

- 19 Sarris in Katz, op. cit. p. 134.  
 20 Peter Wollen, *Signs and Meaning in the Cinema*, 3rd edn, London, Secker & Warburg, 1972, p. 102.  
 21 *ibid.*, pp. 167–8.  
 22 *ibid.*, p. 168.  
 23 François Truffaut, *Hitchcock*, London, Panther edn 1969, p. 296.  
 24 Sam Rohdie, 'Education and Criticism', *Screen*, vol. 12, no. 1, p. 10.

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## B The theory in practice

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### 4 · *Cahiers du Cinéma*

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*Cahiers du Cinéma: revue mensuelle du cinéma et du télécinéma* began publication in April 1951 under the editorship of Lo Duca and Jacques Doniol-Valcroze, joined in the second issue by André Bazin. François Truffaut's polemical article, 'Une certaine tendance du cinéma français', which threw down the gauntlet of *la politique des auteurs*, appeared in issue no. 31 in January 1954. Truffaut's article was essentially a fierce attack on the *Tradition de la Qualité* which was currently dominant in French cinema, a tradition which gave the central creative rôle to the writers – notably Aurenche and Bost – whose work was mainly adaptation of 'quality' novels, leaving to the director the secondary rôle of implementing their scenarios. In opposition to this, Truffaut proposed the *cinéma d'auteurs*, in which the creative rôle was given to the director as *auteur*, whose commitment to the film was something more than an implementation of someone else's creation. The appeal was for more than a shift in creative responsibility; in asking that cinema be given over to the true *hommes de cinéma*, Truffaut was rejecting a novelistic, psychologically realistic cinema (however socially conscious it might be) and appealing for a cinema that was truly cinematic. The directors he pointed to as exemplary *auteurs* for the French cinema were Renoir, Bresson, Cocteau, Becker, Gance, Ophuls, Tati and Leenhardt.

In his history of *Cahiers* in issue no. 100, Doniol-Valcroze identifies Truffaut's article (published with some hesitation by himself and Bazin) as a turning point, the 'real point of departure' – 'From then on there was one doctrine, the *Politique des auteurs*, even if it did lack flexibility. . . . At the same time, while Truffaut's article may have initiated *auteurism* as a critical policy for the magazine, it did not invent the idea of *auteurism*. This idea seems rather to have been foundational for *Cahiers*, informing a number of the earliest articles, most notably Rohmer's 1952 essay,

'Renoir Américain'. Historically and internationally, an idea of *auteurism* seems also to have informed the project of the earlier *Revue du Cinéma* which provided *Cahiers* with much of its inspiration and some of its personnel, and which, in its first editorial in 1946, identified itself as 'the home of inventors and poets' (vol. 1, no. 1, p. 5), and in Britain much of the writing of Lindsay Anderson and his colleagues in *Sequence* was informed by Anderson's belief (expressed in 1950) that the director was 'the man most in a position to guide and regulate the expressive resources of the cinema' ('The director's cinema?' *Sequence* no. 12, p. 37). Anderson sees in Wyler (pp. 11, 37),

a perfect example of the director . . . who seeks with honesty, artistry and technical skill of the very highest order to make his films a true and perhaps enriched realisation of their authors' intentions.

What Wyler does not attempt to do – the declaration is his own – is to use the cinema to express his own feelings or his own ideas; and as a result there is about them a certain impersonality which marks them as the work of a brilliant craftsman rather than a serious artist.

The anticipation of *Cahiers'* distinction of *auteur* and *metteur en scène* indicates that, while *Cahiers* carried the implications of *auteurism* to conclusions which were resisted elsewhere, it did not invent *auteurism* in a vacuum.

The role of the *Cahiers* critics as the directors of the New Wave cinema in France in the late 1950s achieved for *Cahiers* the same sort of cultural currency as the 'Angry Young Men' in Britain. Internationally, the mid-1950s saw the emergence of an oppositional culture which took various forms, but which invariably involved a generational clash, a rebellion against old values and a disappointment with the sterile conventionality of the post-war society from which so much had been hoped. *Cahiers* participated in this in contradictory ways. Much of its writing was conservative, if not reactionary, in its implications at least. (Truffaut's rejection of 'psychological realism' echoes with the scandalized prudishness which greeted the 'smut' of Zola's naturalism: 'In one single reel of the film, towards the end, you can hear in less than ten minutes such words as: "tart", "whore", "bitch", and "bullshit". Is that realism?' – François Truffaut, 'Une certaine tendance du cinéma français'). But its 'tone' was rebellious, albeit in a way which had very little to do with a conscious politics. This lack of politics irritated 'committed', socially conscious criticism, while the extension of 'art' to popular and commercial cinema (and to its lowest echelons) constituted an erosion of the traditional field of art which was equally disturbing to 'bourgeois' criticism. In fact, *Cahiers* critics seemed to delight in the polemical situation in which they found themselves, scandalizing both the bourgeoisie and the committed.

