

Montage, Militancy, Metaphysics: Chris Marker and André Bazin

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Abstract (E): This article focuses on the relationship between the work of André Bazin and Chris Marker from the late 1940s through to the late 1950s and beyond. The division between Bazin's 'Right Bank' affiliation with *Les Cahiers du Cinéma* on the one hand, and Marker's 'Left Bank' allegiances on the other, is called into question here as my argument seeks to muddy the waters of their conventional ideological separation across the river Seine. Working alliteratively through Marker's well-known talent for deft montage along with his militancy, I consider Bazin's praise for Marker's editing technique – in spite of famously expressing a preference elsewhere for the long take, and deep focus cinematography – and I address their political differences and convergences. Yet I also explore the rather more unexpected question of metaphysics in order to further emphasize a closer relationship between these two figures. I chart the emergence of an enduring spiritual bond between critic and filmmaker that surfaces first in Marker's writings for the left-wing Catholic journal *L'Esprit*, but that continues beyond Bazin's death, in Marker's two films made on the crest of the French New Wave: *Le Joli Mai* and *La Jetée*.

Abstract (F): Cet article traite du lien entre les œuvres d'André Bazin et de Chris Marker à partir de la fin des années 1940 jusqu'à la fin des années 1950 et au-delà. La distinction entre l'affiliation « rive droite » de Bazin avec *Les Cahiers du cinéma* d'une part, et, d'autre part, l'affiliation « rive gauche » de Marker est remise en question ici, dans la mesure où mon argumentaire cherche à brouiller les pistes de leur séparation idéologique conventionnelle. Avec un clin d'œil allitératif, creusant le talent bien connu de Marker pour un montage subtil ainsi que son militantisme, j'examine l'éloge de Bazin pour la technique de découpage de Marker – et ce, malgré sa préférence célèbre pour le plan séquence et le champ en profondeur – et j'aborde aussi leurs différences et ressemblances politiques. Enfin, je considère la question plus surprenante de la métaphysique, portant sur l'œuvre de Marker, et non celui de Bazin : un lien durable apparaît entre le critique et le cinéaste dans les écrits de Marker publiés dans la revue catholique de gauche *L'Esprit*, dont la ligne se prolongea au-delà de la mort de Bazin dans deux films que Marker réalisa au plus haut de la *nouvelle vague* : *Le Joli Mai* et *La Jetée*.

keywords: montage, militancy, metaphysics, New Wave, Left Bank, Right Bank, André Bazin

Article

The early years of Chris Marker's career as writer and filmmaker testify to a prolific output within a wider artistic context of intense aesthetic innovation and a tense socio-political climate characterized by Cold War anxieties, along with the stirrings of revolution. The formal choices that he makes in order to render his politicized filmmaking most effective have prompted a critical concern with his status as a "montage ace" (to coin Laura's designation of him thus in *Level 5* (1996)) and as a militant. In this article, I wish to add to these categories by attending to a spiritual dimension that is also apparent in his work but that is rarely singled out for comment. To this end, I focus on a selection of his films and writings from the 1950s through to the 1960s, in tandem with the work of one of his most famous respondents, André Bazin. Bazin had a special relationship with Marker and his work and in the 1950s this leading critic was one of Marker's greatest champions. J Dudley Andrew observes that Marker was present in Bazin's office at Travail et Culture at the discussions in the late 1940s of his friend Alain Resnais's recent documentary *Van Gogh* (1948) (Andrew 90). Their bond continues in print through Bazin's readings of Marker's early work and, after Bazin's death, through Marker's defence of Bazin's political mind against rebukes from Stalinists and Leninists (Marker cited in Andrew 137). Using their textual encounters as a basis from which to chart their correspondences and divergences, I want to proceed alliteratively here by focusing on questions of montage, militancy, and metaphysics as they relate both filmmaker and critic to one another. The question of metaphysics in particular suggests a profound connection between Bazin and Marker, which can be glimpsed in some of Marker's writings on film, but which surfaces most significantly through the filmmaker's rebirth on the crest of the new wave in 1962.

