This shift in Graham's aesthetic concerns had many sources. Those most often cited are the pace of the growth in her company beginning in 1938 and her growing interest in nonlinear forms of narrative, especially those associated with the theatrical traditions of the Far East. But neither can account for the utter displacement of social themes by previous or mythic ones. To explain this, one must look to the broader cultural context of the period, and specifically to the McCarthyite climate of fear that muted the expression of radical ideas or buried them in codes, ostensibly apolitical but understood by those in the know. Thus, two of choreographer José Limón's seminal works of these years—The Moor's Pavane (1949) and The Traitor (1954)—turned on the theme of betrayal, although their narratives derived, respectively, from Shakespeare's Othello and Judas's betrayal of Jesus in the Gospels. Just as Cunningham drew a curtain of impenetrability across his works, so Graham in hers created an inner landscape of the mind in which sex, psychology, myth—the postwar imaginary, one might say—saturated the need for universals created by the loss of socialism's generalizing ideology. As Clytemnestra (1958), the last of her great theater pieces, it was the very end of the tragedy, from the sacrifice of her daughter, Iphigenia, to the slaying of her husband, Agamemnon, are relieved as memory, so in all the works of the postwar period the accords an outside time and place in the subjective realm of the imagination.

Graham's journey from the engagement of radical politics to the disengagement of radical individualism was easily the most remarkable lesson of the BAM season. The reasons for this are twofold: the presence of so many works from the critical decades of Graham's career, and the success of the centennial artistic advisors—Pearl Lang, Ethel Butler, Jane Dudley, Stuart Hodes, Peggy Lyman and Sophie Maslow—in making those works come alive. Graham's style changed over the years, and it is a measure of the achievement of these company veterans that her idioms, beginning with the "pre-historic" technique of early works like Chronicle, were rendered with commitment and stylistic fidelity. Thus, one can only assume that the misguided decision to recast and add men to the cast of Celebration was made not by the veterans who restaged it but by the company's current artistic director, Ronald Protas.

With the women now in backless dresses and the newly added men in harem trousers by Donna Karan, the accent is on sex rather than sisterhood, glamour rather than simplicity. This new version of Celebration, doubtless intended to appeal to the yuppie audience courted in recent years by the company's management, is nothing less than a travesty of the original.

The contrast between public glamour and private nudity dramatized by the walkout of the Graham dancers in not unique to the Graham company but reflects the declining public for mainstream forms of dance. The reasons for this are too complicated to analyze here: Suffice it to say that changing tastes in dance is not the solution. As the plight of the dancers revealed all too clearly, the irony of "Radical Graham" was that its radicalism remained confined to the stage.

**Films.**

**STUART KLAYANS**

Three Colors: Red

Like Prospero drowning his book, our modern-day wizard has gone out with a splash. A mutated splash: Although Krzysztof Kieslowski's Red works up to a full-scale tempest at sea, the heart of its story lies in an old man's act of abnegation. It's something that can be managed quietly, both for the character in the film and for Kieslowski himself, who claims that Red—the final part of his magnum opus Three Colors—his last film, period.

The old man in the movie, a one-time judge in Geneva (Jean-Louis Trintignant), lives in isolation (if not fullProsperian exile) because of a sexual betrayal long ago. Now he spends his days eavesdropping electronically on his neighbors' phone conversations. He knows all their sins and troubles but does not act on his knowledge, either to lend a hand or to prevent others from being hurt. He does not act because he knows; with the network of life spread before him, he sees he cannot touch even one string without setting the whole to jangling, perhaps disastrously. I think of the grieving angel who keeps popping up in Kieslowski's Decalogue series, witnessing the characters' downfall with mute, helpless understanding. I think, for that matter, of Kieslowski himself, who throughout his career has used sophisticated electronic equipment (not unlike the judge's) to track the intersections of people's lives.

Ever since his early feature films such as Camera Buff (1979) and Blind Chance (1982), Kieslowski has been a connoisseur of faultless coincidences, of missed connections and unforeseen consequences. Now, upon his retirement, his screen double appears before us in the form of a judge, who at last shuts off the eavesdropping machine, and allows life to proceed without his surveillance. When does he do so? Not, I'm afraid. Like Prospero, he does so at the moment of sending a young woman into the world.

Her name is Valentine, and she is embodied, more than played, by Irène Jacob. Her husbanded features are as mutable as a dream, as free of sharp edges; yet her physical presence is so strong that you can feel her tendons strain when she's at a ballet class, or sense her breath's force afterward when she pours a bottle of water. By profession, Valentine is a model, made insubstantial by the camera or a fashion show's runway, she is good for selling chewing gum or evening gowns. In her flesh, though, she is something else: a moral being, whose sense of right and wrong is as direct as her gait. I don't mean to say that Valentine is free of doubt. Worried over her teenage brother (a junkie) and harried by a boyfriend who is never home but always jealous, Valentine does not seem to know what to do about her situation, other than to hold on. But when, by Kieslowskian chance, she injures a stray dog, she does not hesitate. She scoops it up in her arms, lays it in her car and drives off to find the owner. When he turns out to be the judge—a man who no longer wants to take part in the world—Valentine doesn't hesitate about him, either. She muscles her way into his path.

