

What is Polanski's worst film? Rosemary's....

by FRANK LIEBECK

Don't eat the chocolate mousse I told her. Don't spread your legs I told her. But would she listen? And so Rosemary had a baby.

Even if you haven't seen the movie by now you know the ending. So there's no sense in being cute about revealing it.

The Virgin Mary parallel is obvious. The film is very religious, because in creating Satan, the existence of God is also substantiated. God's presence is hinted at through the Pope's visit

to New York, and through the girl's childhood encounter with the nuns.

But all the religious and theo-

logical trimmings aside, it must be said that this is Roman Polanski's worst movie. Because what you are left with is an Alfred Hitchcock thriller, very well done, with all the Hollywood sparkle that accompanies such films. Knife In The Water, Repulsion, Cul-de-Sac, The Fearless Vampire Killers, were all extraordinary exercises, tales, while Rosemary's Baby is a safe box office attraction, or to put it more bluntly, a sell-out on Polanski's part to his art.

You really have seen Rosemary's Baby before; you just don't know it. You don't remember? Last time it was Cary Grant being plagued by a satanic group of spies, led by James Mason. Or was it a town terrorized by birds? The format is all the same. Ordinary people placed one day in an extraordinary situation, and we watch them cope with these events until the last frame. Polanski has fallen into this pattern. Where is the extra special world that is usually


created in a Polanski film? The atmosphere of conspiracy found in Rosemary's Baby is not enough to qualify for the isolated aura that he is best known for. The Vampire Killers was photographed in eastern Europe, with its softly rolling snow covered hills, with the texture of the snow as perfect as on a Christmas card. He meant it to be a fairy tale for children, and so it was, with its injection of evil as the spoiling influence on this post card world. Cul-de-Sac had a mad atmosphere - cruelty and suffering appearing as comedy. The castle by the sea, where the homosexual lives with his tart was offered as the background for this film. It was both hideous and profound, but such is life.

I can't resist the line that Polanski has sold his soul to the devil. Now that he has hit the box office bonanza and become one of the most sought after directors around, we shall pray that he will return to the use of cinema as art, and not merely

slick entertainment. Perhaps Cul-de-Sac will be re-released and critics and audiences alike will discover its genius and not succumb to its twisted sense of pain and humour. It seems strange that this technique was condoned in Bonnie and Clyde, and panned in Cul-de-Sac.

But back to Rosemary and her neighbours. Mia Farrow will probably win an Oscar, and that's nice, isn't it. Anybody who has a paint job done on her breasts deserves it.

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