Spiritual Beginnings: Bazin's Ontological Realism

In a special issue devoted to the new wave, published by *Les Cahiers du cinéma* in 1962, a chronological list of dates for the new cinema works back to 1945, and its founding text is André Bazin's signal essay "Ontologie de l'image photographique" (*Les Cahiers du cinéma*, December 1962). For Bazin, writing in 1945, the very being of cinema is rooted famously in photography. The photograph, like the ancient Egyptian process of mummification, which he links to the origins of statuary, is a form of preservation that is directed against death. To photograph someone is not to overcome their literal death, according to Bazin, but to save them from a second spiritual death. Photography hereby embalms a moment in time. As a logical extension of this, Bazin understands filmic images to capture temporal duration and to mummify change (Bazin 2002: 9-17). The spiritual survival of the photographic subject after their inevitable physical death has a religious association for Bazin. The one image that accompanies "Ontologie de l'image photographique" is of the Turin shroud (ibid: 15). The imprint of Christ on the holy shroud serves to illustrate how a material substance is

impressed upon by an indexical trace. Bazin's faith in the mummified endurance of the photographed or filmed subject thus lies at the heart of his definition of ontological realism, which is expanded further in cinematic terms as his work progresses.

Although this ontological argument runs through the entirety of his work, "Ontologie de l'image photographique" was Bazin's only in-depth exploration of the photographic image. One of the reasons why his subsequent focus shifted towards cinema without recourse to further discussion of the photograph is to be found in a later essay, "Montage interdit", first published in *Les Cahiers du cinéma* in 1953. While the title may suggest a total interdiction on montage – its capacity to divide up the reality recorded and to reconstruct it creatively in the editing room – Bazin's argument is subtler. Bazin favours duration and preservation of the space-time continuum over its dissection where relevant to the subjects of particular films. Certain shots – the long-take or the sequence shot – permit sustained contact with the space-time continuum of what is filmed. In Bazin's view, to break up the continuity and simultaneity of observation permitted in such shots through recourse to montage would be to weaken the force of the film. Bazin contrasts the use of such contrasting techniques as they appear in films by Lamorisse, Flaherty, Welles, Chaplin and Hitchcock, noting their strengths and weaknesses. Bazin's interest in duration also constitutes the Bergsonian strand of his work, registered most explicitly in his reading of Henri-Georges Clouzot's *Le Mystère Picasso* (1956) ("Un film bergsonien: *Le Mystère Picasso*"), in which we see paintings by the artist unfold, or sometimes be erased, before our eyes while the camera is focused largely in duration shots on the canvas. Bergson is to be found in Bazin's belief in the rather more intuitive grasp of the universe in flux that is gained by avoiding the tendency of dividing the world up into fragments. The spiritual survival of the photographed subject that was first made apparent in Bazin's 1945 essay now becomes a facet of a broader cinematic ontological realism, which focuses attention on capturing the flow of time through the image the better to forge a correspondence between the world and the beyond. Although far from the exclusive focus of Bazin's film criticism and theory, he did, as Dudley Andrew points out, concentrate "to a remarkable extent on films with a religious dimension" (Andrew 23). Marker might be thought to stand apart from this kind of filmmaking in more ways than one, and his pervasive interest in montage suggests a rather more continuous use of this technique than Bazin's argument in "Montage interdit" advocates. Indeed, Marker's desire to interpret the world through film, rather than just lay it bare, has led critics to note a distance between his work and that of Bazin (Alpigiano 26). While it is useful to note this division here, the apparent difference between their religious and ideological positions is only one facet of a deeper and more complex relationship between Bazin and Marker.

For Antoine de Baecque, who writes meticulously about the influence the co-founder of *Les Cahiers du cinéma* had on the editorial board's beliefs, the foundation of Bazin's definition of ontological

realism places a spiritual position at their very core, and opposes the journal to Marxist and Surrealist oriented reviews (De Baecque 83). De Baecque cites an indirect exchange between Bazin and Marker in *Cahiers* in consecutive issues in 1951, which serves to crystallize positions that divide across spiritual and political lines. Bazin's article on Bresson's style in *Journal d'un curé de campagne* (1951) is a key piece in working through his spiritual stance, and his reading of the film understands it to take us on a journey through the Stations of the Cross (Bazin, "Le Journal d'un curé de campagne" 14). Less by way of a direct response, but certainly seeing access to another reality very differently from the way in which Bazin does, Marker in a subsequent special issue of *Cahiers* on German cinema could not be more contrasting (Marker, "Siegfried et les Argousins" 4-11). In "Siegfried et les Argousins", Marker comments at length on the relative indifference that German cinema had been shown after the war, and compares this with the example of Italy, clearly referring to *Cahiers* which had not only commented at length on neo-realist films, but had followed the spiritual bent of Bazin. Praising the realism of the East German cinema, Marker criticizes the spiritual symbolism of the West, casting it as a refusal to see the real. As De Baecque points out, he turns Bazin's argument inside out, seeing religion here as a mask placed over the real, rather than the real as point of connection to the beyond. This difference is indicative for De Baecque of the deeper Marxist fault-lines that form such a strong point of debate in the ensuing arguments exchanged between Left and Right Bank filmmakers of the new wave (De Baecque 84). The other reality that replaces the spiritual beyond is politically aligned with the ideological thrust that will overcome *Cahiers* in the backlash against Bazin sometime after his death in the late 1960s and 1970s. However, while the spiritual and political division between Bazin and Marker is palpable and has been articulated persuasively by critics, I want to complicate such a vision of their separation here and bring the two closer together. Bazin's own writing facilitates such proximal contact, since he produces several significant articles in the 1950s on Marker's early films. Bazin's readings forge relations between materiality and a spiritual dimension by focusing on the very technique that he approached critically in "Montage interdit". It is through Bazin's praise of Marker's use of montage that we begin to see how the two figures are closer than they at first seem.

