanding. She began a course in cinema at the Slade School of Fine Art, London at 22 years old. She has remained passionate about moving image across most genres, always on a search to see something new that has not been seen before. If the stills camera had not been an easier independent option she may have been a filmmaker.

Postscript: I was the stills photographer on *Light Years* which was a complete pleasure as I was able to spend time with Olive Cotton whom I greatly admire.

Geoff Gardner is a former director of the Melbourne Film Festival and the founding Chair of the Organising Committee of Cinema Reborn.

Vincent Giarrusso is lecturer specialising in writing for screen and direction. His practice, teaching and research are underpinned by an emphasis on the social and cultural significances of filmmaking around themes of creativity, young adults, social cohesion and cultural issues. Vincent curates and runs the annual Multicultural Film Festival in association with the Victorian Multicultural Commission. Vincent is also an ARIA award winning and AMP (Australian Music Prize)-nominated musician and film-maker. His film *Mallboy* (2000), which he wrote, directed and composed music for, was selected for the Directors' Fortnight at Cannes International Film Festival and won an AACTA award.

Claude Gonzalez is an award-winning film director, producer, film lecturer and theatre director. He has created documentaries, television series and feature content for broadcasters in Australia, Japan, and France. His film commentaries have appeared in film journals, festival programmes and he is the author of the play, *The Ballad of Edgar and Mary*.

Dr Helen Goritsas is film director and educator in Screen Studies and Production with a PhD in Screen Arts, from the University of Sydney, Sydney College of the Arts. Helen was awarded Best Interactive Media; a collaboration between educators and students, at the Australian Production Design Guild Awards for *Lightwell*, an instillation for Vivid Sydney. She has also Associate Produced the Australian Feature film, *Alex and Eve* (2015). An experienced academic, filmmaker, film festival director, film reviewer, radio presenter and judge, Helen has served as a board member of Women in Film & Television International, President of Women in Film & Television (NSW), Program Manager for the Media Mentorship for Women, Screen Composers initiatives with APRA-AMCOS and Festival Director of the Greek Film Festival of Australia. Helen is a passionate contributor to the Cinema Reborn Film Festival Catalogue and has published in film studies, on the cinemas of Satyajit Ray and Jane Campion. Her research interests include film aesthetics, screen craft, and increasingly authorship.

Helen Grace is an award-winning new media artist, filmmaker, writer and academic whose work has played an active role in the development of art, cinema, photography, cultural studies and education in Australia and regionally for over 30 years.

Barbara Hall is an historian, journalist and founding member of the Women's Art Movement. She has researched, written about and curated contemporary and historical women's art exhibitions and contributed to pivotal histories and archives, from 1977 to 2021. The blank history of women photographers was a special challenge. In 1981 Jenni Mather and Barbara's original research produced the co-curated national touring exhibition, *Australian Women Photographers 1890–1950*. In 1986 their co-authored *Australian Women Photographers 1840 to 1960* was published. In 1985 Barbara curated *Olive Cotton Photographs 1924–1984* for the Australian Centre for Photography. Barbara was on the *Lip* magazine collective and the start-up committee for Melbourne's Centre for Contemporary Photography. She taught design theory at Swinburne and Monash for seven years before completing her doctorate in 2017, *Design in postwar Australia: the dynamics of change-making 1946 to 1970*.

Dr. Nicky Hannan has a PhD in Film Studies from the University of Sydney. Nicky writes on cinematic temporality, mood, and affect, and is particularly interested in intersections between literature, philosophy, and cinema.

Paul Harris celebrates a half century in 2024 of continuous involvement within the Australian film industry and cultural sectors ranging across distribution, exhibition and education (Swinburne, RMIT). He has also been a broadcaster on 3RRR (1981–2017) and 3AW (1988 onwards), a columnist with *The Age* EG section (1982–2007), host of the podcast *Film Buff's Forecast*, since 2017 author of *The Filmgoer's DVD Companion* (2005–2007, Text Publishing), *Not Quite Hollywood* (2008, Madman Publishing). Currently he is co-authoring *The Art Of Ozploitation* and has been working on a long-term project, Phantom Filmographies, since 1979. Paul has been involved with the NFSA's Oral History Program as an interviewer since 2007

Philippa Hawker is a writer on film and the arts. She is working on a book about Jean-Pierre Léaud.

