

# Movie au hasard balthazar by robert bresson

[Entertainment](#), [Movie](#)



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Movies are representation of the social scenario of the contemporary period. Along with entertainment, these have various social, political and psychological perspectives attached to it. This paper is based on movie Au Hasard Balthazar by Robert Bresson. In his 1966 film, Robert Bresson, has focused primarily on his female character Marie, and her donkey Balthazar. The plot intertwines the fate of both these elements, until finally the symbolic connection between the two is established. While the donkey's fate is clear, we cannot be sure of Marie, beyond what we are told in the narrative.

A shy, farm girl in the French countryside, Marie follows what something of Maggie Tulliver's experience, suffering abuse from different people in her life, oscillating between lovers, finally deciding that she must accept fate, perhaps even rely on some sort of tragic occurrence to relieve her of her pain. This has been called narcissistic rage in literature terminology, and finds its sharpest embodiment in the character of Marie. She too faces the trauma of her parent's disgrace, because of her father's decision, a mother who stands by the father but ultimately sees the pointless agony of a self pride, and then poverty and loss.

The reason why women are presented in such terms, is as Laura Mulvey would say in her essay 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema', due to the unconscious of patriarchal society. In this preexisting fascination with the female object, phallocentrism depends on image of the castrated woman. Female symbolism speaks of castration and her lack produces the phallus as symbolic. It stands as a signifier to the male "other". It is thus the bearer of meaning, and not its maker. Women are bound by linguistic command to this

situation, a command imposed by man to carry out his fantasies and obsessions.

" The formulation surely owes something to Bresson's *Au Hasard, Balthazar*, whose literal ass here becomes a figurative bull-a creature whose portion of " spirituality" is earned in expressions of indiscriminate wrath and sexual irritability. " (Librach, 1992) There are two processes at work in cinema. One is the separation of erotic identity of the subject, the viewer, from the object, the character on screen. While for women, the way that other characters in the film look at her is the same as how viewers look at her, with the male, the viewer feels as though he is looking at the perfect mirror image of himself.

Thus Gerard with his leather jacket and his motorcycle, his display of authority, often through violence and abuse, seems the perfect embodiment of masculinity, someone that the heroine, simple by virtue of occupying screen space, must fall for in the end. It rests on the belief that each one of us essentially thinks of himself as a Gerard. While recent feminist studies would refute this and recent changes in cinema have tried to equate the two sexes on screen, the screen largely remains a sexual parameter due to its connection with the ego, something that greatly manifests sexuality.

The woman, however, is isolated, put on display and sexualized. This is what Mulvey terms the castration complex. In order for the woman to no longer be a threat because she lacks what men have, she must be glamorized into an object of desire, or fetish. Marie finds a consolation in the donkey. It has been presented as the other, against which Marie can understand the need

to sympathize and be pitied and loved. Marie is essentially a Christ figure, whose ultimate ideals find their embodiment in Balthazar.

Perhaps it is for this reason that the donkey's fate has been presented explicitly, while Marie's future remains in doubt. The perfect Christ must face explicit crucifixion. Marie might seem overtly tragic. This is somewhat due to Bresson's insistence on purity of emotion. In this manner, Balthazar is the perfect Bresson character. Covered with snow, we know that he is cold, his tail on fire, we know that he is scared, and finally finding peace and motionlessness among the sheep, we know that his end has come.

When three children baptize it; symbolism tells us here that there is a place for all creatures in the house of god. The town drunkard Arnold is shows compassion, despite his other crimes. All the characters in the village are essentially flawed. However, the film's religious imagery and minimal use of aesthetic detail makes it a powerful statement that highlights the barest of human emotions and thoughts. Reference: Librach, Ronald S. " The Last Temptation in Mean Streets and Raging Bull. " Literature/Film Quarterly 20. 1 (1992): 14+. Questia. Web. 11 May 2010.