In hindsight, today we can and should remember Rivette's masterwork as, if not the triumph of his long, monastically noncommercial career, then at least his most rigorous, disciplined, and culturally important work, especially in light of its revelatory placement within the context of the nascent 1960s women's movement—notably so in laggard, pre-'68 France. In another signature quote, he once pronounced that "all films are about theatre, there is no other subject"—a typically enigmatic comment by him, but one that helps raise the curtain on the dramatic splendor of *The Nun*.

From the opening scene, Rivette and Gruault show us that Suzanne's plight will be intractably bound up in signifiers of theatrics and performance. We first see her dragged out to an altar "stage" behind a cloister screen, presented to an audience of her family witnessing her first convent vows. But when she denies this preordained assent, thus refusing her "role," the curtain behind the screen is hurriedly closed. The audience exits silently miffed, not getting their money's worth. While Diderot was writing in the late eighteenth century (basing his ingenious roman-à-clef on the sad case of one Marguerite Delamarre) condemning the arbitrary power of the pre-Revolutionary Church—and the bourgeois family—it's not too long a leap to a mid-1960s France only fifteen years removed from Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex*, when the binds of the patriarchal Napoleonic Code were still tight. To wit, French women had only won the vote in 1945, while as late as 1965 they were barred from opening a bank account in their own name.

While necessarily condensing Diderot's book, Rivette and Gruault made a more significant revision, changing it from an epistolary first-person account by Suzanne to that of a strictly external dramatization muting her introspective narration. Rivette's camera stays religiously "outside" the events portrayed, photographing them as passive but supremely attentive witness, eschewing close-ups while following her trials in two-shot or deep-focus distance. This, of course, is the sacred realism of Bazinian space as practiced by Renoir, Rossellini, Welles, et al., divining a charged mise en scène where characters dynamically interact with each other and their surroundings.

In Rivette's precisely composed visual tropes, Suzanne is trapped in a surreal maze of nearly abstract interiors as she is shuffled from one virtual prison to another, from her own bedroom to a series of "cells" (a double meaning if there ever was one) in two successive convents: one increasingly harsh, the other illicitly hedonistic. We also watch as Suzanne's keepers constantly enter and exit her rooms at will, either through lock and key or simply barging in. How ironic that she indeed does have a "room of her own," à la Virginia Woolf, but is doomed without her own key.

Jorge Luis Borges's meditation in *The House of Asterion* on the Minotaur and its lethal labyrinth can further illuminate *The Nun*, indeed Rivette's entire oeuvre. Of *Paris Belongs to Us*, a very different film, Rivette singled out the "labyrinth that the decors create among themselves...and people moving about like mice inside these labyrinths, ending up in cul-de-sacs or caught nose to nose." By the end of all his fictions, Rivette pointedly said, "Nothing will have taken place but the place itself." Here it is Suzanne (*and* her female oppressors) trapped within cold, primeval stone walls, in serpentine corridors and entombed rooms, all building on a claustrophobia buttressed by the very artificiality of the two "realistic" convent sets, which offer little contiguous or logical space.

While we can marvel at Rivette's overall classicism, his minimalist music (by Jean-Claude Eloy) and sound effects are audaciously modernist, inverting Suzanne's *Candide*-like misfortunes into a *Caligari*-esque horror show. From the initial, benign naturalism of chiming church bells, alienating off-screen sounds stalk the narrative ("violent incursions" in Nick Pinkerton's apt words) that either haunt Suzanne with tantalizing promises of an idealized outside world and freedom, or provide a cruel counterpoint to the visuals—like the sounds of horse hooves or children playing outside as she suffers alone. The bells crescendo into a grating motif, in no way the biblical "joyful noise" announcing mass but as the infernal knells of solitary time and punishment. All this deceptive naturalism is complemented by Eloy's dissonant percussion music, which enters and exits like a cursed séance soul.