Bruce Hodsdon was program director of the National Film Theatre of Australia (1975–9), curator of the film study collection at the National Library, Canberra (1981–96) and manager, film curator and programmer at the State Library of Queensland (1997–2010). In retirement he is contributing a multi-part series on the history of art cinema online in *Film Alert 101* with special focus on the 1960s. He has contributed to various other film publications, including *Senses of Cinema.*

Digby Houghton is a film critic, screenwriter and programmer from Melbourne. He is interested in the intersection between history and film and completed his Honours thesis on late 1970s Australian cinema in 2022. He is also the co-creator and co-editor of *Kinotopia* kinotopia.substack.com/publish/posts a weekly newsletter published on Thursdays with longform reviews and film listings from cinemas in and around Melbourne. He is currently the recipient of the annual AFI research collection's fellowship in which he plans to write a feature screenplay based on Melbourne and Australian film culture from the 1970s and 1980s. digbyhoughton.com/

Peter Hourigan's passion for the films of Jean Renoir dates back to his undergraduate days in the 1960s when, for the Melbourne University Film Society (MUFS), he curated an early and pioneering imported season of Renoir's films, some for their Australian premieres. His love affair with *The Golden Coach* has survived the years since.

Andrew Jackson is Associate Professor of Korean Studies at Monash University. He obtained his Ph.D. in Korean history from the School of Oriental and African Studies at the University of London with a dissertation on the Musin rebellion of 1728. As well as pre-modern history, Andrew is interested in modern Korean history, North and South Korean film and theories of rebellion and revolution.

Prof. David E. James taught in the School of Cinematic Arts at the University of Southern California until retirement in 2019. His books on cinema include *Allegories of Cinema: American Film in the 60s* (1989); *Power Misses I and II: Essays across (Un)popular Culture* (1996, 2020), and *Rock 'N' Film: Cinema's Dance with Popular Music* (2016). He has also edited anthologies on American experimental cinema, including *To Free the Cinema: Jonas Mekas and the New York Underground* (1992), and in 2002 co-edited *Im Kwon-Taek: The Making of a Korean National Cinema*; the first academic study in English on the director and one of the first on any Korean filmmaker.

CJ Johnson is President of the Film Critics Circle of Australia. He lectures on cinema at the Art Gallery of New South Wales and other prestigious institutions, is a Golden Globes Voter and a member of FIPRESCI, the International Federation of Film Critics. He is the film critic for *Mornings With Sarah Macdonald* and regularly talks about cinema on *Evenings With Renee Krosch* and *Nightlife With Suzanne Hill* on ABC Radio. He is a contributing editor for *Metro Magazine*, and Head Lecturer in Screen Storytelling at Sydney Film School. He served on the jury of the 47th Norwegian International Film Festival in 2019 and the Oberhausen Short Film Festival in 2023.

Bruce Koussaba is a filmmaker, writer and talker engaged within Sydney's arts and culture scenes. His film work has been exhibited within institutions including the Bankstown Arts Centre, Powerhouse Museum Ultimo and the Art Gallery of NSW. His words, featured in various publications and blogs, focus on exhibition and film criticism or interviews with filmmakers – often conversations revolve around filmmaking practices.

Alena Lodkina is a Russian-born Australian filmmaker. The first feature film that she directed and co-wrote, *Strange Colours*, was produced through the Venice Biennale College and premiered at Venice Film Festival in 2017. *Petrol*, her second feature film as writer/director, premiered at Locarno Film Festival in 2022 and was shown at New Directors/New Films 2023. She was a MacDowell fellow in 2023/2024, where she was developing her next film. Alena's writing has appeared in *Heat*, *Senses of Cinema*, *4:3 Journal*, *Meanjin* and *Fireflies*.

Adrian Martin is an Australian-born film critic based in Spain. His most recent book is *Mysteries of Cinema* (University of Western Australia Publishing, 2020) and his website gathering over 40 years of writing is adrianmartinfilmcritic.com/

John McDonald is film critic for the *Australian Financial Review* and art critic for the *Sydney Morning Herald.* A former Head of Australian Art at the National Gallery of Australia, he has written about art and film for Australian and international publications. He has also worked as a freelance lecturer and curator. johnmcdonald.net.au

Kathryn Millard is a writer and award-winning filmmaker. As writer and director, Kathryn has made ten films including documentaries, feature dramas and essay films. Screened at major festivals, they have been broadcast and streamed around the globe. Kathryn's published and produced writing encompasses screenplays, essays, criticism and audio features. Kathryn is an Emeritus Professor in Screen at

Macquarie University. She is currently developing new projects for the screen and print.