Pared down to its essence, Red consists of three complex, extended dialogues between Valentine and the judge. During the first, she discovers his eavesdropping, monologues with him and eventually lays bare her own woes, thereby bringing a moral dilemma into his study not as electronic voices but as flesh and blood. The second dialogue takes place after the judge yields to Valentine and gives up his spying; during the third (which as a farewell scene is prelude to the tempest), Valentine finally elicits a confession from the judge's part. The construction is elegantly symmetrical—a characteristic of the screenplays Kieslowski has written with his longtime collaborator Krzysztof Piestewicz. And yet this skill at pattern-making, though it gives an overall integrity to Red (and to the entire trilogy), counts for little.
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compared to the real thrill the film provides, which is simply the sight of the passing moment. Each action, each image, has an uncanny integrity of its own.

Valentine turns down an offer of tea; and so the judge, his eyes fixed on hers, spills the water he'd boiled for her out of the kettle and onto the floor. What a flaunting of desire, with what an avowal of impotence! What haughtiness, combined with what ramshackle despair! Another supercharged moment: The judge halts his conversation with Valentine so she can watch as the room briefly fills with light, then goes dim again as the sun moves on. How thoroughly must he know this lonely house, to be able to time that event? How keenly must Valentine, too, feel her days ticking away? And another moment, the last: The judge sees Valentine's face on television. Unlike the phone conversations he'd tapped into, this broadcast image is public property; yet it's the one communication in Red that bears him a personal message. Only he knows the full meaning of that close-up of Valentine, that profile set against a red background, which in one context might express a longing for chewing gum and in another might reveal terror and exhaustion. In a context the judge alone knows—the judge, and of course the audience, which is seeing the finale of Three Colors—that same image can suggest the reawakening of love.

I insist that the picture of Valentine is the culmination of the trilogy and not just of Red because I believe the trilogy is really one big movie—a point that ought to be obvious, though relatively few people have mentioned it (an exception being Dave Kehr in Film Comment). The facts of the production should be enough to make the case. According to Kieslowski's account, he and Piesiewicz finished all three screenplays before Blue went before the camera. (Zbigniew Preisner, the composer for the trilogy, contributed to the scenarios by deciding which film should be scored to a tango, which to a bolero; the musical structures worked their way into the elaboration of the plot.) Kieslowski shot Blue in Paris from September to November 1992. He began shooting White on the same day that he wrapped Blue, moved on to Poland (where he completed the trilogy's second section), took ten days' rest, then went to Geneva and shot Red, finishing in May 1993. So the parts of Three Colors were conceived together and shot continuously; and they were edited together, too, beginning with the first week of production in Paris.

Maybe people have overlooked the unity of this effort (and its magnitude) because the finished product has been so neatly labeled. Kieslowski, a sardonic man with a facile tongue, announced early on that the three sections of the trilogy corresponded to the colors of the French flag, which he took to signify liberty, equality and fraternity. Is there a Polish word for blarney? Kieslowski has now admitted that he had more in mind than slogans, however venerable; so perhaps we may dispense with the labels and look at what's actually on the screen.

What we see most vividly—no surprise—is color. Part one, photographed by Slawomir Idziak, floods the screen with blue light, which filters through water, through cut glass, sometimes through the air itself. The camera is thoroughly subjective here; as Julie (Juliette Binoche) passes through mourning for her husband and child, space seems to warp with her every mood, as if her emotions had the power to fog the air around her. White, shot by Edward Kolsinski, is correspondingly objective. At the start, its color literally falls out of the sky onto the protagonist, Karol Karol (Zbigniew Zamachowski), in the form of a pigeon dropping; and from there on, Karol keeps getting whited out in emoticonally material fashion, whether on the snowy streets of Warsaw or between the sheets with his estranged wife. Red, shot by Piotr Sobocinski, is of course the warmest in color but also the most dense. Its reds can be localized in objects (curtains, for example, or items of clothing), giving them a physical insistence that's lacking in the vapid blues of Blue; they're also pervasive, framing the characters at every turn, unlike the isolatable incidents of white in White.

Three Colors invites the viewer to play at giving denotations to blue, white, red—a worthwhile game, as far as it goes. Surely blue is appropriate for its meditative heroine, suffering in well-moneyed Parisian gloom. White goes well with the clownish circumstances of its Warsaw-born hero, scuffing his way up from barber to post-Communist tycoon. So blue might be defined as a color of thought; white, as a color of hard facts; and red would be the color of the heart, as suits a film with both a hero and a heroine, who live at a geographic and economic midpoint between Paris and Warsaw. But again, this is to freeze the flow of experience into a pattern, which is fascinating and lovely but inert. Why not take color seriously—Kieslowski seems to—as a mode of perception beyond fixed meanings?

We live in a time of impatience, people demand a paraphrasable art, the galleries and museums—especially those that traffic in political emblems—the objects you encounter generally read to the viewer. They make a comment, as if each work were already its own translation. In bookstores and reviews, direct address is similarly prosaic: John Ashbery, though eminent, is like poetry slams are in. As for pop music, one recalls an interview of a few years ago with Chuck D. of Public Enemy who missed jazz as that "abstract" stuff dads father listened to. It was no good because it had no words—no message.

Into this market steps Krzysztof Kieslowski, an artist who has the habit of meaning more than he says. His messages (as in No End) used to be too tough to get him in trouble with Communist authorities, though not tough enough for many of the regime's opponents. His key figure of this period, perhaps, was the title character of...