The determinist dirge that is *The Nun* might have been only that were it not for Karina's resplendent performance, from limpid vision of chaste beauty as "bride of Christ" to ragged Joan of Arc tormented and literally trod upon by her inquisitors. Rivette's mise en scène tableaux center on Suzanne, whose recurring gestures of obeisance are tragically echoed in her last, desperately defiant act of escape from yet another oppressive interior. But there are vivid lighter moments, too. An errant cat strolls across a chapel floor—a simple act of feline liberty amid a regimented female order; or when Suzanne is furtively poked with a pin by one of the sisters while testifying before an investigating priest—her pained scream is God's proof she's in bed with the devil himself.

A longtime critical champion, Rosenbaum once called *The Nun* Rivette's "most overtly political film," but if such it's not only for resurrecting Diderot's outcry against the state-sanctioned power of monolithic religion, but equally for its insights on how the temptations of self-serving, arbitrary authority can convert even ostensible "Christian" demimondes into prisons ruled with an iron habit. As Diderot compatriot Jean-Jacques Rousseau so famously declared, "Man is born free, but everywhere he is in chains." Rivette's prescient feminism—rare among the *Cahiers* boys' club—delivered a harrowing vision of Venus descending into a holy, man-made hell.

—Thomas Delapa

Klute

Produced and directed by Alan J. Pakula; screenplay by Andy and Dave Lewis; cinematography by Gordon Willis; art director George Jenkins; music by Michael Small; edited by Carl Lerner; starring Jane Fonda, Donald Sutherland, Charles Cioffi, Roy R. Scheider, and Dorothy Tristan. Blu-ray and DVD, color, 114 min, 1971. A Criterion Collection Release, www.criterion.com.

The Criterion Collection has surpassed its customary high standards with this long-overdue Blu-ray of Alan J. Pakula's landmark Seventies film *Klute*, starring newly radicalized Jane Fonda in a where-did-that-come-from professional reinvention (and her greatest performance). The crisp 4K transfer was supervised by camera operator Michael Chapman, and supplements on the disc include excerpts from a forthcoming documentary about Pakula, a new interview with Fonda by actor Illeana Douglas, and engaging archival pieces—Pakula on *The Dick Cavett Show*, a promotional short showcasing the film's New York City locations in the glory days of its garbage-strewn ungovernability, and an extended time-capsule conversation from 1973 with Midge Mackenzie that captures a thoughtful, articulate Fonda at the height of her antiwar, feminist, actively politicized period, a time when she was a figure of national controversy. This most welcome edition also includes an accompanying booklet with a perceptive essay by Mark Harris and an informative 1972 *Sight & Sound* interview with Pakula.

Klute is nominally a mystery story: Tom Gruneman, a businessman from the white-picket-fence Pennsylvania suburbs, has vanished during a routine trip to the New York office; after six months, the authorities have come up empty, so his good friend, strait-laced small-town cop John Klute (Donald Sutherland), heads to the Big Apple to pick up the trail. This leads him to the doorstep of call girl Bree Daniels (Fonda), who was once beaten savagely and is now being stalked by a sadistic, ominous former customer who may or may not be the missing man. Will Klute crack the case?

He does, for what it's worth—which is very little. Klute, a man of Norman Rockwell integrity, dedication, loyalty, and virtue, certainly cares what happened to his friend—but *Klute* does not. As far as the movie is concerned, the disappearance of poor Gruneman is little more than a half-hearted Hitchcockian MacGuffin. *Klute* has its moments of real suspense, but it is ultimately a brilliant, probing character study, and, despite its title, that character is Bree. It is entirely her film—which, above all, is concerned with her personal struggle, and takes a deep dive into her troubled psyche. This is not to take anything away from Sutherland, whose subtle, restrained performance grounds the film, but his character is something of a blank slate, and his relatively modest dramatic arc (finding humanity in Sin City) is centered

around (and is subordinate to) his increasing attraction to Bree. About Klute we know and learn very little, whereas Bree comes to life in multiple sessions with her analyst, is privileged with voice-overs, and is shown struggling with internal and external challenges.

