

A woman's voice describes being a mother. Grainy photos of a child appear on screen. In a few seconds the woman and child come together as real people, mother and daughter, hamming it up, before the video camera in an empty studio. As we watch and listen to their games and conversation, the woman continues her narrative, relating her past life as an artist, then drifting into the story of her pregnancy and the birth of her daughter. The story gains in intensity as she moves from the common experiences of motherhood, to focus upon what happened uniquely to her and her child.

The performance which they improvise for the camera serves not just to entertain us, but also to reveal the relationship between mother and daughter. They dance, sing, tussle, strip, ask and answer each others questions, talk about their feelings; they cajole, cuddle, quarrel with, confide in, and enjoy each other. Dancing the tango, they meet, sidestep, then come together again. They fight over a doll as if it were a live baby. They direct each others antics, give and take cues, imitate each other, share ideas and the meager props which the studio provides. We begin to realize, as we watch them on camera, how much they must shape and control each other in real life, and how they manage to remain separate personalities.

Their two images merge, then separate on the screen, much as mother and child do in real life. Realistic camera work of the two figures is interspersed with colored silhouettes, sometimes shadowy and sometimes stark outlines of their bodies and faces. From these splashes of contour and color, their identities emerge in varying degrees of focus. We sometimes see every shade of expression on their faces; at other times we see only featureless figures in vivid colors that suggest characters still being formed. Their world is hypothetical, a web of possibilities to be toyed with: after their opening improvisations, they settle into a discussion of future alternatives - what will their relationship be like when the child too grows into a woman? They show us how mother and daughter mold each other into the people they are and continue to become.

Thus, the video concerns the passage of time as well as the play between generations. As the background narrative dovetails with the improvised words and actions taking place in the studio, we see the connection - and contrast - between the past and the present. The narrative recounts painful memories, but somehow that past has evolved into the spontaneous enjoyment which the mother and daughter are sharing for the camera. The woman's story of her pregnancy, and this little girl romping around the studio, are two very separate realities, but the link between them is indissoluble: A new young individual has emerged from events that occurred before her birth and which she probably will not understand, until her own maturity; The young woman too, has emerged from her past to live for the moment, in a play-world she shares with her little girl.

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