Godard plus Stones

(Continued from page 3) and never mind how it looks by itself. But to Godard (restate the quote above) art is an anomaly to action, and in the rest of the movie, the scenes the Stones surround, he seems to be making the same point about present-day revolutions. In two sequences, for instance, we are shown a group of radical blacks (Panthers) living along a river bank among piles of junked cars (the symbolic rains of capital). They read dogmatically from revolutionary texts (even a book on music), paint a sign, sequester pass guns back and forth, submit to a disciple-edited tape recorded interview; one man caresses a white girl lying on the ground, while another reads the relevant passage from Soul On Ice, after which she and the others are machine-gunned. What someone is that? It might be satire, of course, if Godard's politics weren't known. But since there's no reason to believe he's not sympathetic to the Panthers' cause, one can only conclude he forces the ends transcending the means. Perhaps, it's all necessary if the revolution is to be brought off in perfect form; perhaps the dogma must be recited repeatedly to be learned just right. Perhaps, like the means to the Stones' art, it will become acceptable when we appreciate what it's for.

The two other "episodes" are in similar style. One portrays white revolutionaries, whose techniques are as unpredictable as the blacks', running a porno shop, while the proprietor dictates revolutionary prose from a book to a typist, the camera pans slowly over rows of exploitative magazine covers. Occasional customers receive whatever's just come off the typesetter along with their purchase. The other sequence, as one would expect, follows a cameraman, a sound man, and an interviewer who in turn follow a girl who gives her name as Eve and her surname as Democracy. She answers obyes and no, and makes for an endless string of "questions" that are really just statements of belief like the one quoted about art. (One might assume she's just affirming Godard's beliefs.)

Finally there's a running narrative, lasting in and out of the other scenes, sometimes behind shots of people painting slogans that never quite make sense. The camera is never still.

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