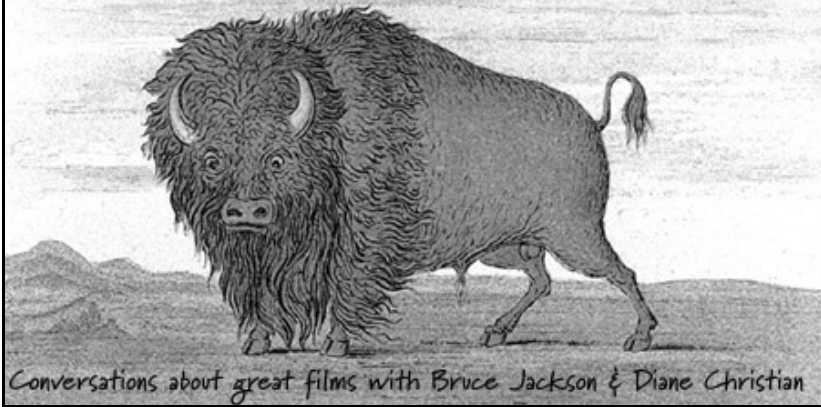


The Buffalo Film Seminars



FRANÇOIS TRUFFAUT (6 February 1932, Paris—21 October 1984, Paris, brain tumor) entered the film world as a writer—first as a critic, then of stories (he did the story for *Breathless/A bout du souffle* 1960 and then he wrote or co-wrote the scripts for all his films. He occasionally acted: he had small roles in several of his films and one of the leads in this one, and he played Claude Lacome in *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (1977). And he was a director. He directed only 19 features, but nearly all of them are interesting and several of them are classics: *Vivement dimanche!*/*Confidentially Yours* (1983), *La Femme d'à côté*/*The Woman Next Door*, (1981), *Le Dernier métro*/*The Last Metro* (1980), *L'Amour en fuite*/*Love on the Run* (1979), *La Chambre verte*/*The Green Room* (1978), *L'Homme qui aimait les femmes*/*The*

Man Who Loved Women (1977), *L'Argent de poche*/*Small Change* (1976), *L'Histoire d'Adèle H.*/*The Story of Adele H* (1975), *La Nuit Américaine*/*Day for Night* (1973), *Une belle fille comme moi*/*A Gorgeous Bird Like Me* (1972), *Les Deux anglaises et le continent*/*Two English Girls* (1971), *Domicile conjugal*/*Bed & Board* (1970), *L'Enfant sauvage*/*The Wild Child* (1969), *La Sirène du Mississippi*/*Mississippi Mermaid* (1969), *Baisers volés*/*Stolen Kisses* (1968), *La Mariée était en noir*/*The Bride Wore Black* (1968), *Fahrenheit 451* (1966), *La Peau douce*/*Silken Skin* (1964), *Jules et Jim* (1961), *Tire au flanc*/*The Army Game* (1961), *Tirez sur le pianiste*/*Shoot the Piano Player* (1960), *Les Quatre cents coups*/*The 400 Blows*. His 1954 book, *Une certaine tendance du cinéma Français* was the first important assertion of what became known as the "auteur theory" of filmmaking. His book on Alfred Hitchcock, *Hitchcock-Truffaut* (1967) established Hitchcock's critical reputation as nothing before had. His critical essays were collected in *Les films de ma Vie* (1975). His collected letters, *Correspondence*, were published in 1990.

GEORGES DELERUE (12 March 1925 Roubaix, Nord, Nord-Pas-de-Calais, France—20 March 1992, Los Angeles) composed original music for over 300 films, among them *Black Robe* (1991), *Steel Magnolias* (1989), *Beaches* (1988), *Platoon* (1986), *Salvador* (1986), *Agnes of God* (1985), *Vivement dimanche!* (1983), *La Femme d'à côté* (1981), *Le Dernier métro* (1980), *Julia* (1977), *La Nuit américaine* (1973), *The Day of the Jackal* (1973), *Les Deux anglaises* (2000), *The Conformist* (1970), *Women in Love* (1969), and *Le Mépris/Contempt* (1963).