Bazin on Marker

In addition to writing a warm review of Marker's book *Giraudoux par lui-même* for *Esprit* (Bazin 1952), Bazin wrote a series of articles for *France-Observateur* on Marker's films in the 1950s, dating back to the early collaboration with Resnais on *Les Statues meurent aussi* (1950-1953). Like several of Marker's films in these early years, this one was banned upon completion, and relegated to a shadow zone, to join what Chris Darke aptly terms the works of Marker's lost period (Darke 48). In Bazin's first article, "Les Films meurent aussi" of 1957, death by censorship is his focus and he comments on the lengthy saga of this film's plight. He laments the fact that the most dazzling parts are in the banned section, in which he singles out Marker's "éblouissante analyse de la situation spirituelle de l'homme

noir à travers le monde” (Bazin, “Les Films meurent aussi” 19). He also comments that this is where the filmmakers have used montage in a brilliant but new way: “tout à la fois poétique et intellectuelle, jouant simultanément du choc de la beauté des images, et de la conflagration de leur sens, cependant que le texte intervient comme la main qui entretouche les silex (ibid).” The figure of speech that designates the impact of text on image is materialist and suggests that it is through the collision of the two – the text striking the beauty of the images and the conflagration of their meaning – that the spiritual situation referred to above is crafted. This vision of a material process that provides access to the spiritual, links Bazin’s criticism to Marker’s films in the years to come.

Bazin develops his observations regarding montage in articles on two subsequent films of the 1950s. Writing about *Dimanche à Pékin* (1956) months later, he describes this short as a perfectly cut diamond (“diamant exactement taillé”), which leaves us in a state of wonderment (Bazin, “*Sur les routes*” 19). Likening the film to Jean Vigo’s definition of a documented point of view in *A propos de Nice* (1930), Bazin writes in praise of Marker’s specific style of montage once again. He explains that the threefold combination of the images, their relation to one another, and their relation to the commentary lends another dimension to the screen. As Bazin argues, the dialectical connection between commentary and image is crucial to the making and the impact of Marker’s work and he is different from those directors who add a commentary once the image track is complete. Again, Bazin uses a material image to describe the way in which text and visuals interrelate: “le texte vient mordre sur elles comme l’acier de la molette sur le silex pour en arracher la lumière” (ibid). This poetic image suggests that the text bites into the image as one might strike up a cigarette lighter: the generation of ethereal light essential to cinema is dependent on material contact. In a manner that pre-empts his ultimate discussion of Marker’s montage technique, he speaks of the raw material (“matière originelle”) of the work being the idea, which organizes the montage of images, creates the text, and presides over the synthesis of the two.

Finally, a year later, and a month before his death, Bazin refines his praise of montage still further after viewing *Lettre de Sibérie* (1958). This article is the most widely cited and well known in Marker criticism. In the first instance Bazin revisits *Dimanche à Pékin* and explains that in spite of its excellence, it left people hungry for more, since the form of the short film was insufficient for such a vast subject (Bazin, “*Lettre de Sibérie*” 179). The feature length of this subsequent film is more fitting, in Bazin’s view. Bazin orients our attention first to the soundtrack and the intelligence of the commentary, which then leads us to the images. The raw material (“matière première”) is now described as intelligence, its immediate expression the spoken word, and the image is said to come in third place in relation to this verbal intelligence (ibid 180). Bazin coins the term “horizontal montage” to speak of the way in which filmic connections move from ear to eye, creating a new relation to space and time. The aural beauty through which the mind subsequently gains access to the image works in

the reverse direction of traditional montage, which proceeds along the length of the film reel, shot by shot: “Ici, l’image ne renvoie pas à ce qui la précède ou à ce qui la suit, mais latéralement en quelque sorte à ce qui en est dit (ibid).” Adapting his description of a documented point of view in relation to Marker’s preceding film, he now describes this work as “un essai documenté par le film” (ibid). This *essay* is what he has glimpsed from the outset of his comments on Marker’s documentaries of this period, including the collaboration with Resnais.