Bree's bread-and-butter problem is her difficulty escaping "the life" of prostitution. Once a successful, high-class Park Avenue call girl, she has taken to turning occasional tricks as necessary to make ends meet as an aspiring actress, reduced to living in a modest flat in strung-out, very pregentrified Hell's Kitchen. That ambition is no pipe dream, and it was important to Pakula for the movie to show that Bree had real talent, and he takes time to linger on her dismissive treatment by casting directors and other gatekeepers of straight society. *Klute* introduces Bree at a degrading modeling audition, where she and a virtual conveyer belt of beautiful women are inspected and assessed like cattle. Instructed to move this way and that, she is summarily rejected for having "funny hands." Rushing off from this humiliation, Bree quickly arranges a tryst with a "commuter"—a profitable encounter during which she's "the best actor in the world."

This juxtaposition serves two purposes for Pakula: it allows him to gesture at the notion that there is a very thin line indeed between prostitution and the "legitimate" ways in which women are asked (or expected) to offer their bodies for sale, and, more important, it introduces the key theme of the movie—Bree's internal, existential struggle with control. In her first therapy session, Bree's analyst notes pointedly that she is unsuccessful as an actress but successful as a call girl, and presses her on why that might be. Bree's answer is that "when you're a call girl, you control it," and as she continues to free-associate, she uses the word "control" ("over myself...over my life") three more times.

The issue of control raises the stakes considerably, because control comes at a price. As Bree explains in another session, when you're a call girl "you don't have to feel anything." But maintaining that independence runs the risk (and in Bree's case, the reality) of sealing herself off from the prospect of real emotional intimacy with others. In 1971, navigating the tightrope between autonomy and intimacy (and even domesticity) was one of the vexing challenges of the emerging women's movement. Critic Diane Giddis (in her essay "The Divided Woman: Bree Daniels in *Klute*" in the 1977 anthology *Women and the Cinema: A Critical Anthology*) identified Bree's internal tug-of-war as the core theme of the movie, and saw it as "nothing less than a metaphor of the intense struggle many women go through" more generally.

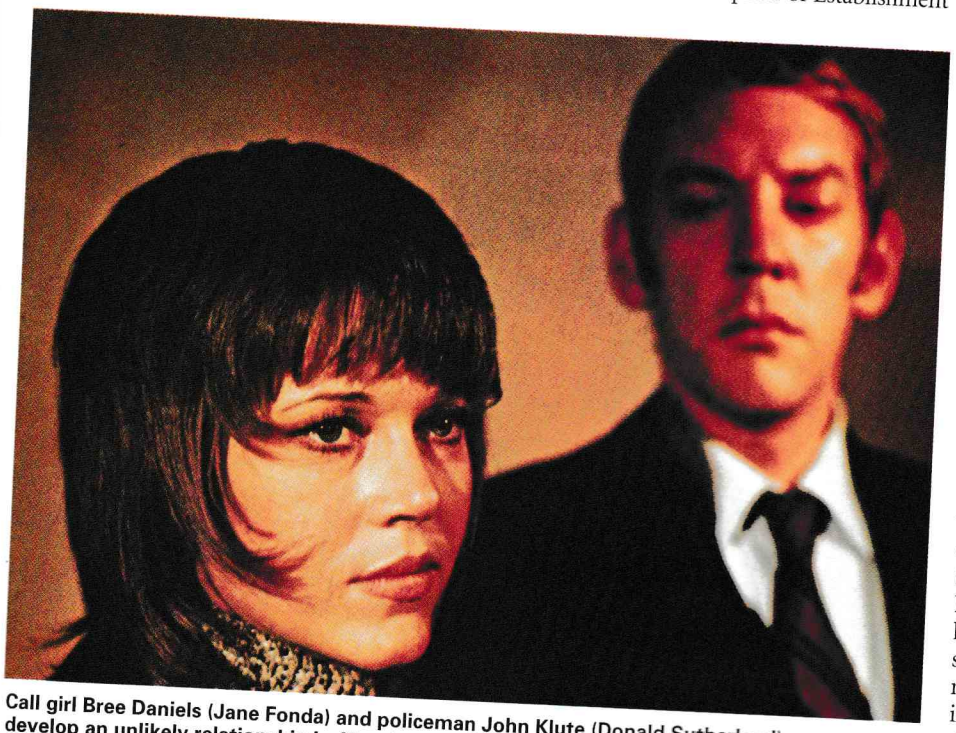
Bree's independence and autonomy are threatened—most obviously by whoever is stalking her (a sociopath who has perhaps taken to bumping off potential witnesses, such as two of Bree's affiliates from the old Park Avenue days who have since died under murky circumstances)—but also by the genuine feelings she begins to develop, to her utter bafflement, for Klute. For a woman whose "stock in trade" is to manipulate her clientele, which she described as the talent "to lead men by the nose where they think they want to go...and you control it," Bree is suddenly confronted by two men that are completely beyond her control: one due to his murderous rage; the other by confronting her with the hitherto unthinkable—genuine affection.