RAOUL COUTARD (16 September 1924, Paris, France) was a favorite cinematographer of Truffaut and Godard. Among his 78 films are *The Bride Wore Black* (1968), *La Chinoise* (1967), *2 ou 3 choses que je sais d'elle* (1967), *Pierrot le fou* (1965), *Alphaville, une étrange aventure de Lemmy Caution* (1965), *Band of Outsiders/Bande à part* (1964), *Le Mépris/Contempt* (1963), *Tire au flanc* (1961), *Tirez sur le pianiste/Shoot the Piano Player* (1960), and *À bout de souffle* (1960)

JEANNE MOREAU (23 January 1928, Paris, France) has acted in 117 films, the most recent of which was the made-for-tv "Les Parents terribles" (2003). **Biography from Leonard Maltin's Movie Encyclopedia:** "A near-flawless embodiment of cinematic sensuality, Moreau's physical beauty, sensitivity, and charm made her instantly successful following an almost simultaneous film and stage debut in 1948. She first impressed American audiences in two 1958 films directed by Louis Malle: *Elevator to the Gallows* (aka *Frantic*) and *The Lovers* both successes on the art-house circuit. Moreau's appeal made her the thinking man's Brigitte Bardot; her intelligent, sensual persona was perfectly in keeping with the new freedom in films of the 1960s. Very much in demand, she starred for Michelangelo



Jules et Jim (1961)

Jeanne Moreau...Catherine
 Oskar Werner...Jim
 Henri Serre...Jim
 Vanna Urbino...Gilberte
 Boris Bassiak...Albert
 Anny Nelsen...Lucie
 Sabine Haudepin...La petite Sabine
 Marie Dubois...Therese
 Christiane Wagner...Helga
 Michel Subor...Récitant/Narrator (voice)

Directed by François Truffaut
 Based on the novel by Henri-Pierre Roché
 Adaptation by Jean Gruault and François Truffaut
 Produced by Marcel Berbert
 Cinematography by Raoul Coutard
 Jeanne Moreau...singer: "Le tourbillon"

Antonioni in *La Notte* (1961), for Joseph Losey in *Eva* (1962), for Orson Welles in *The Trial* (1963) and *Chimes at Midnight* (1966), for Luis Buñuel in *Diary of a Chambermaid* (1964). Moreau's most memorable movies, however, may have been those she did for François Truffaut, including *Jules and Jim* (1961, arguably her greatest role, as the center of a classy, three-sided bohemian relationship) and *The Bride Wore Black* (1968, as the woman who coolly seeks revenge for the death of her husband on their wedding day). During the 1970s Moreau acted in a handful of American films (including the melancholy 1970 Western *Monte Walsh* and 1976's *The Last Tycoon*), tried her hand at directing (first with the well received features *Lumière* in 1976 and *L'Adolescente* in 1979, and then with a 1984 documentary on Lillian Gish), and even briefly married an American director, William Friedkin (a union long since dissolved). She is still sought after by the world's foremost filmmakers, and has taken a number of glorified cameo roles, in movies ranging from Bertrand Blier's *Going Places* (1974) to Luc Besson's *La Femme Nikita* (1990). She had an especially robust part, as a flamboyant family friend, in the British production *The Summer House* (1993). She adds a distinction to every film in which she appears. Moreau has no peer in projecting worldly womanliness. OTHER FILMS INCLUDE: 1959: *The Four Hundred Blows*, *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* 1960: *5 Branded Women* 1961: *A Woman Is a Woman* 1963: *Bay of Angels*, *The Fire Within*, *The Victors* 1964: *Banana Peel* 1965: *The Train*, *Viva Maria!* (teamed with Brigitte Bardot); 1968: "The Immortal Story" (made for TV), *Great Catherine* 1970: *Alex in Wonderland* (as herself); 1977: *Mr. Klein* 1982: *Querelle*, *La Truite* 1991: *Until the End of the World*.



Oskar Werner (13 November 1922, Vienna, Austria—23 October 1984, Marburg an der Lahn, Germany, heart attack). **Biography from Leonard Maltin's Movie Encyclopedia:** "...At age 18, Werner joined Vienna's Burgtheater; after serving in the war, he returned to the theater, and for the next decade starred in a wide variety of productions, including "Hamlet" and "Becket," and in 1959 he established his own company, Theater Ensemble Oskar Werner. The actor's initial film credit was *Der Engel mit der Posaune* (1948). His U.S. debut came in *Decision Before Dawn* (1951), filmed in Europe, in which he played a German P.O.W. who becomes a spy for his captors. His acclaimed performance earned Werner a trip to Hollywood and a 20th Century-Fox contract, which never came to fruition. He returned to Europe, took a supporting part in Max Ophüls' *Lola Montes* (1955), and starred in *Mozart* (also 1955). Werner returned to the international spotlight in one of Truffaut's most beloved films, *Jules and Jim* (1961), playing a retiring German Jew bohemian involved in a three-cornered friendship. His next important film, *Ship of Fools* (1965), gave him his best screen role, and an Oscar nomination, as Dr. Schumann, a melancholy doctor who enjoys a brief romance with Simone Signoret aboard an ocean liner heading for Germany in 1933. Other film roles followed, including *The Spy Who Came In From the Cold* (1965, as a counterspy), Truffaut's *Fahrenheit 451* (1967, as the rebellious Montag), *The Shoes of the Fisherman* and *Interlude* (both 1968). Werner's final screen role was reminiscent of Dr. Schumann: in *Voyage of the Damned* (1976), he plays an urbane Jew fleeing Nazi Germany on an ill-fated ship."

