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*US Go Home* Article Summary

I reviewed an article titled “Tous les garçons and toutes les filles”, which reviewed the film project *US Go Home* is a part of (of the same name). The article was published by Ohio State University Professor Judith Mayne, who specializes in French studies.

In her article, Mayne aims to dissect the movie with the movie’s prompt in mind: to create art reflective of what one’s life was like as a teenager. She cites an interview in which Denis explains why she accepted the project, saying

“I could have said yes or no. I hated parties, but I was excited about the importance of

music in the series. As an adolescent, my records and record player were my secret.

Alone in my room, I listened to the Animals, the Yardbirds, Ronnie Bird. The idea of

using their music was a powerful motivation to make the film.”

I found this quote particularly helpful in understanding how much of the film really is based on Denis’ own experiences. While one could make the assumption that Denis sees herself in Martine, the character most like her is Alain. Realizing this helped me understand why one of the longest uninterrupted scenes is of Alain dancing in his room. The scene initially confused us, as we kept waiting for it to end, but now I get why Denis devoted so much time to us seeing Alain in his element. When he’s later at a party, he doesn’t have that same purely happy feeling, instead appearing jaded.

Even if Denis and Alain are similar, Mayne still made sure to devote time to explaining Martine. She specifically dives into Martine’s role as an outsider. She rarely dances, is the most uncomfortable, and stands out compared to Marlene (who seamlessly joins the party crowd once they’re in). We spend the movie with Martine as the observer, and then why she finally has sex with the GI, she does so off screen, which Mayne notes makes the viewer the limited observer that Martine was earlier.

I think the only limit of the article that I wished Mayne had explored is the theme of America. She focuses so much on the coming of age half of things due to it being the theme of the film collection, so it makes sense to neglect the American themes in the piece. Instead of viewing the encounter with the GI as Martine’s introduction to America as a whole, it’s viewed in the lens of a Martine finally meeting someone that she feels comfortable with.

Reference

Judith Mayne (2005) Tous les garçons and toutes les filles, Studies in French Cinema, 5:3, 207-218, DOI: [10.1386/sfci.5.3.207/1](https://doi-org.proxy.lib.duke.edu/10.1386/sfci.5.3.207/1)