KINONIK

THE LONELINESS OF THE LONG DISTANCE RUNNER (1962)

Directed by Tony Richardson

WEDNESDAY July 9th 7PM



Where are all the angry young men now? / Barstow and Osborne, Waterhouse and Sillitoe / Where on earth did they all go? / And where are all the protest songs?

The Angry Young Men of 1950s and 60s England were an unorganized movement of artists responding to the radical class gap of postwar Britain. Years of sacrifice, rationing, and death had not led to a new bounty, at least not for the majority. As the gap only grew, kitchen sink dramas, which turned pen and lens to the everyday life of the poor, blasted their intense, often nihilistic critiques of the UK.

In **The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner**, director Tony Richardson directs Alan Sillitoe's screenplay adaptation of his novella, rendering the traditional British form of the autobiographical thief's tale anew. Here, instead of allowing the audience to furtively enjoy a criminal life and then be morally satiated by the thief changing his ways, teenage protagonist Colin Smith is never repentant. For Smith, crime is not dishonest. Dishonest would be capitulating to systems of power, acting against one's feelings or desires. Dishonest would be using another man's talents to further one's own fortune. Colin Smith, petty thief, claims, "I have always been honest."

This honesty is reflected in Richardson's filmmaking: everything shot on location with available light by a crew of trusted colleagues immune to studio demands. Actors Tom Courtenay (Colin Smith, in his second-ever film) and Michael Redgrave (the "Governor", Smith's overseer) deliver starkly captivating performances as they stand on either side of the "out-law, in-law" divide. "Sillitoe begins his tale in prison, and he ends it before the doors have opened again," asking us what freedom can one person have or claim within a closed, all-encompassing system?