HENRI SERRE (26 February 1931) has acted in about 30 films. Since the mid 1970s he has worked primarily in tv dramas. Some of his films were *La Main/The Hand* (1969), *Le Combat dans l'île* (1962), *Tire au flanc* (1961), and *The Sad Sack* (1961).

from I Lost it at the Movies. Pauline Kael. Atlantic, Boston, 1965

When the Legion of Decency condemned *Jules and Jim*, the statement read: the story has been developed "in a context alien to Christian and traditional natural morality." It certainly has. The Legion went on to say: "If the director has a definite moral viewpoint to express, it is so obscure that the visual amorality and immorality of the film are predominant and consequently pose a serious problem for a mass medium of entertainment." It would be possible to make a fraudulent case for the film's morality by pointing out that the adulterous individuals suffer and die, but this is so specious and so irrelevant to the meanings and qualities of the work that surely the Legion, expert in these matters, would recognize that it was casuistry. The Legion isn't wrong about the visual amorality either, and yet, *Jules and Jim* is not only one of the most beautiful films ever made, and the greatest motion picture of recent years, it is also, viewed as a work of art, exquisitely and impeccably *moral*. Truffaut does not have "a definite moral viewpoint to express" and he does not use the screen for messages or for social pleading or to sell sex for money; he uses the film medium to express his love and knowledge of life as completely as he can.

The film is adapted from Henri-Pierre Roché's autobiographical novel, written when he was seventy-four, with some additional material from his even later work, *Deux Anglaises et le Continent*. If some of us have heard of Roché, it's probably just the scrap of information that he was the man who introduced Gertrude Stein to Picasso—but this scrap shouldn't be discarded, because both Stein and Picasso are relevant to the characters and period of *Jules and Jim*. Roché is now dead, but the model for

Catherine, the Jeanne Moreau role, is a German literary woman who is still alive; it was she who translated *Lolita* into German. Truffaut has indicated, also, that some of the material which he improvised on location was suggested by Apollinaire's letters to Madeleine—a girl whom he had met for a half-hour on a train.

The film begins in Paris before the First World War. Jules the Austrian (Oskar Werner) and Jim the Frenchman (Henri Serre) are Mutt and Jeff, Sancho Panza and Don Quixote, devoted friends, contentedly arguing about life and letters. Catherine enters their lives, and Jules and Jim try to have both the calm of their friendship and the excitement of her imperious, magical presence. She marries Jules, who can't hold her, and in despair he encourages Jim's interest in her—"That way she'll still be *ours*." But Catherine can't subjugate Jim: he is too independent to be dominated by her whims. Not completely captivated, Jim fails to believe in her love when she most desperately offers it. She kills herself and him.

The music, the camera and editing movement, the rhythm of the film carries us along without pauses for reflection. Truffaut doesn't linger; nothing is held too long, nothing is overstated or even *stated*. Perhaps that's why others besides *the Legion of Decency* have complained.

What is the film about? It's a celebration of life in a great historical period, a period of ferment and extraordinary achievement in painting and music and literature. Together Jules and Jim have a peaceful friendship (and Jim has a quiet love affair with Gilberte). But when Jules and Jim are with Catherine they feel alive. Anything may happen—she's the catalyst, the troublemaker, the source of despair as well as the source of joy. She is also the enchantress who makes art out of life....

Catherine is, of course, a little crazy, but that's not too surprising. Pioneers can easily become fanatics, maniacs. And Catherine is part of a new breed—the independent, intellectual modern woman, so determined to live as freely as a man that while claiming equality she uses every feminine wile to gain extra advantages, to demonstrate her superiority, and to increase her power position. She is the emerging twentieth century woman satirized by Strindberg, who also adored her; she is the woman with rights and responsibilities who entered Western literature after the turn of the century and has almost always been seen by the male authors as demanding the rights but refusing the responsibilities. This is the traditional male view of the feminist, and the film's view is not different....