In this sense there are intriguing parallels between Klute and the pillar of Establishment respectability revealed a scant third of the way into the film to be the "real killer" (so much for the mystery angle). Both men, if with very different motives, follow Bree, surreptitiously watch her from a distance, and secretly record her voice. Both men become increasingly obsessed with her; Klute, of course, remains a paragon of propriety and restraint, but he does keep her mugshot prominently displayed in his little basement apartment for no obvious purpose, and his feelings for Bree grow apace with the film. As Pakula put it, "Donald gave the subtext of obsession at times."

This convergence is also emphasized by Giddis, who notes that "as her attachment to Klute grows, Cable becomes more dangerous," a point underscored by Pakula with another crucial sequencing of events. At the high point of their relationship, the (momentarily) blissful couple go shopping, and they idyllically linger at a neighborhood bodega to select fresh produce for dinner. Bree even observes a father and a child (the only child to appear in the movie), and it is not a stretch to imagine that she might be contemplating—surely for the first time in her life—the possibility of having children of her own. She leans against Klute and closes her eyes. Returning home moments later (passing the neon light of the funeral parlor next door), they find her apartment has been ransacked and defiled—and the phone is ringing. Bree's voice comes across the line, a tape from one of her sexual encounters, describing how liberating it is to shed one's every inhibition. It is as if, as Pakula commented about Bree more generally, she "really almost destroys herself."

This observation echoes a confession Bree makes to her analyst, in expressing her confusion and ambivalence about her emerging relationship with Klute, the only man for whom she has ever had genuine feelings—and is astonished to find that he has real feelings for her, even when—especially when—she's not doing that thing she does, putting on an act to fulfill a fantasy. "He's seen me mean, he's seen me ugly," she protests, and it doesn't seem to matter. But for some reason, "all the time I feel the need to destroy it."

This instinct informs the most emotionally intense scenes in the movie—none more than the ambiguous seduction scene, when the couple have sex for the first time. She comes to his apartment very late at night, obviously frightened (Pakula shows this explicitly); hours later, after nodding off to sleep on separate cots, she initiates their encounter, wordlessly, and is quite blissful in the aftermath. Klute, on the other hand, appears to regret what has transpired, and, after observing his downcast look, Bree turns on him, viciously, in an exchange that remains difficult to watch. In the supplements Douglas mentions this as her favorite scene in the movie, but Fonda shakes her off, unwilling to revisit that ugly moment, even a half-century later. Was it her intention to seduce and humiliate him, or was she striking out defensively, after the fact? *Klute* won't give a definitive answer; it is a



Call girl Bree Daniels (Jane Fonda) and policeman John Klute (Donald Sutherland) develop an unlikely relationship in Alan J. Pakula's *Klute*. (photo courtesy of Photofest)

quintessentially New Hollywood moment, with a complex, compromised protagonist left unprotected in an ugly moment that defies tidy explanation and resolution.

