

dream happens to be the Bosnian's dream. Everything is true in "Bosna!," but "Bosna!" is a film. "Bosna!" because the war is not over and because one can not always wait for it to be over to tell it." For Lévi what is at stake in Bosnia is not only a question of what becomes of Serbs and Moslems, but, he sees it, rather, as a question of the future of Europe. "These men, these women, are not defending a country, but an idea. If this idea were to perish, if the principle of a nation made up of men of various backgrounds be run to the ground and made to fail, let it then be said that after Bosnia, that men will have no other title to live in a place than the right they will have acquired through an imaginary "purity." This would mean a disaster for democratic Europe, this would leave us with one idea less and one disgrace more. The film's last words, which could be the

story's are "...so it can not be said that Europe died at Sarajevo." In this way, Lévi sees his film as being about Europe, dangling on the edge of ruin, its fate hanging in the balance, between heaven and hell, and whether this is so is certainly open to a debate that must begin and end with the question of art's potential for bringing about change. What is crucial, to Lévi and to many of the makers of European cinema, is that no issue should be larger than the scope of cinematic ambition, as no issue should be larger than the scope of the thinker's heart and mind.

Bertolucci laughs when he remembers that he would make jokes to himself about "1900," saying that what he wanted was for people to leave the cinema and run out and join the Communist party, but the laugh is no more than half hearted, because somewhere in Bertolucci's mind and in

the process of his creation, that notion is close. In the view of many people, especially Americans, the idea of film directors dabbling in politics, social issues, and international affairs is mere fodder for snide jokes and sarcastic ridicule, but in Europe, the notion of important cinema does not preclude this any more than it precludes the possibility for a comedy to have philosophical insight. What continues to define the European cinema is its makers's ambitions in relation to subject matter and execution. That at times their gaze outdistances their grasp should not be held against them. When the words "dumb" and "trash" are being used as compliments more often than not when discussing films, I believe the contributions of the European cinema to be consequential and important, now more than ever, and I mean that as a compliment.



## NEXUS

### ET NOX FACTA EST

BY SIMON NJAMI

I've stolen this title from a text by Victor Hugo. It's a poem in which the old master describes the fall of Lucifer, once God's favourite angel, to Hell, where he was going to build a parallel kingdom to the one that Christianity's omnipotent Lord presided. On several occasions the Lord of Christianity has shown us his limitations. How can we therefore give credit to the belief that propagates the ideal of God as love and as light? I've never believed in it myself. And I don't believe it. Too many wars, too many

inquisitions and crusades. The God that mankind has lived with for centuries (at least European mankind), is a Lord of iron, fire and blood. We are interested in writing another kind of history, a history that would question the social and economic dynamic that motivates the industrialized world, (historical materialism). The syncretic religions of the Caribbean provide an alternative. In the same way as in Africa does the survival of an animist legacy inherited from a fluent past and future métissage.

Somebody once said, I think it was Mallarmé, "la chair est triste et j'ai lu tous les livres". I haven't read all the books, and I have no need to. Well, and as far as the flesh goes, I'd rather shut up. We have to write different books that will narrate a new kind of history.

And in this epoch when century old anxieties are embodied, especially in ethnic and religious conflicts, it is essential to get up and speak with a new voice. It is a duty we have to fulfill for humanity's sake, on its drifting course. Let's ignore witches and black masses. On the face of the earth only man exists. This quadruply wounded animal. We charge windmills, we erect imaginary empires that crumble as soon as the signal for battle is given. The acceptance of weaknesses, is something that I can't fully admit, despite having understood it. Evidently, Lacan was right. We have to lament all those things that we have not been able to experience, to feel and to love. Every conviction implies its contradiction: yet, unfortunately, we're only human. Too human, carried away

by our dreams despite the voice of experience. Today, here and now, we are determined to die for a beautiful ideal, and tomorrow, we'll be in limbo, beset by our personal insecurities. There is no room for generosity, narcissists that we are, extremely concerned about resolving an equation whose solution got lost in the depths of time. God is dead, said Nietzsche. Art, therefore is the celebration of this divine loss. We have to believe in this death. God has never existed. The Austrian philosopher made a mistake and had to pay for it with his life. I didn't want to err in my struggle. Only life holds certain value. And I would only like to be interested in it. Somebody suddenly weighted the dice, and the freedom Sartre told us about got abolished. We are animals reduced to contemplative status, with no control over the meaning of life.