Catherine in her way, compensates for the homage she demands. She has, despite her need to intrude and to dominate, the gift for life. She holds nothing in reserve; she lives out her desires; when she can't control the situation, she destroys it.... Catherine the free spirit has the insanity of many free spirits—she believes that she knows truth from lies, right from wrong. Her absolutism is fascinating, but it is also rather clearly *morally insane*. She punishes Jim because he has not broken with Gilberte, though she has not broken with Jules. Only the relationships *she* sets and dominates are *right*. Catherine suffers from the fatal ambivalence of the “free and equal” woman toward sex: she can leave men, but if they leave her, she is as abandoned and desolate, as destroyed and helpless as any clinging vine (perhaps *more* destroyed—she cannot even ask for sympathy). *Jules and Jim* is about the impossibility of freedom, as it is about the many losses of innocence.

All these elements are elliptical in the film—you catch them out of the corner of your eye and mind.

Jules and Jim are portraits of the artist as young men, but they are the kind of artists who grow up into something else—they become specialists in some field, or journalists; and the dedication to art of their youth becomes the *civilizing* influence in their lives. The war blasts the images of Bohemian life; both Jules and Jim are changed, but not Catherine. She is the unreconstructed Bohemian life which does not settle down. She needed more strength, more will than they to live the artist's life—and this determination is the *uncivilizing* factor. Bohemianism has made her, underneath all the graces, a moral barbarian: freedom has come to mean whatever she says it is. And when she loses what she believes to be freedom—when she can no longer dictate the terms on which Jim will live—she is lost, isolated. She no longer makes art out of life: she makes life hell.

She chooses death, and she calls on Jules to observe her choice, the last demonstration of her power over life and death, because Jules by a lifetime of yielding his own freedom to her has become, to her, a witness. He can only observe grand gestures; he cannot *make* them. In the last moment in the car, when self-destruction is completely determined, she smiles the smile of a statue: this is the mystery that drew them to her—the smile that looks so easy and natural but which is self-contained and impenetrable.

Jules and Jim ends after the burning of the books in Germany, the end of an epoch, as Truffaut has said, for intellectual Bohemians like Jules and Jim.

Jules and Jim is among other things the best movie ever made about what I guess most of us think of as the Scott Fitzgerald period (though it begins much earlier). Catherine jumping into the waters of the Seine to demonstrate her superiority over Jules and

Jim, who are discussing the weaknesses of women, is not unlike *Zelda* jumping over that balustrade. This film treatment of the period is a work of lyric poetry and a fable of the world as playground, a work of art as complex and suggestive in its way as the paintings and poetry and novels and music of the period that it is based on. It is a tribute to the school of Paris when art and Paris were synonymous; filmically it is a new school of Paris—and the new school of Paris is cinema.

Though emotionally in the tradition of Jean Renoir, as a work of film craftsmanship *Jules and Jim* is an homage to D.W. Griffith. ...I think it will rank among the great lyric achievements of the screen, right up there with the work of Griffith and Renoir.

from François Truffaut. *Correspondence 1945-1984*. Noonday Press NY 1990

28 October 61 to Jean Mambrino

Jules et Jim has really exhausted me. I was right to wait before shooting it, since it was, of my three films, the most difficult one to make. Though it has a very salacious theme, it's a film I believe to be profoundly moral, if on no other evidence than the frightful melancholy that emanates from it. It's the third time this has happened to me: starting a film under the impression that it's going to be amusing and discovering as I go along that the only thing that saves it is its melancholy.

9 November 1961 to Helen Scott

Jules et Jim: certain intellectuals are enthusiastic (Queneau, Audiberti, Jules Roy and my film-director pals!). Women cry a lot, a lot of men get pissed off. It's my first deliberately boring film (1 hour 50 minutes). Frankly, because of the three actors, it holds up better than my previous films.

21 July 1974 to Jean Gruault

I improvised the scene in *Jules et Jim* in which the two men discuss her in her absence: 'Catherine is a force of nature. . . she's in a constant state of crisis, etc.'

I see the central relationship as being a bit like the one in *The Beast in the Jungle*, by which I mean she's in love with him from the start (and she knows it), whereas he is in love with her but doesn't know it, probably because he doesn't know that one can fall in love twice in a lifetime. That is really one of our favorite themes: the permanent and the temporary.

The problem with James is that nothing is ever stated and film doesn't allow that kind of vagueness; we're going to have to explain everything, make everything clear, and we're also going to have to find a thousand ways of emphasizing what I call the privileged moments (like the scenes of bookburning in *Fahrenheit 451*).

