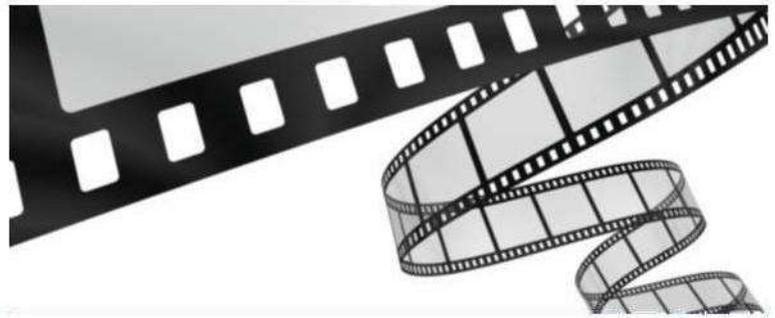


CHELMSFORD FILM CLUB

An Independent film society based in Chelmsford

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IN THE HOUSE

(Dans la maison)

France 2012

Directed by

François Ozon

Screenplay by

François Ozon, freely adapted from a play by

Juan Mayorga

Photographed by

Jerôme Almeras

CAST

Germain

Fabrice Luchini

Jeanne

Kristin Scott-Thomas

Claude

Ernst Umhauer

The story of a handsome young man being introduced into a middle-class home which he disrupts and then ultimately destroys through his seduction of members of the household immediately calls to mind Pasolini's *Theorem*, starring Terence Stamp, which has, coincidentally, recently been re-released. But where Pasolini's film has a strong political message, Ozon uses the idea to explore the art of storytelling and the nature of fiction.

Claude is a gifted 16 year old pupil who fascinates his literature teacher, Germain, with the accounts he writes about the home-life of his classmate, Rapha. Germain is both shocked and delighted by his student's talents and revelations and becomes absorbed by his chronicles of his friend's family life. Appreciation of a developing literary talent soon becomes an obsession and Germain begins giving him extra lessons and ultimately compromises himself by stealing a maths exam paper for him in advance of the exam. Germain's wife Jeanne, who also reads the assignments, takes a more detached view of the young man's talents.

Claude is emboldened by his teacher's praise and begins to manipulate events in the household he is describing, seemingly so as to sustain his audience's interest. Gradually the distinction between life and literature starts to blur and even take on a slightly sinister note as Claude starts to take an erotic interest in his friend's mother. Germain becomes a voyeur as well as mentor in the project and finds himself increasingly fascinated by the narrative which is being imposed on others' lives.

This merging of the literary imagination and reality is not new to Ozon. It is also the theme of his earlier film *Swimming Pool*, starring Charlotte Rampling, which the club showed about 5 years ago. Here a crime novelist, supposedly seeking relaxation and inspiration for her next novel, becomes involved in a crime committed by her daughter and the audience has difficulty in working out what is true and what is going on in the author's head. The film's fascination lies in this very ambiguity.

In the House is Ozon's 13th feature film and close to being his best. The title is tantalisingly ambiguous, referring both one and the same time to Claude's infiltration into other people's lives, including, ultimately into that of his teacher, and also to Henry James' description in his preface to *Portrait of a Lady* of the 'house of fiction' and its million windows which need to be penetrated. And, of course, James was an enormous admirer of Flaubert after whom the school in the film is

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named. There is, however, a perhaps more pertinent allusion. Try to think of another film featuring a bored individual who starts to impose narratives on other people's lives and if a certain shot at the end of *In the House* reminds you just a little bit of that other masterpiece of cinema, which shows how the fictional imagination can develop a life of its own, I am sure you are not mistaken.

Jill Dimmock

- **DON'T FORGET TO BUY YOUR TICKETS FOR THE QUIZ NIGHT ON FRIDAY 29TH NOVEMBER AT MOULSHAM MILL. TICKETS FROM SALLY - £5**
- Based on the feedback slips returned on the night, you rated *Like someone in Love*, screened on Tuesday 24th September, 3.67 stars out of 5. Please visit the current season page at <http://www.chelmsford-filmclub.co.uk> to read all the feedback comments.
- You can still provide feedback on this, or any other film, by visiting the discussions page (<http://www.chelmsford-filmclub.co.uk/discussion/>).
- **NB Brentwood Arts Cinema Club is screening both parts of Eisenstein's *Ivan the Terrible* on Sunday 17th November starting at 7.30. This will be in the United Reformed Church Hall, New Road, Brentwood, opposite the library at the back of the Baytree Centre.**

Our next presentation:

Beyond the Hills will be shown on Thursday 24th October, starting at 8:00pm.