The New Hollywood is often characterized as an auteurist cinema, with an emphasis on the singular voice and vision of the director. But *Klute*, like many (and perhaps most) of the great films of the era, was a collaborative effort. As Pakula readily acknowledged, his film also reflects the crucial creative imprints of two partners in particular—cinematographer Gordon Willis, and Fonda. Willis, who would of course subsequently emerge as one of Hollywood's most influential cinematographers, was a relative unknown in 1971, with a small handful of promising credits to his name (his next assignment would be *The Godfather*). Pakula had a decade of experience as a producer, but *Klute* was only his second feature as a director, and the influence of Willis on the visual style of the film is unmistakable, with its gritty New York City location work and naturally lit interiors. Pakula and Willis also combined the creative use of widescreen compositions with an emphasis on dizzying verticals —in particular elevator shafts and the soaring World Trade Center, then under construction, visible behind the massive windows of Cable's Lower Manhattan office—a motif chosen to underscore Bree's perilous state of mind. The two men would work together on four subsequent films, including *The Parallax View* (1974) and *All the President's Men* (1976), which, with *Klute*, would come to be known as Pakula's "paranoid trilogy."

As for Fonda, her essential contributions can be traced to two personal crises of her own: could she, as a feminist, play a prostitute, and could she, as an actor, do it convincingly? After consulting with confidants, it was clear that the answer to the first question was a resounding yes—this was a rich, complex role and a rare opportunity, and the film did not glamorize the trade but lingered instead on its harsh, ugly realities (compare the unflinching eye of *Klute* with the obscene sugarcoated fantasy of *Pretty Woman*). That settled, and anxious about her own performance, the actor threw herself into the role with a De Niro–like intensity, spending time with call girls and madams in furtive quarters of the city, visiting the city morgue, and living in (and contributing to the design of) Bree's apartment. Fonda also contributed several small touches of behavior, and, more than anything, took ownership of the role in the scenes with her therapist. Originally a man had been hired for the role, but Fonda insisted that Bree would only speak freely to a woman, and the part was recast. The two performers did not meet beforehand, and Fonda, other than anticipating a few key lines, improvised the rest, engaging the sessions fully in character. Pakula shot hours of footage that were whittled down to the precious few minutes seen in the finished film. It was efforts like these that allowed *Klute* to touch the realities that New Hollywood filmmakers so aspired to reach.—**Jonathan Kirshner**

The Wild Pear Tree

Produced by Zeynep Özbatur Atakan; directed by Nuri Bilge Ceylan; screenplay by Akin Aksu, Ebru Ceylan, and Nuri Bilge Ceylan; cinematography by Gökhan Tiryaki; production design by Ahmet Demircan; edited by Nuri Bilge Ceylan; starring Aydın Doğu Demirkol, Murat Cemcir, Bennu Yıldırımlar, Hazar Ergüçlü, and Serkan Keskin. Region B Blu-ray, color, 188 min., Turkish dialogue with English subtitles, 2018. A New Wave Films release, www.newwavefilms.co.uk.