8 August 1980 to Robert Fischer

First of all, concerning the preface on Henri-Pierre Roché, even if it won't be appearing immediately, I wish to make an important change on page 17. This involved removing the names of Franz Hessel and Helen Hessel and replacing them by the initials F.H. and H.H.; for I have just learned that Helen Hessel is still alive (ninety-four years old) and that her son is ambassador to Switzerland. The keys to *Jules et Jim* must continue to remain secret.

24 October 1980 to Robert Fischer

I was very touched and very moved by the idea of receiving the documentation on Franz Hessel. His widow has just recently written to me and sent a beautiful photograph of herself from the period of her youth. She has rather hard features and was certainly less beautiful than Jeanne Moreau, but there's a strong personality there.

3 September 1982 to Robert Fischer

I've read the texts that Professor Witte gave me concerning Helen Hessel, and I had the pleasure of receiving some months ago, one or two letters from her as well as a very beautiful photograph. I believe she is now quite incapable of either speaking or writing as her earthly existence is drawing to a close.

From Charles Taylor, "Tout Truffaut" (Salon.com):

For Truffaut and his compatriots in the nouvelle vague, the ambition to capture a poeticized vision of life as it is lived was not so much a break with tradition as a way to resume the tradition, interrupted by war, of French films of the '30s. Seeing only stultification and decay in the glossy "quality" films that dominated the French industry in the '50s, Truffaut, Jean-Luc Godard, Eric Rohmer, Jacques Rivette (first as critics at Cahiers du Cinema and then as directors) celebrated the en plein air style of Jean Renoir, Jean Vigo and René Clair. (In "The 400 Blows," young Antoine even cleans his dirty hands on a window curtain, just as Michel Simon used one to wipe his muddy shoes in Renoir's "Boudu Saved From Drowning.") Truffaut might have been summing up the cri de coeur of the nouvelle vague when, introducing a festival of Renoir films in 1967, he said, "His work unfolded as if he devoted his most brilliant moments to fleeing from the masterpiece, to escape any notion of the definite and the fixed, so as to create a semi-improvisation, a deliberately unfinished 'open' work that each viewer can complete for himself, comment on as it suits him, approach from any side."

There may be no film masterpiece more suited to that description than "Jules and Jim." And there may be no other film whose every frame sings with freedom in the way this one does -- not just in the story of two best friends (Oskar Werner and Henri Serre) whose lives are brought to their highest peaks of joy and bitterest depths by their love for the magnificent and perhaps mad Catherine (Jeanne Moreau), who will live only by her own rules, but in the way the film moves from style to style, from mood to mood, as if only the freedom to reinvent itself from moment to moment could do justice to his characters' spirit. Truffaut uses jump cutting and freeze frames, songs and newsreel footage, isolating sections of the frame the way Griffith did; at one moment the camera takes flight and soars over the countryside (the way it will later soar over the ocean in "The Story of Adèle H.") as if the film's mounting sense of joy and its compulsive need for movement had burst forth. "Jules and Jim" is one of the pinnacles of poetic storytelling in the movies. Jean Renoir said the film made him "most fondly jealous," and yet, as with Truffaut's description of Renoir's films, it's a perfect film that agitates for life over perfection. Which is why people who love the film have always tended to talk about it as if it were something they have lived rather than watched. And why, each time you go back to it, part of you expects it to be different than you remember it, as if it were so alive it had rearranged itself to suit some new whim.

Stephen Nottingham: The French New Wave

The term French New Wave or *La Nouvelle Vague* refers to the work of a group of French film-makers between the years 1958 to

1964. The film directors who formed the core of this group, François Truffaut, Jean-Luc Godard, Claude Chabrol, Jacques Rivette and Eric Rohmer, were once all film critics for the magazine *Cahiers du Cinéma*. Other French directors, including Agnès Varda and Louis Malle, soon became associated with the French New Wave movement. This essay examines what was distinctive about the early films of these directors.

During the late 1950s and early 1960s young film-makers in many countries were creating their own "new waves", for example the working-class cinema of the "angry young men" in Britain, but the new wave movement in France turned out to be the most influential. The French New Wave directors' background in film theory and criticism was a major factor in this. They changed notions of how a film could be made and were driven by a desire to forge a new cinema. The *Cahiers du Cinéma* critics were highly critical of the glossy, formulaic and studio-bound French cinema of the 1940s and 1950s, but praised the work of 1930s French film-makers Jean Renoir and Jean Vigo and the work of the Italian neo-realists, including Roberto Rossellini and Vittorio De Sica. They also championed certain Hollywood directors, for example, Alfred Hitchcock, Nicholas Ray and Howard Hawks, who they saw as *auteurs* (authors) of their films, despite the fact that they worked within studio systems making genre pictures. These directors were labelled *auteurs* because of distinctive themes that could be detected running throughout the body of their work. Through their writings the *Cahiers du Cinéma* critics paved the way for cinema to become as worthy of academic study as any other art form.

