



rc On what is the idea of the film based?

yy Originally it was a true story. The story of an agricultural worker whose life was transformed completely when he started to travel late in his life by means of a motor-bike, which he bought himself with the money he received from the old-age pension fund. As he was caught drunk, the motor-bike was taken by the police. He died of the consequences of a failed suicide.

rc How were you able to transform this anecdote into such an elaborate work as *LES PETITES FUGUES*?

yy We, Claude Muret and I, decided to use this story to describe not only the life of an old farm-hand but also to construct some kind of fable. We took the whole story, kept the main events and the setting and added to it a part of ourselves. The various stages of development of the main character represent the various symbolic stages which correspond to our own reality: the discovery of geographical autonomy, the power over oneself and over others, the implication of the body in an experience, a sense of escape, the flight to somewhere else, ecstasy, Katmandu. Then the repression that shocks you in a state of complete destruction and the impossibility of continuing along the road to detachment. Finally, slow reconstruction by means of reflection, by the discovery of others and your place among them and the power and potentiality of loneliness.

INTERVIEW WITH YVES YERSIN AND CLAUDE MURET (Continue)

- cm After having made a clear state of all conditioning, you arrive at a point zero from which you restart in a constructive way. When we wrote the script we did not know which way, since we have not yet arrived at this stage personally. The film ends at the moment when autonomy has been acquired but it does not give any hint as to how this freedom can be used.
- rc How does the figure of an old man like Pipe reflect reality?
- yy It is much easier to give a mystic and fabulous dimension to a person to which you have a certain distance than to one that stands very near to you. On the other hand, I am very interested in the potential of people who looks as to be at their wit's end. At a moment when everything seems finished, something new can be restarted. That is why the situation of the farmhand's complete alienation, coupled with his age, seemed to us to be an excellent basis for the story we wanted to tell.
- rc The figure Pipe carries the whole narrative. Everything else is determined by him, even if only indirectly. Was this your intention?
- yy Pipe clearly is a catalyst. He overthrows taboos - the taboo of silence, the taboo of immobility - and he enables others to do certain things. By questioning the mechanism of power, by putting a spanner in the works, so to speak, he lets others breathe an air which cause them to get moving.
- cm It is, therefore, in terms of power that the regrouping of the characters takes place. An important instance of this procedure is when Pipe, Luigi and Josiane - the proletariat or the three pariahs, whichever you want - come together in the kitchen.
- yy We took care to describe the malaise that exists in the farm in a way that shows a possibility of transformation. Unintentionally, Pipe creates another pole, in opposition to power. The others, who had so far no possibility of taking sides, since power had not been questioned, are forced now to make a choice. It is here that Pipe precipitates the conflicts and the outbreak of the crisis.
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- rc It seems to me that LES PETITES FUGUES can be defined as a film of pure fiction. How does this film range among your documentary films?
- yy LES PETITES FUGUES is just the opposite of the documentary films I made. These films had to be as near to reality as possible and, as a film-maker, I had to withdraw from personal intervention. It is quite the contrary with LES PETITES FUGUES

INTERVIEW WITH YVES YERSIN AND CLAUDE MURET (Continue)

for which we used a given situation and projected on it all that we are. This permits us to mix different kinds of information and reshape them without any sociological or ethnographical considerations.

rc We are used to Swiss film-makers making chamber cinema. LES PETITES FUGUES surprises by its volume.

yy Right from beginning we did not want to make a film which is limited to the privacy of two persons, within four walls. We did not feel like writing a film with much dialogue. Instead of bringing forward our message in form of words we chose to do it by means of impressions, through atmosphere, humour and lyricism. We intended to make a film which is both popular and spectacular.

cm We decided not to respect the conditions imposed on the cinema in Switzerland because we wanted to create an impression which conforms with what we have to say and which contains things you usually could not afford to express. This is in opposition to certain Swiss fictional films, whose form and content are strongly determined by external restrictions such as finances and techniques.

rc But despite the importance of the film, it has been produced with the cooperation of a great number of non-professionals.

yy This was a choice we made at the beginning, too. We decided right from the start that people from cinema as well as people from outside should be associated with the making of the film. The idea behind this was that the opinion of people from outside is without prejudice and, therefore, an essential contribution to our work. Thanks to them, certain constraints that professionals consider inherent attributes of the cinema could be avoided to a certain extent.

rc Even if no name allows us to identify the place of action, or the country in which it takes place, LES PETITES FUGUES is a film which seems to be fixed to a particular place.

yy Indeed, the purpose is not only to tell a story, our own as mentioned before, but to show more particularly how such a life of transformation can be lived here in this country. For us it is important that LES PETITES FUGUES is recognized as a film from this country, made by people from this country. This identity is given by the presence of the landscape, by a rhythm which seems specifically ours, by a language which is our own.

(Interview made by Roland Cosandey on March 22, 1979, in Lausanne)