But this has a serious side, the most fundamental point of which is the refusal to valorize films on the basis of their subject matter, preferring instead to discover the audacities of the *mise en scène*, and the marks

of the *auteur's* unique personality. Again the search was for the purely filmic, but it led *auteurism* into a formalism which not only brought down the scorn of its detractors but also worried its elder statesman, Bazin, whose reservations on the question of subject matter appear over and over again in his writing. In an important article written in 1974 ('La Politique des auteurs', *Jump Cut*, nos 1 and 2) John Hess identifies the *politique* as (no. 1, p. 19),

a justification, couched in aesthetic terms, of a culturally conservative, politically reactionary attempt to remove film from the realm of social and political concern, in which the progressive forces of the Resistance had placed all the arts in the years after the war.

There is no doubt that *auteurism* as practised in the *politique* was formalist, or that *Cahiers* swung between a-politicism, political confusion and downright political reaction. At the same time, its rivals in the field, *Positif*, say, or *Sight & Sound*, expose the opposite danger of a contentism in which a film is valued on the basis of the correctness or relevance of its sentiments. Fereydoun Hoveyda, in his 'Autocritique', in *Cahiers'* December 1961 special issue on criticism accepts the condemnation of formalism, but adds (p. 45):

But they forget that, far from overvaluing form, [formalism] mistakes it by separating it from meaning. This formalism meets up with the cinema of 'subject-matter' which ignores form. It can't be enough to judge Stanley Kramer or Autant-Lara on their intentions alone, however worthy they may be. It's not enough to protest against atomic suicide or war: it's also necessary to produce a work of art capable of shifting the spectator and of making him ask himself questions.

John Hess attributes something of *Cahiers'* cultural conservatism to its association with Personalism, a movement of Catholic intellectuals, including Bazin and Leenhardt, initiated in the 1930s around the magazine *Esprit*. But Personalism itself is something of a mish-mash: a quasi-philosophical attempt to align anti-capitalism with a belief in the importance of spiritual development, appropriating terms from socialism and early existentialism; and it's a mish-mash which tended to characterize *Cahiers'* intellectual background in the 1950s, a variable confusion of religious moralism, existential anxiety, absurdist nihilism, Angry Young Man polemics and beatnik rejection of convention. Alongside this should be placed the fascination which American culture had traditionally exerted on French intellectual life, a fascination which had been intensified by the cultural deprivation of the Occupation. The toughness and brashness associated with American culture was a quality to be valued, and in *Cahiers* it appears supported by such terms of approval as spontaneity, originality, roughness, primitiveness, violence and virility.

It is this diversity of stimuli, rather than a singular philosophical source, which seems to account for the confusion of positions in early *Cahiers*.

At the same time, a certain ideological profile can be discerned in the confusion, a certain privileging of those films which focused the themes of solitude, aimlessness, introspection, aggression and failure, leaving little room for the political concerns of *Positif*, or for the liberal social values of *Sight & Sound*.

*Cahiers'* function in the history of film criticism appears as a shaking loose of established modes. Not necessarily progressive in itself, *Cahiers* seemed to enable progress. In so far as there was a 'critical revolution' it was a revolution within bourgeois film criticism, which made other critical revolutions possible and necessary.

In the selection of extracts, which concentrate on the period 1951–61, I have tried to preserve something of the confusion of voices. It is tempting to present the principles of the *politique* as a set of rules: the late work of an *auteur* is necessarily more interesting than the earlier work, the worst work of an *auteur* is necessarily worth more than the best work of a *metteur en scène*, etc.; but such a schematization, though it has a substantial foundation, avoids the seductiveness of *Cahiers'* *auteurist* practice, with its celebration of *mise en scène* and its ability to account for pleasure and excitement: it misses the variety and dissensions in the writing, and, most seriously, it situates the *politique* as an aberration outside any tradition of criticism, rather than as an attempt to bring the principles of romantic criticism to bear on cinema, as they had been brought to bear on the other arts.