In the late 1950s the *Cahiers du Cinéma* critics took the opportunity to become film *auteurs* themselves, when film subsidies were bought in by the Gaullist government, and they put their theories into practice. The core group of French New Wave directors initially collaborated and assisted each other, which helped in the development of a common and distinct use of form, style and narrative, which was to make their work instantly recognizable.

The unique experience of French film-makers was evident in their films. During the war France was an occupied country, unlike say England or the USA, and the experience of austerity and internal tensions, created by a population that in part resisted and in part collaborated with the Nazis, left a mark on the country's psyche. A distinctive philosophy - existentialism - evolved in France in the post-war years. This philosophy, associated with Jean-Paul Sartre and other French intellectuals, was a major influence on *La Nouvelle Vague*. Existentialism stressed the individual, the experience of free choice, the absence of any rational understanding of the universe and a sense of the absurdity in human life. Faced with an indifferent world an existentialist seeks to act authentically, using free will and taking responsibility for all their actions, instead of playing pre-ordained roles dictated by society. The characters in French New Wave films are often marginalized, young anti-heroes and loners, with no family ties, who behave spontaneously, often act immorally and are frequently seen as anti-authoritarian. There is a general cynicism concerning politics, often expressed as a disillusionment with foreign policy in Algeria or Indo-China. In Godard's *À Bout de Souffle* (1959) the protagonist kills and shows no remorse, while in Varda's *Cléo de 5 à 7* (1961) the protagonist stops playing the roles others expect of her, when she discovers she has cancer, and starts to live authentically.

The French New Wave directors took advantage of the new technology that was available to them in the late 1950s, which enabled them to work on location rather than in the studio. They

used lightweight hand-held cameras, developed by the Eclair company for use in documentaries, faster film stocks, which required less light, and light-weight sound and lighting equipment. Their films could be shot quickly and cheaply with this portable and flexible equipment, which encouraged experimentation and improvisation, and generally gave the directors more artistic freedom over their work.

The films had a casual and natural look due to location filming. Available light was preferred to studio-style lighting and available sound was preferred to extensive studio dubbing. The *mise-en-scène* of Parisian streets and coffee bars became a defining feature of the films. The camera was often very mobile, with a great deal of fluid panning and tracking. Often only one camera was used, in highly inventive ways; following characters down streets, into cafes and bars, or looking over their shoulders to watch life go by. Eric Rohmer's *La Boulangère Du Monceau* (1962) opens by establishing the action in a specific location in Paris, and is almost entirely filmed in the streets, cafes and shops of this area. In *À Bout de Souffle* (1959), the cinematographer Raoul Coutard, who worked on many of the French New Wave films, was pushed around in a wheelchair - following the characters down the street and into buildings. Innovative use of the new hand-held cameras is evident, for example, in Truffaut's *Les Quatre Cent Coups* (1959), where a boy is filmed on a fairground carousel.

The way the films were made reflected an interest in questioning cinema itself, by drawing attention to the conventions used in film-making. In this manner, the French New Wave directors strove to present an alternative to Hollywood, by consciously breaking its conventions, while at the same time paying homage to what they regarded as good in Hollywood cinema. Godard's *À Bout de Souffle* set the tone for *La Nouvelle Vague*, by telling a simple story about a relationship in a convention-challenging style with numerous references to previous cinema. In addition to telling a love story, the film can also be seen as an essay about film-making.

French New Wave films had a free editing style and did not conform to the editing rules of Hollywood films. The editing often drew attention to itself by being discontinuous, reminding the audience that they were watching a film, for example by using jump cuts or the insertion of material extraneous to the story (non-diegetic material). Godard, in particular, favoured the use of the jump cut, where two shots of the same subject are cut together with a noticeable jump on the screen. In a Hollywood film this would be avoided by either using a shot/reverse shot edit or cutting to a shot from a camera in a position over 30 ° from the preceding shot. In Godard's first full-length film *À Bout de Souffle* jump cuts are used during a lengthy conversation in a room and in a scene in a car driving around Paris. Irrelevant shots were sometimes inserted for ironic or comical effect, for example, in Truffaut's *Tirez le Pianiste* when one character says "May my mother drop dead if I'm not telling the truth", the shot is cut to one of an old lady falling over dead. The latter is also typical of the casual, sometimes anarchic, humour found in many *Nouvelle Vague* films.

