

Fellini once said about cinema, its charm and hypnotic charisma it had, that it was “a dream we dreamt with our eyes opened”.¹ A film begins from inside of the mind of the director; it embodies the philosophy of its creator — their values, vices, virtues, and various parts of their big, big brain... carefully constructed/camouflaged in the (con)text of ‘cinema’. Therefore to ‘separate the art from the artist’ is quite impossible. The modern role of ‘cinema’ has reverted back into the category of ‘entertainment’ (now more than ever, or it may have always been), perhaps what differentiates a ‘movie’ (entertainment) from a ‘film’ (art, strictly speaking) must be the intention behind every line, cut, shot — every classic and masterpiece seem to never run out of elements to analyze no matter how old. After all, no director serious about their craft wants to be called a ‘movie-maker’.

Jean-Luc Godard is a French Auteur who challenged Hollywood with his radical and stylistic way of approaching cinema. The way Godard integrates his own politics into *Tout Va Bien* (1972) is quite hilarious — aside from the overall strong political message that is heavily implied of class struggle and criticism of capitalism of 60’s France — How did *Tout Va Bien* feature the leading box office stars of the generation, American AND French? In the beginning of the film we go over the various processes that are reviewed to make a film, turning over the parts of the elements one by one: scripting, producing, directing, lighting, editing, actors, etc., So, will the two household names guarantee an ‘exciting’, ‘entertaining’, and ‘fun’ movie? Not entirely. Spokespersons for Godard, the actors are also just the subject of a different discourse. Through Him, Jacques (Yves Montand) and Her, Suzanne (Jane Fonda), the audience is

¹ <https://vigouroffilmlines.com/2020/01/17/in-federico-fellinis-words-movies-dreams/>

forced to engage into their discourse on the commerciality of film, coverage and function of media, and even on the difference in perspective and dialogue between men and women; and in fact, Fonda and Montand's commercial significance to their characters are quite dimmer than expected, and they merely play their role to verbalize Godard's ideologies. By accompanying Jacques and Suzanne's storyline, the audience is also forced to experience the disappointment and frustration of the working class in the sausage factory, and social collapse of late 60's to early 70's France.

This film is meticulously curated from before its beginning to after its ending, in order to somewhat fulfill the public audience's thirst for whatever they look for in a 'movie' for the director's voice to be properly heard. Would the film function the same way as it does today without the two leads being Yves Montand and Jane Fonda? What was Godard trying to achieve other than commercial success in the United States by casting Fonda? The first answer is probably no, and the second answer can be found in the postscript to *Tout Va Bien*, *Letter to Jane: An Investigation About a Still* (1972). Thus, he successfully made his film politically, but not political.²

² Tham Mina, "Tout va bien / Everything is Fine" <https://academics.winona.edu/povwinona/tout-va-bien-everything-is-fine/>