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Extract from Pierre Kast, 'Des confitures pour un gendarme'

*Cahiers du Cinéma*, no. 2, May 1951

The film *auteur* who thinks that, in the current system of production it is possible to *express himself* is not only massively deluding himself but is also, however pure his intentions may be, defending and protecting the mystifications which the cinema generously distributes to its spectators.

Extract from Eric Rohmer (Maurice Schérer), 'Renoir Américain'

*Cahiers du Cinéma*, no. 8, January 1952

The history of art, as far as I know, contains no example of an authentic genius who has experienced, at the end of his career, a period of real decline. Rather history encourages us to discover, under the apparent awkwardness or poverty of these films [Renoir's American films], the traces of that willingness to lay oneself bare which characterizes the 'late period' of a Titian, a Rembrandt, a

Beethoven or, nearer home, of a Bonnard, a Matisse or a Stravinsky. Having once cited those great names, I would wish then to propose a form of criticism which would not concern itself with 'beauties' or 'faults', but which would uncover the rationale underlying a development whose thread has eluded us, and would discover, under its 'pseudo-faults', the true brilliance which a cursory glance had only been able to tarnish. Such a proposal involves a certain overturning of commonly accepted values, and I believe that our time is more ready than any other to recognize that it is the property of all masterpieces to suggest a new definition of the beautiful.

Extract from François Truffaut, 'Une certaine tendance du cinéma français'

*Cahiers du Cinéma*, no. 31, January 1954

(the article appears in full in Nichols, see bibliography)

'But why', they will say to me, 'why couldn't we have the same admiration for all those film-makers who do their best to work within this Tradition and within the Quality which you deride so flippantly? Why not admire Yves Allégret as much as Becker, Jean Dellanoy as much as Bresson, Claude Autant-Lara as much as Renoir?' ('Taste is made up of a thousand distastes' – Paul Valéry.)

Well, I can't believe in the peaceful co-existence of the *Tradition de la Qualité* and a *cinéma d'auteurs*.

Basically, Yves Allégret and Dellanoy are only *caricatures* of Clouzot, and of Bresson.

It isn't the desire to create a scandal that leads me to deprecate a cinema so praised elsewhere. I remain convinced that the exaggeratedly long life of *psychological realism* is the cause of the public's incomprehension when faced with works as new in their conception as *Le Carrosse d'or* [Renoir], *Casque d'or* [Becker], not to mention *Les Dames du bois de Boulogne* [Bresson], and *Orphée* [Cocteau].

Long live audacity, certainly, but it's still necessary to discover it where it really is. In terms of this year, 1953, if I had to draw up a balance sheet of the audacities of the French cinema, there wouldn't be a place on it for the vomiting in *Les Orgueilleux* [Allégret], nor for Claude Laydu's refusal to be sprinkled with holy water in *Le Bon Dieu sans confession* [Autant-Lara], nor for the homosexual relations of the characters in *Le Salaire de la peur* [Clouzot], but instead it would have the gait of *Hulot* [Tati], the

maid's soliloquies in *La Rue de l'estrapade* [Becker] the *mise en scène* of *Le Carosse d'or*, the direction of the actors in *Madame de . . .* [Ophuls], and also Abel Gance's experiments in Polyvision. You will have understood that these are the audacities of *hommes de cinéma*, and no longer of scenarists, *metteurs en scène*, or *littérateurs*.

Extract from Eric Rohmer, 'A qui la faute?'

*Cahiers du Cinéma*, no. 39, October 1954  
(the article introduces a special issue on Hitchcock)

Is it our fault, can those of us who like Hitchcock and think him the equal of the greatest creators in the history of the cinema be blamed, if, simply because he can perform with greater assurance on that difficult instrument called the motion picture camera, one is supposed to consider him as a mere virtuoso, as a man with a clever but superficial touch? Is it our fault if it isn't possible to speak of profundity without using profound terms, or if the whole essence of profundity consists of not revealing itself on the surface? . . .

