
PIERROT LE FOU

We were without a past, and the man of Avenue de Messine made us a gift of this past.
 Jean-Luc Godard, 1995



Malraux, Langlois and Godard had in common apprehending art by editing and knowing how to show it, each in his own way, like the most beautiful and most ancient dream of men.

Bernard Benoliel, Bernard Eisenschitz, Foreword, *Henri Langlois, Ecrits de cinéma*, La Cinémathèque française/Flammarion, 2014

Godard concerning *Pierrot*

Pierrot le fou was inspired by a novel by Lionel White. An American, a strange guy. An autodidact. He refused to sell the rights to the cinema. I don't know why. He'd never wanted anything to do with cinema. I went to see him; I bought the rights. The film has nothing to do with the novel, but you've got to admit that the Americans know how to make up a story. I like that a lot. You open a novel by [James] Hadley Chase, and you don't put it down again before the end. Greengrocers, cops, concierges... everyone over there knows how to make up stories.

Jean-Luc Godard, *Mon Pierrot le fou*

Langlois concerning Godard

I have great admiration for Godard, I love Godard, he's really an extraordinary gentleman, but I can't say that Chabrol is dead. It's not true. He's the classic example of the unrecognized artist. Even Godard is recognized in a way. He won the battle. In actual fact, seemingly... but still, people don't dare say that Godard has no personality. They keep trying to bury Godard and will continue to try. But every time people think he's finished, he'll already be off again. I mean that people are always late. And in this case, they are a year late. It was last year that they could have killed Godard, but when they tried, it was already too late: the situation was turned round by his last two films and by the reception he met with at the New York Festival.

Unpublished interview 'Le cinéma se meurt de tranches de vie', late 1964, *Henri Langlois, Ecrits de cinéma*, La Cinémathèque française/Flammarion, 2014

Godard concerning Langlois

Today I realize that this desire for doing cinema differently was based on a young, real practice at the time, yours, which spoke of the screen, which means that we, who wanted to succeed, like plants of chlorophyll, turning our backs on those who were making and forbidding the making of films otherwise than starting from the projector, i.e., from the exhibitor's booth.

Letter from Jean-Luc Godard to Henri Langlois, 8-9/7/1975

Pierrot le fou

France, 1965 – 109 minutes

Direction, script and dialogues: Jean-Luc Godard

Assistants director: Philippe Fourastié, Jean-Pierre Léaud

Author of the original work: Lionel White

Production: Rome-Paris Films, SNC - Société Nouvelle de Cinéma, Cinematografica Spa

Photography: Raoul Coutard

Music: Antoine Duhamel

Set: Pierre Guffroy

Editing: Françoise Colin

Cast: Jean-Paul Belmondo, Anna Karina, Dirk Sanders, Graziella Galvani, Raymond Devos, Aïcha Abidir, Samuel Fuller, Roger Dutoit, Hans Meyer, Jimmy Karoubi, Jean-Pierre Léaud, Pascal Aubier, Pierre Hanin, Christa Nell, Laszlo Szabo, Dominique Zardi, Alexis Poliakoff

The story of Pierrot le fou? I don't know. There must be one, but it is of no importance. A man loves a woman, what more do you want? His name is Ferdinand. Her name is Pierrot. Together, they run towards the sun, towards the sea, towards the heat; they go through fires of colour and cross beaches of melancholy; they jump from one car to another, from one book to another, from one mood to another. They live a passion, and without passion one does not live. One drags along. He loves her so she gets bored. She follows someone else; he kills her; he kills himself; everything explodes. Yes, it's something like that, Pierrot le fou. Something that explodes. Something red and blue, quite beautiful, quite tragic, quite funny, and which dilates your heart and fights its way into your eyes and ears. Serious people loathe it. It's an anarchistic film, they say. Of course. Banned, on this account, for those under 18. Doubtless that, over 18, there's nothing more to fear? The glue is dry, no more question of becoming unstuck? O stupidity of censorship! Serious people loathe Godard.

Françoise Giroud (*L'Express*, 8/11/1965, excerpt)

***Pierrot le fou* was shot in Techniscope on Eastmancolor emulsion. The master, duplicated at the time, has disappeared. The internegative, having become unusable, was destroyed in 1990. A new duplication element was then made on reversal film, which is at the origin of the prints duplicated up until the present time. However, this element never reflected the qualities of the original work, especially as concerns the colorimetry. The restoration called for making a new negative, stemming from the 2K digitization of the camera negative, in which the original colours of the Eastmancolor are found again. As for the sound, the original magnetic elements having disappeared, a new negative was established from a sound positive of the time, respecting the original mono format. The film was restored by StudioCanal and La Cinémathèque française with the support of the Franco-American Cultural Fund (DGA- MPA -SACEM -WGA). The work was carried out at L.T.C., the original laboratory.**



Pierrot le fou, Jean-Luc Godard © Georges Pierre