Throughout the time in which Bazin registered his admiration for Marker’s work, and for the filmmaker’s privileged attention to the very technique of montage that he cautioned against elsewhere, Marker was also writing in addition to making films. It is by attending to a strand of Marker’s written output in these years that we perceive a striking relationship to Bazin’s spiritual beliefs that Marker elsewhere seemed to refute.

Marker’s writings

Les Cahiers du cinéma features several articles by Marker during the early 1950s, which range from erudite, although brief, film reviews to more extended pieces on film in Mexico and Hollywood. *Cahiers* was not, however, Marker’s main outlet for his writings and journalism in these years; it was, rather, the journal *Esprit* that published much of his material in the late 1940s and 1950s. Marker’s writings for *Esprit* are numerous and wide-ranging – he published over sixty five articles of varying length – but all fall in line with the left-wing Catholic stance of the journal, and are critical of the abuses of politics and religion across a broad spectrum of issues. Marker turns his attention to film on a number of occasions, devoting detailed articles to works as different as Robert Montgomery’s *The Lady in the Lake* (1947), and Elia Kazan’s *On the Waterfront* (1954). A couple of pieces register the establishment of the IDHEC and one in particular congratulates a student at the Sorbonne, Mlle Poncet, under the tutelage of filmologist Étienne Souriau, for having pursued a thesis on cartoons (although a further article, based on a response from Resnais to the first, questions why Marker omitted Gérald Mc Boing-Boing from his list of additional cartoons to those which Mlle Poncet discussed). In another contribution, he praises the Cinémathèque française and the irreplaceable services that Henri Langlois has done for cinema and audiences alike. And in an article on women students at a high school he is visibly impressed by the sensibilities for cinema that they reveal through a written exercise that asks them to imagine making Corneille’s *Horace* into a film. Within this range of work on film it is, however, in two lengthy articles that the connection between cinema and a spiritual dimension is registered most extensively. While Marker’s and Bazin’s views seemingly divided across the Seine in *Cahiers* on the basis of a tension between religion, politics, and the real, they come much closer in a couple of articles Marker wrote for *Esprit* in the early 1950s. Indeed, Marker writes in praise of the very mysteries that his *Cahiers* piece on German cinema refuses with

good reason, less in support of orthodox religion than in tune with, and wholly open to, the spiritual aspects of the films themselves.

Marker wrote extended meditations on Jean Cocteau's *Orphée* (1950) in 1950 and Carl Theodor Dreyer's *La Passion de Jeanne d'Arc* (1928) in 1952. In his article on *Orphée*, Marker criticizes those who doubt the cinema's capacity for revelation, noting that from mount Sinai to Paramount, the only difference is a change of public. He speaks of a redoubled realism in this film and he talks about the laws of the marvellous world of which Cocteau is the architect. He writes: "Partout cette recherche du concret, du donné, de cette réalité pauvre qui n'est pas substantiellement différente de la réalité des âmes, de la mort, qui lui est proche et étrangère comme l'endroit et l'envers d'un tissu" (Marker, *Orphée* 696). For Marker, Cocteau's film recounts its inner spiritual journey in material terms, explores subjective, interior states through aspects of the physical world, and places us at the meeting point of time and eternity in its bridging of the dimension of myth and the more contemporary setting. Writing at this point in 1950, he states that he sees only one film that is comparable to *Orphée* in the history of cinema – Carl Theodor Dreyer's *Vampyr* (1932) through what he terms its fleshed out metaphysics ("métaphysique incarnée"). Two years later, the rediscovery of a print of Dreyer's *La Passion de Jeanne d'Arc* causes Marker to revise this view (Marker, "*La Passion de Jeanne d'Arc*").