Jane Mills is an Honorary Associate Professor at UNSW. She has taught, written and broadcast widely on cinema, screen literacy, censorship, feminism, and human rights. She's Associate Editor for *Fusion, Metro,* and *Screen Education,* the Series Editor of *Australian Screen Classics,* a member of the SFF Film Advisory Panel, a Programmer for Antenna Documentary Festival, and a member of the NSW Education Standards Authority Technical Advisory Group for Visual Arts. Her books include *The Money Shot: Cinema Sin & Censorship* (2001), *Loving & Hating Hollywood: Reframing Global & Local Cinemas*(2009) and *Jedda* (2012). Jane is the guest-editor of the dossier 'Pier Paolo Pasolini's Centenary Retrospective: Film Culture in Action' in the Spring 2023 issue of *Framework* that originated in Cinema Reborn's 2022 Pasolini Retrospective: available to read on Project Muse, **here**.

Anjali Monteiro and **K.P. Jayasankar** are former Professors from the School of Media and Cultural Studies, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai. They are award-winning documentary filmmakers who have worked with community-based, collaborative films since the 1980s. They are also media teachers, researchers and authors. Their book *A Fly in the Curry* (Sage, 2016), on independent Indian documentary, won a Special Mention for the best book on cinema at the National Film Awards, 2016. More at www.monteiro-jayasankar.com/

Bill Mousoulis is a Greek-Australian independent filmmaker, programmer, and critic. Since 1982, he has made over 100 films, in both Australia and Greece, including 11 features, the latest of which is *My Darling in Stirling* (2023). In 1985 he founded the Melbourne Super-8 Film Group; in 1999 he founded the online film journal *Senses of Cinema*; in 2003 he founded the website *Melbourne Independent Filmmakers*; and in 2018 he founded the website *Pure Shit: Australian Cinema*. Together with Chris Luscri, he currently curates the film screenings Unknown Pleasures: Australian Independent Cinema in Melbourne since 2018, highlighting neglected or forgotten Australian independent films.

Margot Nash is a filmmaker and Visiting Fellow in Communications at the University of Technology Sydney. Her credits include the experimental shorts *We Aim To Please* (1976) and *Shadow Panic* (1989), the feature dramas *Vacant Possession* (1994) and *Call Me Mum* (2005) and the personal essay documentary *The Silences* (2015). In 2021 *Vacant Possession* screened in the Restorations Program at the Melbourne International Film Festival (MIFF) and *Shadow Panic* screened in Cinema Reborn. Her short *Undercurrents: meditations on power* (2023) screened at MIFF, Warsaw Film Festival, Adelaide Film Festival and Antenna. Made from restored/recycled images from her archive and other found materials, it is a cautionary poem or 'song' for the dark times. www.margotnash.com

Darcy Paquet is an American-born, South Korean-based film critic, university lecturer, author, programmer, translator and occasional actor. A native of

Massachusetts, he has been living in Seoul since 1997. He is the author of *New Korean Cinema: Breaking the Waves* (2009), co-ordinates the influential koreanfilm.org website, and his film translation credits include the English subtitles for Bong Joon-ho's Oscar-winning *Parasite* (2019). In 2010, Paquet was awarded the Korea Film Reporters Association Award for his contributions in introducing Korean cinema to the world. Paquet is also the founder and organiser of Wildflower Film Awards Korea

Andrew Pike is a film historian, film distributor and documentary film-maker. Through his company, Ronin Films (formed in 1974 and still going strong), he has released many Australian feature films and social documentaries. He is currently Director of the Canberra International Film Festival. From 2010 to the present he has worked with the Asia Pacific Screen Academy as Chair of the MPA APSA Film Fund. His films as producer-director include *Message From Mungo* and *Pumphead*.

Tony Rayns is a London-based critic, curator and occasional filmmaker with a particular interest in the film cultures of East Asia. He has contributed to many of the world's leading film periodicals (many now defunct!) and has recently published *Just Like Starting Over*, a book on his encounters with Korean films and filmmakers over 35 years.