It is well known that the *Cahiers* team is divided on the Hitchcock case, as it is on many others. Since Jacques Doniol-Valcroze has given an advantage to the defence by entrusting the presentation of this issue to one of the most fervent Hitchcockians, I will gladly return the compliment by not launching from the outset into a sectarian apologetic. I willingly concede to Hitchcock's critics that our author is indeed a formalist. Even so, we still need to determine whether this appellation is as pejorative as they like to think it is. What, for example, is a formalist painting: a painting without soul, purely decorative, in which the play of lines and colours seems to have been imposed by a preconceived design on the part of the artist rather than born directly from a perception of things? Does it mean, on the contrary, that the painter can express nothing except through the intermediary of spatial relations? I see nothing in that undertaking which is incompatible with the very essence of his art, and it is clearly a difficult task, one which only the very greatest have been able to accomplish, while the more superficial artists, on the other hand, express their emotion in ways which have nothing to do with plasticity. In this sense, the film director could never be too formalist.

Extract from Jacques Rivette, 'Notes sur une révolution'

*Cahiers du Cinéma*, no. 54, Christmas 1955: special issue on American cinema

After the existential *coup de force* of Griffith, the first age of the American cinema was that of the actor; then came that of the producers. If we declare that this is at last the age of the *auteurs*, I know quite well that I will provoke sceptical smiles. I won't put up wise theories against them, but four names. They are those of film-makers, Nicholas Ray, Richard Brooks, Anthony Mann, Robert Aldrich, whom criticism had scarcely accounted for, when it didn't purely and simply ignore them. Why four names? I would have liked to have added others (those for example of Edgar Ulmer, Joseph Losey, Richard Fleischer, Samuel Fuller, and still others who are only promises, Josh Logan, Gerd Oswald, Dan Taradash), but these four are *for the moment* incontestably at the front of the queue.

It's always ridiculous to wish to unite arbitrarily under a single label creators with different affinities. At least you can't deny them this trait in common: youth (the kiss of death for a director), because they possess its virtues.

Violence is their prime virtue; not that easy brutality which constituted the success of a Dmytryk or a Benedek, but a virile anger, which comes from the heart, and lies less in the scenario or the choice of events, than in the tone of the narrative and the very technique of the *mise en scène*. Violence is never an end, but the most effective means of approach, and these fist fights, these weapons, these dynamite explosions have no other purpose than to make the accumulated debris of habit jump, to drill an opening: in short, to open the shortest routes. And the frequent resort to a technique which is discontinuous, halting, which refuses the conventions of cutting and continuity, is a form of that 'superior madness' which Cocteau speaks about, born out of the need for an immediate expression which accounts for and shares in the primary emotion of the *auteur*.

Violence is still a weapon, a double-edged weapon: physically touching an insensible public with something new, imposing oneself as an individual, if not a rebel, unsubdued. Above everything, it's a question for them all of refusing, more or less freely, the dictates of the producers, and of trying to make a personal work – and these are all *liberal* film-makers, some of them openly men of the left. The throwing out of the traditional rhetoric of the scenario and of the *mise en scène*, of this limp and anonymous

dough imposed by the *executives* since the beginnings of the talkies as a symbol of submission, has primarily the value of a manifesto. In short, violence is the external sign of rupture.

Extract from Fereydoun Hoveyda, 'La réponse de Nicholas Ray'  
*Cahiers du Cinéma*, no. 107, May 1960

The subject of *Party Girl* is idiotic. So what? If the substratum of the cinematic opus was made up simply of the convolutions of the plots which are unravelled on the screen, then we should just annex the Seventh Art to literature, be content with illustrating novels and short stories (that, moreover, is exactly what happens in a great many films which we do not admire), and hand over *Cahiers* to literary critics. I am not attempting to reopen here an old debate which is both pointless and without interest. But, with the regularity of a clock, some critics keep harping back to how necessary it is not to neglect the importance of the screenplay, of the acting, of the production system. While they are about it, why not take into account as well the influence of celestial bodies?

Of course cinema is at the same time a technique, an industry and an art, and like all art, it borrows from other arts. But to my knowledge, the diversity of production systems and of types of subject has not stopped masterpieces reaching us from every latitude. This digression doesn't really take me away from the point I am making. Precisely because *Party Girl* comes just at the right moment to remind us that what constitutes the essence of cinema is nothing other than *mise en scène*. It is through this that everything on the screen is expressed, transforming, as if by magic, a screenplay written by someone else and imposed on the director into something which is truly the film of an *auteur*...

