

The Game of the Chosen

by Guylain Desnoues

A screen split in two. On the left, a speaker in front of a green screen. “Hello. My name is Alain Galli. I am the representative from a small town...” On the right, the same speaker in profile with a make-up table in the background. It is funny. The man stammers, repeats himself, takes breaks between two takes... Is the interview of a politician made to look ridiculous by the effects of skillful editing? It is not clear.

The green screen evokes the cinema and its special effects, the make-up table as well. Moreover, the person asking the question is not a journalist but the film maker himself. So, what is it? Reality or fiction? Documentary or *mise en scene*? Politician or actor?

All of this at the same time, as the powerful apparatus deploys its effects. The two unchanging axes of the camera, the confrontation of two points of view, create a gap and a distance. Even the space of the film, the questions it asks, upon what the film asks us to reflect.

First, a silhouette. The representative is a beginner and he plays the role that one expects from an elected official. He aims to be a “type” in the theatrical sense. Feeling around, during retakes, he outlines the contours of his character and searches to enter into that costume. This creates a distance between the man and the function.

Ambitious, the representative grasps the opportunity to practice in front of the camera. It is a baptism by fire and risks to be ridiculous. The director leads the dance but the representative wants to seduce. There is a distance between being manipulated and wanting to manipulate.

The representative has nothing special to say, but answers every question, even the most odd— “And what about God?”. He knows that his tone means more than the message. There is a distance between his conviction and political convictions, and in that sense the intention is universal, beyond the partisan rhetoric.

And however, it is about politics, [because the representative would not be scornful without contempt for the people who chose him to represent them]. The representative indulges himself in the democratic exercise, essential in our society of information and technology. There is a distance between the awkward sincerity of a novice and the typical political rhetoric induced by the media.

Because there is an honesty of apparatus? The dispositif and the editing strongly suggest the same intention, that of a desire to control. But here the two expose each other (the technical pauses, the make-up retouches, the snippets of conversation between the director and the representative...) This is not a deceitful neutrality but a constant willingness to interrogate the viewer.

The representative takes himself seriously and that is what makes him funny. He plays the game, until it becomes masochistic, and that is what makes him touching.

The Chosen cuts, reveals, and discomposes. It invites us to measure the distance between that which one wants to show and that which one gives us to see. It is a game of "reflection" in total, like the mirror in the corner suggests by metonymy.