Long takes were common, for example, the street scene in *À Bout de Souffle*. Long takes have become particularly associated with the films of Jacques Rivette. The use of real-time was also common, for example, in Varda's *Cléo de 5 à 7*, in which the screen duration and the plot duration both extend two hours, and in the slice-of-life scenes in Godard's *Vivre Sa Vie* (1962). These two films are also both firmly shot in the present tense, a common feature of French New Wave films generally. The films tended to have loosely constructed scenarios, with many unpredictable elements and sudden shifts in tone, often giving the audience the impression that anything might happen next. They were also

distinctive for having open endings, with situations being left unresolved. Truffaut's *Les Quatre Cent Coups* is typical in ending ambiguously, with the protagonist Antoine on a beach caught in freeze-frame looking at the camera.

The acting was a marked departure from much that had gone before. The actors were encouraged to improvise their lines, or talk over each others lines as would happens in real-life. In *À Bout de Souffle* this leads to lengthy scenes of inconsequential dialogue, in opposition to the staged speeches of much traditional film acting. Monologues were also used, for example in Godard's *Charlotte and her Bloke* (1959); as were voice-overs expressing a character's inner feelings, as in Rohmer's *La Boulangère Du Monceau*. The actors in these films were not big stars prior to the French New Wave, but a group of stars soon became associated with the films including Jean-Paul Belmondo, Jean-Pierre Léaud and Jeanne Moreau. Women were often given strong parts, that did not conform to the archetypal roles seen in most Hollywood cinema, for example, Jeanne Moreau in Truffaut's *Jules et Jim* (1962) and Corinne Marchand in Varda's *Cléo de 5 à 7*.

French New Wave cinema was a personal cinema. The film-makers were writers who were skillful at examining relationships and telling humane stories. Truffaut's films were particularly autobiographical. His first full-length film *Les Quatre Cents Coups* drew upon his early life, and the life-story of the main character Antoine Doinel was developed through three subsequent films: *Antoine et Colette* (1962), *Baisers Volés* (1968) and *Domicile Conjugal* (1970).

The Nouvelle Vague film-makers, being critics, were very knowledgeable about cinema. Their films incorporated elements of American genres, for example, film noir in *À Bout de Souffle*, the gangster movie in *Tirez le Pianiste* and the thriller and the musical in Godard's *Bande à Part* (1964). They also frequently contained references to particular Hollywood stars or films by American auteurs. In *À Bout de Souffle*, for example, Jean-Paul Belmondo models himself on Humphrey Bogart, while Malle's *Ascenseur pour l'Echafaud* (1957) and several of Claude Chabrol's films make reference to Hitchcock. The American jazz music that was popular in Paris at the time also featured in some of the films, for example, the Miles Davis score for *Ascenseur pour l'Echafaud*.

The French New Wave directors were prolific film-makers. The five *Cahiers* directors (Truffaut, Godard, Chabrol, Rivette and Rohmer) made 32 films between 1959 and 1966. Although the films represented a radical departure from traditional cinema, and were aimed at a young intellectual audience, many of them achieved a measure of critical and financial success, gaining a broad audience both in France and abroad. Truffaut's *Les Quatre Cent Coups*, for example, won the Grand Prize at the 1959 Cannes Film Festival, while *À Bout de Souffle* was a big European box office hit. This contributed to the growing influence of these directors. After 1964 the experimentation elements of the French New Wave were already starting to become assimilated into mainstream cinema. The directors meanwhile diverged in style and developed their own distinct cinematic voices. Truffaut incorporated more traditional elements in his films, for example, while Godard became increasingly political and radical in his film-making during the 1960s.

Bibliography

- Allen, D. 1986. Finally Truffaut. Paladin, London.
Bordwell, D. and Thompson K. 1993. Film Art: An Introduction. 4th Edition. McGraw-Hill, New York.
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Nowell-Smith, G. (ed.) 1996. The Oxford History of World Cinema. Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Next week, **Tuesday April 20, the final presentation in Buffalo Film Seminars VIII:**

Sergio Leone turned down *The Godfather* so he could make *C'era una volta in America/Once Upon a Time in America*, (1984), his last and best film. With Robert De Niro, James Woods, Treat Williams, Elizabeth McGovern, Tuesday Weld, Joe Pesci, Burt Young, and Danny Aiello, and a stunning score by Ennio Morricone. It's one of the great film epics.