I said at the beginning of this article that Nicholas Ray's new film is in its way a continuation of the interview which *Cahiers* published in 1958. *Party Girl* does indeed reply, in colours on celluloid, to the *big* question: the ultimate meaning of an already extensive body of work. Should we be looking for this meaning in Ray's thematics? I have already talked about the subjects he uses. Solitude, violence, moral crises, love, struggle against oneself, self-analysis, the common features of the characters and their preoccupations in the different films, in a word, the constants of this universe, present nothing which is original, and belong to an arsenal shared by all the film-makers whom we admire. Where then can we locate the deep meaning of his work? *Party Girl* shows

us in the clearest possible way: we must look for it purely and simply in the *mise en scène*: not in the apparent answer that Ray gives to the mystery of the world and of people, but in the way in which he interrogates this world and imitates life. It is not by examining immediate significance that we can come into contact with the best films, but by looking at the personal style of each author. It is obvious why I think that *Party Girl* is Ray's most interesting film to date.

Extract from Luc Moullet, 'Sam Fuller: sur les brisées de Marlowe'

*Cahiers du Cinéma*, no. 93, March 1959

Young American film directors have nothing at all to say, and Sam Fuller even less than the others. There is something he wants to do, and he does it naturally and effortlessly. That is not a slight compliment: we have a strong aversion to would-be philosophers who get into making films in spite of what film is, and who just repeat in cinema the discoveries of the other arts, people who want to express interesting subjects with a certain artistic style. If you have something to say, say it, write it, preach it if you like, but don't come bothering us with it...

Could Fuller really be the fascist, the right-wing extremist who was denounced not so long ago in the communist press? I don't think so. He has too much the gift of ambiguity to be able to align himself exclusively with one party. Fascism is the subject of his film, but Fuller doesn't set himself up as a judge. It is purely an inward fascism he is concerned with rather than with any political consequences. That is why Meeker's and Steiger's roles [*Run of the Arrow*] are more powerfully drawn than Michael Pate's in *Something of Value* [Richard Brooks]: Brooks is far too prudent to feel directly involved, whereas Fuller is in his element: he speaks from experience. And on fascism, only the point of view of someone who has been tempted is of any interest.

It is a fascism of actions rather than of intentions. For Fuller does not seem to have a good head for politics. If he claims to be of the extreme right, is that not to disguise, by a more conventional appearance, a moral and aesthetic attitude which belongs to a marginal and little respected domain?

Is Fuller anti-communist? Not exactly. Because he confuses, partly no doubt for commercial reasons, communism and gangsterism, communism and Nazism. He invents the representative of Moscow,

about whom he knows nothing, on the basis of what he does know, through his own experience, about Nazis and gangsters. We must not forget that he only talks about what he knows. When he depicts the enemy (and in *The Steel Helmet*, *Fixed Bayonets* and *Hell and High Water*, he usually tries just to avoid doing so), it is a very abstract conventional enemy. Only the dialogue dots the i's, and it is really unfortunate that *Pickup on South Street* and *China Gate* should remain *verboten* to us for such unjustified reasons.

Morality is a question of tracking shots. These few characteristic features derive nothing from the way they are expressed nor from the quality of that expression, which may often undercut them. It would be just as ridiculous to take such a rich film [as *Run of the Arrow*] simply as a pro-Indian declaration as it would be to take Delmer Daves for a courageous anti-racist director because there is a clause in each of his contracts which stipulates that there will be love affairs between people of different races. The unsuspecting public is taken in and he always ends up on the right side of the fence.

Extract from André Bazin, 'Comment peut-on être Hitchcocko-Hawksien?'

*Cahiers du Cinéma*, no. 44, February 1955

I for my part, in common with many others, deplore the ideological sterility of Hollywood, its growing timidity when it comes to dealing with 'big subjects' with any freedom, and this is why *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* makes me long for *Scarface* or *Only Angels Have Wings*. But I am grateful to the admirers of *The Big Sky* and of *Monkey Business* for discovering with passionate perception that, in spite of the explicit stupidity of the screen-writers, the formal intelligence of Hawks's *mise en scène* conceals an actual intelligence. And if they are wrong not to see, or to wish to ignore, the stupidity, at least in *Cahiers* we prefer this prejudice to its opposite.

Extract from André Bazin, 'La politique des auteurs'

*Cahiers du Cinéma*, no. 70, April 1957

(translated in Peter Graham, *The New Wave*, and in forthcoming translations from *Cahiers*)

(This short extract simply attempts to focus Bazin's position on the issue of subject matter; it does not do justice to the breadth of Bazin's critique,

which is available elsewhere in English, and is taken up in Edward Buscombe's article.)