The revelatory capacity of cinema that Marker indicated in his piece on Cocteau, its ability to probe the soul and to map it onto the flip side of materiality, appears differently in the later piece on Dreyer. Although praising the capacities of panchromatic film for the portrayal of flesh, tears and the glint of Renée Maria Falconetti's eyes, he focuses on the access that this fleshed out vision provides to the soul. He thanks Dreyer the protestant for having given this beauty to one of *our* saints, and says that the drama of the film lies in the journey of a being towards the salvation of their soul, fought out through a cinematographically specific play of space and time. Citing a line from Racine's second preface to *Bajazet*, which will resurface in 1982 as an epigraph to the French version of *Sans Soleil*, Marker notes how the spatial and temporal play of proximity and distance at work between the spectator and characters on screen relates us to a grammar of time. He declares that it is misguided only to see Dreyer's use of close-ups as part of a psychological realist approach, and even more so an exercise in style. Rather, this spatial play in the service of a grammar of time, along with neutral décor and the absence of make-up and elaborate costumes work towards the same goal, which for Marker is to write a film in the present of eternity. Through his vocabulary in these articles, a mystical strand is discernibly entwined with his interests in the plastic or material aspects of film and the image, in addition to his politics. But rather than see these pieces as isolated moments in his writings that appear only as a function of what he is writing on, and the journal he is writing for, this facet of his work survives beyond his writings of the early fifties, couples itself with the passion for montage and the

materialism that Bazin sees in Marker's films of this period, and re-emerges at a later date, after Bazin's death in November 1958.

Death and Rebirth

It is in Marker's films of 1962 that the quite disparate elements apparent in my discussion thus far come together: the spiritual and the material, the historic-political dimension and the eternal, the Bazinian interest in Bergsonian inspired duration, and the more restless cutting that Bazin comes to reassess in relation to a broader conception of montage praised as unique to Marker's work. Fittingly, 1962 is Marker's preferred starting point for his career, as he has sought to cast his works of the preceding decade as juvenilia unfit for public scrutiny (Marker, "Marker Mémoire" 78). Marker's self-declared date of re-birth is one that I wish to link to the question of resurrection and then to a heightened critical sense of morality as it appears in his films of this year, and relates back to Bazin. Although Bazin's interest in photography is restricted to his famous 1945 essay, Marker's films, as I have argued elsewhere, are closer to a Bazinian than a Deleuzian ontology of cinema through an originary and persistent challenge that they present to the always already moving image (Cooper 1-10). Here I want to pursue the question of how the two films of 1962 inaugurate an opening out of the Bazinian focus on mortality, spirit, and photography in "Ontologie de l'image photographique" – an opening out that is rooted in, but different from, Bazin's spiritual bent. And it is through an interest in duration as much as the stoppage of time that Marker incarnates these very possibilities.

La Jetée (1962) famously projects photographs into the movies, but has filmic inter-texts as various as *Battleship Potemkin* (1925), *Vertigo* (1958), and *L'Année dernière à Marienbad* (1961), to name but the most obvious. The material, political, and historical resonance of the photo-roman is apparent from the outset. Marker's filmic debts suggest a combined relation to Soviet montage, along with its blend of politics, history, and revolution; to the Resnais of *Marienbad* whose statuesque poses recall photographic stasis at times; and to Hitchcock, one of many directors, of course, key to the new wave more broadly. The Palais de Chaillot's underground passages form the space for the time-travel experiments of *La Jetée*, their German whispers bringing with them a history of association with occupation and resistance, along with a happier connection to the broader history of the Chaillot site which was later to house the Cinémathèque Française for a time, and to preserve the history of French cinema. Closer to the present, the destruction of Paris actualizes palpable fears of the Cuban missile crisis. *La Jetée*'s almost exclusive use of photographs, its opening focus on the life of the child and his death as a man, align form and subject-matter, with a concern with mortal fragility that runs throughout Marker's work. But this photo-roman clings to spiritual in addition to physical life.

The choral music that plays intermittently throughout the film is provided by the choir of the Russian Cathedral of Paris and sets a poignant minor key from the opening sequence onwards. The choir sings Piotr Goncharov's "Krestu Tvoyemu" (Tropaire en l'honneur de la Sainte Croix/Troparion to the Holy Cross): "Before Thy Cross we bow down in veneration, O our Master, and Thy holy Resurrection we glorify". Thus they introduce echoes of the crucifixion that will linger throughout, even as the soundtrack diversifies. Coupled with this, we are told by the commentary that "[s]e réveiller dans un autre temps, c'était naître une seconde fois – adulte." As I have argued elsewhere, the difficulty of being reborn as a man exchanges the miracle of religion for that of science: resurrection – that of Lazarus or Christ – is rewritten as re-birth through time travel (Cooper 50). However, while Marker's time travel secularizes the miraculous possibilities of the man's re-birth, subsequent death, and looped temporal structure of eternal return, it never entirely loses a connection to the spiritual dimension, and this echoes through to the Russian choral music that accompanies his death at the end.