Buffalo Film Seminars IX, fall 2004:

August 31 Buster Keaton *Sherlock Jr.* and *Steamboat Bill Jr.* 1928
September 7 Gregory La Cava *My Man Godfrey* 1936
September 14 John Ford *My Darling Clementine* 1946
September 21 Carol Reed *Odd Man Out* 1947
September 28 Michael Powell & Emeric Pressburger *The Red Shoes* 1948
October 5 Yasujiro Ozu *Floating Weeds* 1959
October 12 John Huston *The Misfits* 1961
October 19 Federico Fellini *8½* 1963
October 26 Peter Davis *Hearts and Minds* 1974
November 2 Haskell Wexler *Medium Cool* 1969
November 9 Terrence Malick *Badlands* 1973
November 16 Andrei Tarkovsky *The Mirror* 1974
November 23 Stanley Kubrick *Barry Lyndon* 1975
November 30 Martin Scorsese *Raging Bull* 1980
December 7 Orson Welles *Citizen Kane* 1941

Bonus! The first 50 purchasers of series tickets also receive a free copy of the booklet *The Buffalo Film Seminars I-VIII*, which includes indexes of all 112 films in the first eight series by series, title, director, and year of production; comments on the Buffalo Film Seminars and the Market Arcade Film and Arts Center, and an essay about James Card, the film historian who was the inspiration for these screenings and discussions.

Free screening of Blue Vinyl, a toxic comedy for the whole family

Diane will be introducing the director Judith Helfand at a free screening of her film, *Blue Vinyl*, Friday, 16 April, 7:00 p.m., Screening Room, Center for the Arts, UB's Amherst Campus. The filmmakers describe *Blue Vinyl* as "a toxic comedy for the whole family." The New York Times said it was "scary and hilarious." The press release says, "With humor, chutzpah, and a piece of vinyl siding firmly in hand, Peabody Award-winning filmmaker Judith Helfand and co-director Daniel B. Gold travel to America's vinyl manufacturing capital and beyond in search of the truth about vinyl (a.k.a. PVC plastic). Join us for an incredible odyssey that follows the lifecycle of vinyl. Along the way, learn how much our reliance on vinyl could be costing communities, workers, children, our health and the environment. It's a journey you can't afford to miss. This film is relevant to WNY because CertainTeed is attempting to site a PVC fabrication plant on the Lake Erie waterfront in Buffalo. CertainTeed's PVC is produced in Mossville, Louisiana, a low-income African American community that is featured in *Blue Vinyl*." The film and talk are co-sponsored by the following organizations: UB Green Office, UB Environmental Network, Citizens' Environmental Coalition, Great Lakes United, Learning Sustainability Campaign, and the New York Public Interest Research Group. **For more info, contact the UB Green Office at 716-829-3535 or Citizens' Environmental Coalition at 716-885-6848.**

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Buffalo Film Seminars website: <http://buffalofilmseminars.com>

Bruce's website: <http://brucejackson.us>

To be placed on the Buffalo Film Seminars email list: adddtolist@buffalofilmseminars.com

THE BUFFALO FILM SEMINARS ARE PRESENTED BY THE MARKET ARCADE FILM & ARTS CENTER

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University at Buffalo *The State University of New York*

François Truffaut, Writer: La nuit américaine. French director François Truffaut began to assiduously go to the movies at age seven. He was also a great reader but not a good pupil. He left school at 14 and started working. In 1947, aged 15, he founded a film club and met André Bazin, a French critic, who became his protector. Bazin helped the delinquent Truffaut and also when he was put in François Truffaut, (born February 6, 1932, Paris, France—died October 21, 1984, Neuilly-sur-Seine, near Paris), French film critic, director, and producer whose attacks on established filmmaking techniques paved the way for the movement known as the Nouvelle Vague (New Wave). Early works. Truffaut was born into a working-class home. His own troubled childhood provided the inspiration for Les quatre cents coups (1959; The 400 Blows), a semiautobiographical study of a working-class delinquent. It is the first of the Antoine Doinel trilogy, tracing its hero's evolution from an antisocial anguish François Roland Truffaut (UK: /ˈfrʊfoʊ, ˈtrʊfoʊ/ TROO-foh, TRUUF-oh, US: /ˈtruːfoʊ, ˈtrʊ-foʊ, French: [fʁɑ̃swa ʁɑ̃ˈlɑ̃ˈf tʁyfo]; 6 February 1932 – 21 October 1984) was a French film director, screenwriter, producer, actor, and film critic. He is widely regarded as one of the founders of the French New Wave. In a film career lasting over a quarter of a century, he remains an icon of the French film industry, having worked on over 25 films. Truffaut's film The 400 Blows came to be a defining film of the