



Malle's perpetual beginnings

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By: Melinda Camber Porter

Having completed his 13th and most puzzling film, *Black Moon*, Louis Malle is still a very young 40 year old. It is no coincidence, he says, that his recent films have all had adolescent heroes or heroines. It seems evident to anyone who has followed his development that he will never give up his restless searching, his self-questioning and his earnestness. Many of his "Nouvelle Vague" friends, with whom he made a startling entry into the cinema, have found a formula and have lived by it, Louis Malle regards each film as a new beginning and challenge.

"The more one goes on in life, the more the past becomes a burden. In my life and films. I have always tried to cut off from the past and start again. But each time, it requires greater effort. It is only by breaking with habit that one can get rid of all that is anecdotal. If not, you let a mask come between you and the reality of your situation. It is a protection, like clothes. But it is wonderful to be naked from time to time, and it's also a good idea to change one's clothes of context.

"I am very preoccupied by the idea of routine at the moment. And whenever I feel entrenched in habit I make an abrupt and often painful change. This is reflected in my life and in the sequence of my films. Each film coincides with a certain period of my list. I cannot make films on request. They have to come at the right psychological moment. I want to chart the moment where I find myself in my films, I am confused, like everyone, but a film is a method of getting rid of a nagging question and exorcising it on the screen. *Black Moon* was born out of a period of isolation in my country house. I used elements of my life, both dreams and waking, fact and fantasy.

There is an inter-penetration between my films and my life on every level. I choose actors and actresses because I like them or want to find out more about them. Often, when I make a film with amateurs, continue to be close friends with them afterwards. If like the way they have acted it is because they have entered my life through understanding my film."

Louis Malle's next project is a film on child prostitution set in the brothels of New Orleans at the beginning of the century. As in *Lacombe Lucien* (1973) and *Black Moon* (1975), he chooses a subject hemmed in by taboos. "Child prostitution is a difficult subject to treat because people don't like to think about it. But it has always existed and still exists. I will neither explain nor condemn it. In fact, I think that prostitution, with the financial element withdrawn, is a very attractive notion.

"In a sense, all creation is prostitution. One searches for things inside oneself to expose them in public. This posed a problem for me at first. To be without modesty is an asset and a virtue in making films. Often, I have felt that I was placing myself naked on a screen, and I was tempted to stop the film being shown."

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