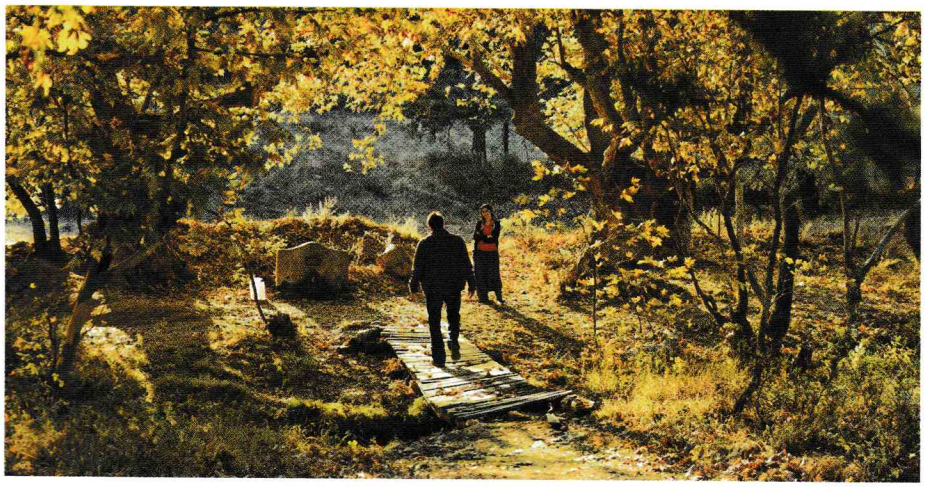
With half an hour to go in *The Wild Pear Tree*, snow begins to fall. Snow was to be expected in Nuri Bilge Ceylan's last film, the Palme d'Or–winning *Winter Sleep* (2014), where it was at once a meteorological fact, a narrative deus ex machina, and an instance of pathetic fallacy, mirroring the soul of its emotionally wintry protagonist, a man in late middle age whose surface silver fox charm and need to dominate could not conceal a fear of emotional engagement.

By contrast, the summer sun beats down on the much younger protagonist of *The Wild Pear Tree*. The vast, monochrome, rocky, and snowy wastes of the earlier film's Cappadocia are replaced by glowing fields on which a handful of people try to work, where the sound of animals, birds, and the wind through the trees can be heard. It is appropriate weather for a young man entering the uncertain summer of his life. Returning home from a city university to the small town he despises, Sinan (Aydın Doğu Demirkol) has to decide what to do with his life. He feels, as a peasant from an impoverished family, that he cannot marry. He wants to publish a book about his negative experiences, but fails to interest a publisher or local sponsor.

This leaves two limited options. In a country where education is devalued by the state and teaching jobs are scarce, Sinan can teach in the economically deprived eastern region like his father before him, and essentially resign himself to the back of beyond. Or, like many of his fellow graduates, he can join the police force where work is readily available for hooligans willing to suppress student and leftist dissent of Erdoğan's theocratic regime (as illustrated by a chillingly jokey phone call Sinan has with a friend).

Sinan is as obnoxious, high-handed, contemptuous, and condescending as the much older Aydın in *Winter's Sleep*, but without the latter's independent means with which to nurse his misanthropy. Much of the film follows Sinan as he walks through and around the town weighing up his options, often to the strains of the Passacaglia in C Minor by Bach (via Leopold Stokowski), a form whose name derives from the Italian for "to pass" and "street."

He meets an old flame (Hazar Ergüçlü) whose surprising adoption of a headscarf signals the reduced role of women in contemporary Turkey (his sister, mother, and grandmother are never seen outside their homes, and rarely outside of confined spaces within those homes), and who is about to marry someone who *can* support a wife. He visits bars, cafés, and the bookshop where, in the film's most hilarious set piece, he harangues and harasses a local author (Serkan Keskin) who has no problem getting his books published, publicized, or read. He later engages in a long (twenty minute) "walk and talk" with a pair of engaging and contrasting imams, each arguing for or against traditional or reformist Islam and the appropriateness of imams riding motorcycles. He approaches local worthies to sponsor his book; they praise him extensively and insincerely but part with no money. Most of all he struggles with his family —his frustrated sister, disappointed mother, and vexed grandparents, each exasperated by his father, Idris (Murat Cemcir), a lovable, literate, brilliant, sensitive, engaging man, whose gambling addiction and "crazy" schemes (such as digging a well in a field where there is no water) frequently leaves his family without money, food, or electricity.



On return to his hometown, newly graduated college student Sinan (Aydın Doğu Demırkol) encounters Hatice (Hazar Ergüçlü), a former girlfriend, in Nuri Bilge Ceylan's *The Wild Pear Tree*.

Women in Film: Interviews with Joanna Hogg, Jennifer Kent and Penny Lane

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