Eloise Ross is a Lecturer in the Film, Games, and Animation Department at Swinburne University and has been a co-curator of the Melbourne Cinémathèque since 2015. She has published book chapters and articles in places including *Quarterly Review of Film and Video, Screening the Past, Screen Sound Journal*, and *Senses of Cinema*. Since 2018, Eloise has contributed commentary tracks and other special features to assorted Blu-ray releases with a range of home entertainment distribution companies, including Kino Lorber, Arrow Video, and Indicator.

Anne Rutherford is a freelance film critic and Adjunct Associate Professor (Cinema Studies) in the Writing and Society Research Centre at Western Sydney University. She is the author of *What Makes a Film Tick* and her film and art criticism has been published widely in books, journals and magazines. Her recent work has appeared in *The Monthly, Australian Book Review, Meanjin* and *Movie: A Journal of Film Criticism*. In 2021 she was awarded the Australian Film Critics' Association award for best international review. westernsydney.academia.edu/AnneRutherford

Lucia Sorbera is Senior Lecturer and Chair of Discipline of Arabic Language and Cultures at the University of Sydney. She is known for her work about the history of Egyptian feminism and cultural production in the Arab world, including scholarly essays on Iraqi cinema and on Arab women filmmakers. She has previously curated *ImmaginAfrica*, a Festival of African Cinema at Padua University (Italy), retrospectives on Arab cinema at the University of Sydney, and she was a guest curator at the Torino Book Fair, where she co-curated the section *Arab Souls*, on Arabic Literature and Cultures. Her forthcoming book, *Biography of a Revolution. The Feminist Roots of Human Rights in Egypt*, is published by University of California Press.

Noa Steimatsky is author of the award-winning *The Face on Film* (Oxford University Press, 2017), of *Italian Locations: Reinhabiting the Past in Postwar Cinema* (University of Minnesota Press, 2008), and of numerous articles. Her scholarship braids historical research on post-war cinemas with questions of realism and modernism, film theory and aesthetics. She was faculty member at Yale University's Department of the History of Art, tenured at the Department of Cinema and Media Studies at the University of Chicago, and visiting faculty at Stanford, University of California-Berkeley, and Sarah Lawrence College. She was recipient of the Guggenheim Fellowship, the National Endowment for the Humanities fellowship, the American Council of Learned Societies senior-level Fellowship, the American Academy in Rome Prize, the Getty Research Grant, and the Fulbright Award. She has lectured internationally on the World War 2 vicissitudes of the Cinecittà movie studio – a project which inspired a documentary film, and is being expanded into a book.

Janice Tong is a cinephile and one-time film scholar. By day she runs a martech agency, by night she enjoys watching films and good Brit and Nordic crime dramas. She is particularly interested in the intersection of film, philosophy and literature, the cinema of Wong Kar-wai, as well as French and German cinemas. You can check out her film blog at: nightfirehorse.wordpress.com/

Quentin Turnour is a film historian, archivist and silent film programming specialist.

James Vaughan is a Sydney-based writer and filmmaker. His work has been presented by the Berlinale, KANAL-Centre Pompidou, New Directors/New Films, Viennale, Melbourne International Film Festival, TIFF Lightbox, Art Gallery of NSW and others. His debut feature film, *Friends and Strangers* (2021) was the first Australian film to screen in IFFR's Tiger Competition. It was awarded the Special Jury Prize at Jeonju International Film Festival and was named in *Sight and Sound's* international critics poll as one of the 50 best films of 2021.

Jake Wilson is a long-time film reviewer for *The Age* and *The Sydney Morning Herald*, a former editor of *Senses of Cinema*, and a freelance writer whose articles have appeared in many publications in print and online. His monograph on Philippe Mora's 1976 bushranger film *Mad Dog Morgan* was published in 2015 as part of the Australian Screen Classics series.

Keva York is a New York-born, Melbourne-based writer and film critic. Since completing her doctorate on the directorial work of Crispin Glover through the University of Sydney in 2019, she has regularly covered film for ABC Online. Her work can also be found in publications such as the *Metrograph Journal, Reverse Shot*, *Screen Slate*, and *MUBI Notebook*.

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Cinema Reborn acknowledges the traditional owners, the Bidjigal people, the Gadigal people and the Wurundjeri people on whose lands we meet. We pay our respects to Elders past and present and extend our respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from all nations of this land.

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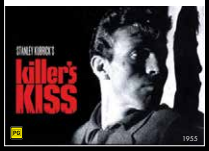

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