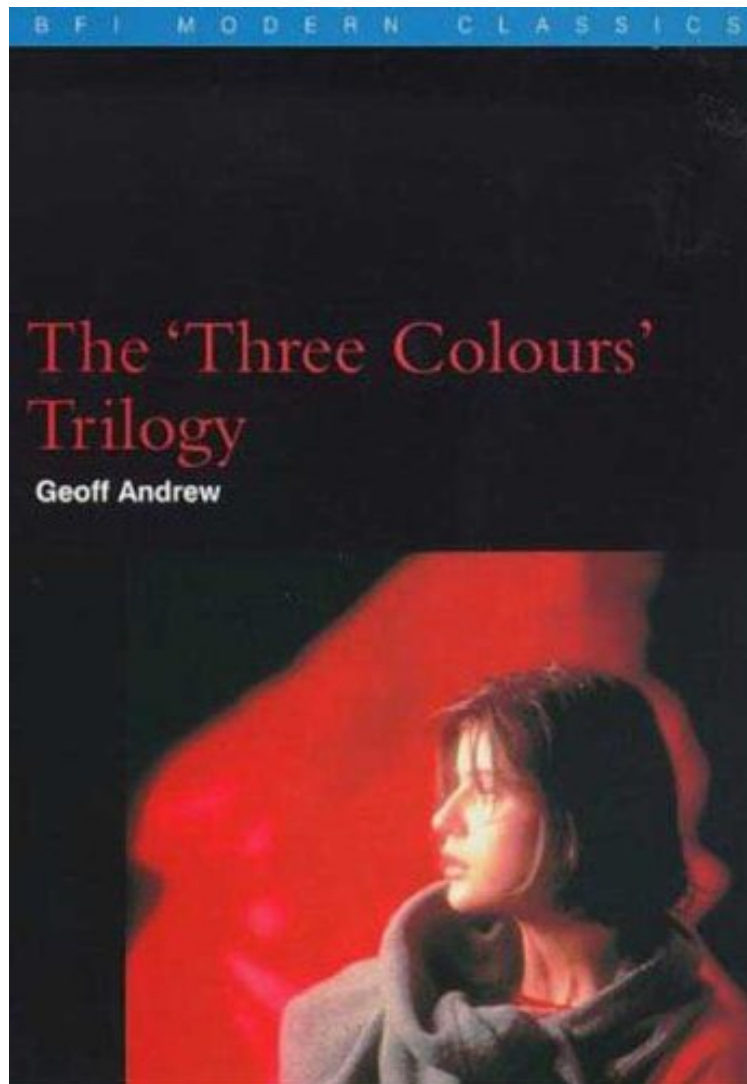


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The 'Three Colours' Trilogy (BFI Modern Classics)

Geoff Andrew

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Geoff Andrew : The 'Three Colours' Trilogy (BFI Modern Classics) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The 'Three Colours' Trilogy (BFI Modern Classics):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. BFI books are the bestBy DnchanceBFI books are clearly written and illuminate aspects of the films you may not have noticed, but enrich your viewing now you They produce the greatest film analysis books on the market. Always worth buying it you want to know more about a film, especially if you love it and know it well.28 of 31 people found the following review helpful. amidst a slew of details, nothing really newBy S. ParkFirst, beware the cybershopper: this is an *extremely* slim volume. The contents make up a scant 80 pages. Thick, glossy paper quality, which showcases film stills extremely well, and a six-page interview with

