

Filmmakers on Bresson – Paul Schrader

From *Robert Bresson* by James Quandt (Toronto: Cinematheque Ontario, 1998)

Paul Schrader

I can pin-point the moment my film sensibility was galvanized: April 1969, when I, as a film critic, saw Robert Bresson's *Pickpocket* (it had just been released in Los Angeles). I wrote about it for two consecutive issues, then went on to write a book about Bresson.

I had been drawn to films as a college student (film-going at the time was forbidden by my church). One never forgets one's first love, and my first love in the movies was the intellectual European cinema: Bergman, Resnais, Godard, Antonioni, Buñuel.

I "studied" these films. They touched my mind more than my heart.

Pickpocket moved through my mind into my heart. It was as if my soul was deflowered. Strange to say, Bresson "loosened me up." A weight of High Art fell from my young shoulders. Films could be spiritual *and* profane. I was free to enjoy both.