La Jetée's sister film of 1962, released in 1963, remains on the surface of Paris, rather than plunging into its subterranean depths. *Le Joli Mai* was co-directed with Pierre Lhomme in May 1962, the first May after the signing of the Evian accords to end the Algerian war. The memory of the war haunts the present time of filming (as indeed it does in *La Jetée* in experiments akin to torture) and this memory emerges in the film as part of the unconscious of everyday life that its interrogative style seeks to bring out. Indebted to changes in camera technology as well as the emergence of *cinéma vérité* and direct cinema, the crew takes to the streets to interview people to ask them about their hopes and dreams, their awareness of socio-political events, and their relations to other people. With only a few exceptions, *Le Joli Mai* shows how unknowing or uncaring these individuals are about what lies beyond their own immediate concerns, and how easily they position themselves as the point of origin for the unfolding of time, memory, and history without thinking of others. Occasionally, though, thinking of others also emerges as a possible problem when it leads to self-effacement, and *Le Joli Mai* strives for a rather utopian balance between thinking too much about others and not enough.

The film clearly marks its awareness of its place in recent French cinematic history. For Jean-Luc Alpigiano, Marker's work is closest to that of Jean Rouch at this point in his career (Alpigiano 27). Gesturing back to *Chronique d'un été* (1960), there are cameo appearances from Morin and Rouch, but Resnais and Varda also appear fleetingly, as do Godard and Rivette. Of the many people that they interview, there are some who are taken very seriously indeed: victims of prejudice and colonial oppression, notably a black African student and a young Algerian man, but also a priest who converted to communism. As is suggested by the seriousness with which this latter man's testimony is treated, the film does not uphold a belief in the institution of the church, and listens attentively to his communist conversion, but it does also build contrastingly on the connection to the spiritual resonance of *La Jetée*. Through grounded observation and by listening to the people it interviews, the film is

rooted in a connection to the real that respects the time-space continuum of many of its encounters in addition to intermingling some faster paced montage, photographic stills, and time-lapse cinematography towards the end. For the first time since its brief appearance in *Cuba Si!* (1961) Marker uses direct footage of people talking. Even when the synchronous relation between the person talking (or singing) and their image is disrupted by cuts to other images or a smoother transition to another sequence, continuity of their story is respected by preserving their voice over the different images. Regardless of what the various figures say, they are filmed at length – usually in a long take or sequence shot. Thus, quite different from the ceaseless restlessness of montage cutting, and the succession of photographs in *La Jetée*, linked by straight cuts and dissolves, the duration of the scenes we witness is valorized. In this, a Bazinian resonance becomes apparent, albeit distinct from *La Jetée*'s exploration of a secularized resurrection of one man in time.

We shift in *Le Joli Mai* from a concern with mortality and spiritual survival, to morality, as a different kind of resurrection takes place here through film – one that is founded in its encounters and in its critical drive towards altruism. To an extent, such a view is partially discernible in the Bazinian sense that aesthetic choices betray a worldview that is moral, spiritual, or phenomenological. It is also apparent in Godard's observation, when talking about *Hiroshima mon amour* in 1959, that tracking shots are a moral affair (Godard et al 5). Yet Marker goes further than both positions, by connecting with duration to offer a filmic articulation of a series of encounters here that re-cast a relation to the spirit of Bazin's ontology. While still questioning what film is and what it can do, these encounters relocate the response in interrogative moral terms, through relations to others, rather than focusing on the more solitary death and spiritual rebirth of *La Jetée*'s contention with mortality.

After these two films of 1962 based in Paris, Marker's subsequent film, *Le Mystère Koumiko* (1965), takes us to Tokyo and pays playful homage to the new wave. Marker the montage ace and militant may generally be more widely discussed than Marker the metaphysician, but these varied aspects of this director owe a great deal to tacit and explicit dialogues between his work and that of Bazin. Eschewing a complete embrace of orthodox religion, but preserving the fascination of some of its mystical moments, Marker's preferred starting point for the rest of his career is one in which the material and the spiritual, mortality and morality collide in highly generative ways. Marker's regeneration through the new wave posits this period as pivotal to the future directions that he will take, and his Bazinian-inspired concerns live on throughout his oeuvre, without ever fully containing or constraining his own protean spirit.

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