Kieslowski at the end, but the writing is less than satisfying. Andrew tends to run to extremes - most of the time his "analysis" consists of painstakingly assembled narrative details from the three films (expounded at length over individual synopses of the three films), and when he does take a shot at analysis, he tends to draw grand and general conclusions for which the evidence is found wanting. The author prefers to rhapsodize about the role of chance and destiny in the Trilogy, when an introductory discussion regarding the precise meaning of the *title* and how it is expressed in the film might have seemed more proper. In a sense he can't be blamed for this, since this is his own take on the trilogy and he is free to think whatever he thinks - in fact, he apologizes early on that this tome represents a non-definitive (meaning personal) take on the trilogy from the viewpoint of an "unrepentant admirer". However, in this sense each and every passionate viewer of Kieslowski could have written his or her own book, with no more and no less merit for publication than Andrew's. In sum, if you are already initiated into Kieslowski, there is nothing in this book that a good second (or third or fourth) viewing of the films will not give you (but to be on par with this author be prepared to hit the "pause" button every five minutes - gotta spot that portrait of Van Den Budenmayer's on the judge's desk!), and if you are a novice, this is not the book to start with. Watch the films again, carefully, and let your mind draw its own conclusions.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A Concise Guide to One of the Greatest Films By Julia Shuvalova To comprehend Kieslowski the film-maker is an intellectually arduous task, and those who are interested in how his Polish identity manifested itself in his non-Polish films might make better use of Emma Wilson's 'Memory and Survival: the French Cinema of Krzysztof Kieslowski' (Oxford, 2000). It is fairly correct to say that Geoff Andrew was not interested in that. Publishing his book for the first time in 1998, only two years after Kieslowski's death, Andrew's main purpose was to offer his insight, as a film critic, to Kieslowski's tour-de-force, especially in the light of uneven critical reception of the trilogy. Andrew's fascination with 'Three Colours' definitely makes his book an engaging and illuminating reading. At the same time, this book cannot be passed for yet another summary of the films' plots, simply because it goes well beyond that. It is probably useful to remind oneself of the difference between a plot and a story and of the fact that the story (i.e. what happens) tells relatively little about its author's potential; it is the plot ('how' the story is happening), together with authorial structure and style that does. Taking 'Three Colours: Blue' for example, its story is very simple: a woman who lost her husband and child in a car crash, is trying to rebuild her life. The work begins when we ask, who the woman is, who her husband was, how she may rebuild her life, how she is actually rebuilding it, etc. The fact that all this is told in connection with ideas of liberation and freedom (because the French 'liberte' carries both meanings) adds further complexity to the story. As one knows, most films reviews seldom answer questions like these, simply because they require attention to detail that 500 words do not allow for. This, however, is possible in a book. Andrew painstakingly collects scattered details, to tell us, what sort of character Julie is. He also studies the dead husband, whose character is easy to ignore altogether. We are told early on that Julie's husband was a famous composer, but when I was watching the film I noticed the same point, upon which Andrew remarks in his study: it looks kind of strange that a classical composer so effortlessly produces a marketable piece of music, commemorating the unification of Europe. If anything, it does raise questions as to how serious a composer he is; and a suggestion that he could have been helped in writing his music seems therefore all the more valid. Andrew pays attention to this episode, which in a way is pivotal for Julie's 'awakening'. This very detail, however, continues to elude some critics, despite its overall importance. Without it, Julie's own musical talent is hugely underplayed, whereas the theme of love as liberation and a creative source (but also as a realm of delusion) does not resonate as much, as Kieslowski certainly intended. What Andrew is doing therefore is plucking out these 'elusive' details, in order to show us, how truly genuine were Kieslowski's last films. One may say, of course, that such purpose did not require a book, but one should also admit that most viewers will only pick upon the majority of details, if they sit through the films at least three times. And since we are discussing a film, then the story evidently unravels not only in words, but in frames, colours and sounds, which further complicate its grasping. In the chapter on 'White', Andrew studies the different and often ambiguous use of the white colour, to illustrate how it corresponds with different ideas that Kieslowski communicated in this film. The use of music is central for 'Blue', while 'Red' is visually and intellectually impressive for its camerawork and direction of photography, which does require a viewer to check on their attention. Andrew rightly suggests that 'Red' is the sum total of all three films, which is why it is both so remarkable and so complex. This book is indeed a summary, but of a kind that many films could only wish to have. It is intelligent, fairly easy to read (especially if the reader has seen the films) and helps to systematise Kieslowski's technique and ideas, as they emerged for the last time in his career. As Andrew indicated in the Preface, his was 'an "auteurist" study', and not an investigation into prices and individuals, let alone into the "politics" of 'Three Colours'. This is one of the reasons for why he draws continuous parallels between this trilogy and 'Decalogue', as there are many recurrent topics, ideas and even techniques that make 'Three Colours' belong to the realm of ethics, rather than politics. Andrew also specifies that Kieslowski himself was adamant that his understanding of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity must be seen as personal, and not politically infused. What we have, therefore, is an indispensable systematisation of one of the greatest works in film history, a gateway for further research into Kieslowski's work, as well as a good example of an in-depth, yet concise, film study.

This appreciative account of the "Three Colours" trilogy communicates the power and imagery of the films, and demonstrates how Kieslowski's art is brought to bear in their moving renditions of the lives of its characters. An interview with Kieslowski shortly before his death concludes this tribute.

About the Author Geoff Andrew is Film Editor of Time Out magazine and the author of several books, including *The Film Handbook*, *The Films of Nicholas Ray*, and *Stranger than Paradise: Maverick Film-makers in the Recent American Cinema*.