To its supporters *Confidential Report* is a more important film than *Citizen Kane* because they justifiably see more of Orson Welles in it. In other words, all they want to retain in the equation *auteur plus subject = work* is the *auteur*, while the subject is reduced to zero. Some of them will pretend to grant me that, all things being equal as far as the *auteur* is concerned, a good subject is naturally better than a bad one, but the more outspoken and foolhardy among them will admit that it very much looks as if they prefer small 'B' films, where the banality of the scenario leaves more room for the personal contribution of the author.

Of course I will be challenged on the very concept of *auteur*. I admit that the equation I just used was artificial, just as much so in fact as the distinction one learnt at school between form and content. To benefit from the *politique des auteurs* one first has to be worthy of it, and as it happens this school of criticism claims to distinguish between true *auteurs* and directors, even talented ones: Nicholas Ray is an *auteur*, Huston is supposed to be only a *metteur en scène*; Bresson and Rossellini are *auteurs*, Clément is only a great *metteur en scène*, and so on. This conception of the *auteur* is not compatible with the *auteur/subject* matter distinction, because it is of greater importance to find out if a director is worthy of entering the select group of *auteurs* than it is to judge how well he has used his material. To a certain extent at least, the *auteur* is always his own subject matter; whatever the scenario, he always tells the same story, or, in case the word 'story' is confusing, let's say he has the same attitude and passes the same moral judgments on the action and on the characters. Jacques Rivette has said that an *auteur* is someone who speaks in the first person. It's a good definition; let's adopt it.

The *politique des auteurs* consists, in short, of choosing the personal factor in artistic creation as a standard of reference, and then of assuming that it continues and even progresses from one film to the next. It is recognized that there do exist certain important films of quality that escape this test, but these will systematically be considered inferior to those in which the personal stamp of the *auteur*, however run-of-the mill the scenario, can be perceived even minutely. . . .

The American cinema is a classical art, but why not then admire in it what is most admirable, i.e. not only the talent of this or that

film-maker, but the genius of the system, the richness of its ever-vigorous tradition, and its fertility when it comes into contact with new elements – as has been proved, if proof there need be, in such films as *An American in Paris*, *The Seven Year Itch* and *Bus Stop*. True, Logan is lucky enough to be considered an *auteur*, or at least a budding *auteur*. But then when *Picnic* or *Bus Stop* get good reviews the praise does not go to what seems to me to be the essential point, i.e. the social truth, which of course is not offered as a goal that suffices in itself but is integrated into a style of cinematic narration just as pre-war America was integrated into American comedy.

To conclude: the *politique des auteurs* seems to me to hold and defend an essential critical truth that the cinema needs more than the other arts, precisely because an act of true artistic creation is more uncertain and vulnerable in the cinema than elsewhere. But its exclusive practice leads to another danger: the negation of the film to the benefit of praise of its *auteur*. I have tried to show why mediocre *auteurs* can, by accident, make admirable films, and how, conversely, a genius can fall victim to an equally accidental sterility. I feel that this useful and fruitful approach, quite apart from its polemical value, should be complemented by other approaches to the cinematic phenomenon which will restore to a film its quality as a work of art. This does not mean that one has to deny the role of the *auteur*, but simply give him back the presupposition without which the noun *auteur* remains but a halting concept. *Auteur*, yes, but what of?

#### Extract from Fereydoun Hoveyda, 'Autocritique'

*Cahiers du Cinéma*, no. 126, December 1961; special issue on criticism

This leads me to clarify my ideas on the function of criticism. In many respects, it resembles that of the psychoanalyst. Must it not, in effect, re-establish across the film the discourse of the *auteur* (subject) in its continuity, bring to light the unconscious which supports it, and explain its particular 'joints'? The unconscious, as Lacan would say, is indeed marked by a gap; it constitutes in some way the censored sequence. But, as in psychoanalysis, the truth can reveal itself: it is written somewhere other than in the 'apparent' chain of the images: in that which we call the 'technique' of the *auteur*, in the choice of actors, in the decor and the relationship of the actors and objects with this decor, in the gestures, in the

dialogue, etc. A film is, in some ways, a rebus, a crossword puzzle. Better still: it is a language which inaugurates a discussion, which doesn't end with the viewing of the film, but incites a genuine research.