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Selected Writings

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Cover: Anna Karina and Jean-Claude Brialy in a scene from A WOMAN IS A WOMAN



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BAND OF OUTSIDERS

WS: Upon viewing your films as a whole there seems to have developed a more controlled, less playful and less experimental attitude in their contents. Do you find this true?

J-LG: Yes, I do. *Bande a Part* is my eighth film and I still find what Ingmar Bergman said true: "With each film you have to go into it as if it were either your first or your last film." That is, to put all you can, to put everything in it. I still have plenty of time in my life and maybe I won't make as many pictures as John Ford or Raoul Walsh, but I will try.

I consider myself as a searcher, and I try to put my research and experience for a film on a spectacular level. Each last film is my favorite, like Hitchcock.

WS: Are you still as concerned about what critics say about your films?

J-LG: Yes, very much so. I still like to read a critic's opinions and still consider myself one when I see a film. Sometimes I agree with a critic's opinions on my films, good or bad, sometimes I do not. But, you know, not that I am sentimental about it, but I have been a film critic myself and I prefer to speak and others to speak about what is good and beautiful in a film than what is bad in it. To say, for instance, why Howard Hawks is good and John Frankenheimer is not.

WS: Do you think *Une Femme est Une Femme* influenced Demy's *Les Parapluies de Cherbourg*?

J-LG: No. Michel Legrand, who did the music for both films, did his best work in mine.

WS: The color of *Une Femme est Une Femme* recaptures the boisterous atmosphere of the early 50's Hollywood musical. What were you striving for with your use of color in *Le Mepris*?

J-LG: In *Le Mepris* I was influenced by modern art: straight color, "pop" art. I tried to use only the five principal colors.

WS: Do you consider *Le Mepris* as an homage film?

J-LG: I think it is in the same realistic, journeying mood as

Rossellini's *Strangers* and all of Howard Hawk's odysseys. It happens to be very often an homage because it deals with motion picture people and Fritz Lang plays himself as a director, but the story could have happened anywhere.

WS: In *Vivre Sa Vie*, there is a rather obvious still of a crowded Parisian street as the background of a cafe. Why did you use this?

J-LG: Well, you know, that was the actual wall of the cafe and I used it because it looked funny to me and deceiving to the audience.

WS: What's your next project? Do you plan to use scope and color again?

J-LG: I will make a film with Anna Karina and Jean-Paul Belmondo from an American thriller novel in Cinema-scope and color, which I like very much. I was very impressed with the new Antonioni, *The Red Desert*: the color in it was completely different from what I have done: in *Le Mepris* the color was before the camera but in his film, it was inside the camera.

I also believe in shooting in 16mm. and blowing up to 35mm. This could have been done, for instance, in *Bande a Part* or *Les Carabiniers*, both in color. The latter, if I may say so, I consider to be about military people, the savage animals, while the former is about civilians, the domestic animals.

WS: In Truffaut's *Le Peau Douce* various banal objects (telephones, lights, shoes) play a significant role. Is there any similarity in the continual presence of spherical objects and motions in *Bande a Part*?

J-LG: No, all that was accidental. But you know, now that I think of it, what you said about round objects often seen in *Bande a Part*: the last shot is of the world which is round, you know — so maybe you're right.

Transcribed by Gretchen Weinberg

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