

SCENARIO OF "VIVRE SA VIE"

by Jean-Luc Godard

This is a story of Nana S., a young girl from the provinces who has been living in Paris for some time.

She is a salesgirl in a record shop.

My film is going to follow her for a period of five to six months, perhaps less, perhaps more; I don't exactly know yet.

It is not a question of spying on her (Reichenbach), trapping her (Bresson), nor of surprising her (Rouch), but simply following her; nothing more than to be good and just (Rossellini).

The few episodes in her life which I am going to film are very likely of little interest to others, but most important to Nana S.

Indeed, Nana, like the song in Max Ophuls LOLA MONTES, is gracious, which means that she has grace and will be able to safeguard her soul while selling her body.

In other words, VIVRE SA VIE will prove Montaigne's saying that you have to give yourself to others and not only to yourself.

Over this six months' period, Nana first becomes an amateur prostitute and then a professional one. The film will consist of approximately twenty episodes concerning Nana's most important experiences during these six months, and it will do so without making any a priori attempt to justify or to blame.

Basically, I would like to show what modern philosophy calls existentialism as opposed to essence. However, thanks to cinema which can demonstrate that the two are not really in opposition to each other at all, I want to prove that existentialism pre-supposes essence, and vice-versa, and that this in itself is something quite beautiful.

The film opens up inside a coffee house somewhere in the section of Vaugirard. Paul and Nana are talking while seated at the counter. Since the film is rather sad, Nana, in line with Renoir's beloved law of contrast, is often gay.

Paul is an unsuccessful young journalist. We gather from their conversation that Paul and Nana see each other quite often. They have a small son but since they are always very broke, they have placed the child in custody with a friend. And though Nana still loves Paul, she feels a need for a change.

We see Nana working at the shop.

Later, she tries to borrow a few thousand

francs to pay her rent but is unsuccessful.

In the evening, her landlady refuses her entry into her apartment unless she first pays the back rent.

Nana goes out for the night, and since she doesn't feel like seeing Paul, she spends her last few francs by going to a movie — Dreyer's JOAN OF ARC.

The following day, she is confronted with the same problems: where to find the money to pay her rent. Day at the record shop. In the evening, Nana walks the streets for the first time in her life. Along the Champs-Elysee. On the rue Washington, a man accosts her and looks her up and down, then goes away, but comes back again. He asks her: "Mind if I come along with you?" This is a misunderstanding but Nana automatically says yes. They walk. He turns to her and says: "Is this it?" Nana looks up and sees the neon sign which says "Hotel." She repeats yes. The scene ends with a close-up of Nana and the man in an embrace as Nana struggles to avoid being kissed on the lips.

Nana meets Josiane, an old friend, on the boulevards. Josiane used to be a ticket puncher on the Metro, now she is a streetwalker at Reaumur Sebastopol. They talk about various things, then Nana accompanies Josiane to her work.

Josiane introduces Nana to Raoul in a bar. While they stand there playing the pin-ball machine, a police raid takes place. Nana runs away. The record shop again. Nana goes out to lunch in a small restaurant. While there, she writes a letter to a woman in the south of France whose address had been given to her by Josiane. Suddenly, Raoul turns up. He tells her it would be better for her to stay in Paris, that she could make more money. Nana accepts his offer. As they walk back to the record shop, Nana asks him questions: "Do you have to register somewhere?" "What time do you have to get up?" etc. etc . . .

We see Nana spending an ordinary day as a prostitute.

We also see her with Raoul. They go to a friend's bistro together where Nana does a crazy new dance, tantalizing a very young man who is playing the pin-ball machine.

We see her trying to break away from Raoul. Then we see Raoul selling her to another pimp, and finally we see Nana being killed by Raoul.