For a long time I dreamt of being like that omnipotent and omniscient God that would change the colour of the world. Who would transform the perception we have of heaven and earth, and of our brothers, the humans. That would change the order of the seasons. Some, before me, have imagined such a titanic task, and have found no chance of success. Then...

Then let's be like Don Quijote, magnificent travellers that only find joy in the brilliance of the sky. There is no one battle worth a human life. Let us close our eyes. Imagine that we are for a moment in a space where we can't see, like blindmen, cast out, without any warning to the dark abysses of perennial night. Did not Orpheus descend to the Avernus in order to rescue Eurydice? We dream. Whenever we close our eyes, we will nevertheless be aware that a simple act of our will is sufficient to make the sun shine again. Sometimes I feel I'd like to close my eyes forever, and to taste the exquisite sensation of being an ever-wandering soul, tossed about by the waves of time. Perhaps then, would the turbulent silence that takes us to the limits of our will be silent definitely. And night, the perfect one, that is all enveloping and shrouding, would finally descend, fearless of rejection.



## CLEAN HANDS

BY JOËLLE BUSCA

*"It is the margins  
that fasten the page"*  
Jean-Luc Godard

Politically, aesthetically, economically, intellectually and emotionally it is the curator who dirties his hands. He chooses, thinks, spends, cuts, fossilizes, spoils, triumphs, devours, digests, regurgitates and kids.

He transforms the perishable into the imperishable, introduces the anodyne into the museum. He is anguished and interrogates himself alone. An exhibition is not a Manifesto. It is a slice of time in the existence of art. Humbly speaking, as far as we are concerned, an attempt at shaking the coconut tree.

True or false disorder, *accrochage* is precisely an exercise of reconstituting an individual order that serves to exhibit and state that which in fact has nothing at all to do with order— Art and order, I can't think of two more antinomial words. The CAAM is not a standard deep-freezer museum; it is completely open to the modern. That was the first emotion I experienced, such a large, calm and beautiful museum, wholly devoted to *one show. The courage and the audacity* to go in only one direction. There's no chance for the unsatisfied visitor to go and console himself next door.

Our culture inflates an object until it makes it a symbol, it works like that. I'm referring here to the exhibition that celebrated the bicentenary of the French Revolution, in Paris, in 1989. "Magiciens de la terre" had to be put on then, it was correctly staged at the right place, even if nobody came later. As if such a profusion of things would leave us dumbfounded. The symbol is not really contemplated, it is put on a pedestal and becomes a diabolical censoring reference. "Magiciens de la terre" was an epistemological break in the contemporary art exhibition. Something called art in another place had got into a very important Western art centre.

If only I could get to know the art of those far-off lands. (you only have to make a journey to do it). My curator's eyes hit upon a new perspective. Till then Western museums had seemed totally hermetic to me. In fact they are. We can open a hole in their harmonic structure yet never make a clear passage.

It was, up to a point, the first combustion of liquid. Politically correct, top-heavy with defects, although exhilarating and impressive. Afterwards, things didn't go as quickly as we would have liked. At this moment we have to get stuck in and face necessities: the creation of a market. In order to present art and for artists to work properly. A paradox, no doubt. It isn't hypocrisy: for the system to function, we need collectors, critics, specialised magazines; words and terminologies have to be invented, information distributed, galleries and museums stimulated. Territory has to be enclosed, occupied, saturated. All of this before those artists from another place can merge with the ordinary mass of the world of contemporary art. In this exciting and worthy enterprise nobody is better than their neighbour. All of us go searching, trying to keep our hands as clean as possible.

With "Another Country", we don't want to maintain an attitude of deceptive herosim. We are still subject to the revealing contradictions of the political, economic, military, sanitary and cultural divide between North and South. We, and you from the Canaries, from Spain, and I, from the south of France, we that consider ourselves southerners though we belong to the north intimately know the pains caused by this divide that grows daily, insinuating its presence in our developed societies. I remember a comic illustration that had two South Africans saying, one black, another white, as they shook hands. "There is no more apartheid, no more blacks, no more whites... now there's only poor and rich".

However the distance between ourselves and those who offer exoticism is narrowing. The studies of ethnology, anthropology and of "distance" modify their relationship with the object of their concern. The relation with the "other" is