

Spring 5-3-2019

1st Place Research Paper: Countering the Current: The Function of Cinematic Waves in Communist vs. Capitalist Societies

Maddie Gwinn

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.chapman.edu/
undergraduateresearchprize](https://digitalcommons.chapman.edu/undergraduateresearchprize)

Part of the [American Film Studies Commons](#), [American Popular Culture Commons](#), [Critical and Cultural Studies Commons](#), [Cultural History Commons](#), [Economic Theory Commons](#), [European History Commons](#), [European Languages and Societies Commons](#), [Film Production Commons](#), [Growth and Development Commons](#), [Other Communication Commons](#), [Other Economics Commons](#), [Other Film and Media Studies Commons](#), [Other History Commons](#), [Political History Commons](#), [Public History Commons](#), [Social History Commons](#), [United States History Commons](#), and the [Visual Studies Commons](#)

1st Place Research Paper: Countering the Current: The Function of Cinematic Waves in Communist vs. Capitalist Societies

Comments

Maddie Gwinn won First Place in the 2019 Kevin and Tam Ross Undergraduate Research Prize for her [essay](#) about how the Czech New Wave and New Hollywood cinema are defined by their agency in preserving and prescribing cultural meaning across their societies while being bound to their economic systems. This essay is the original scholarship that emerged from that research.

Countering the Current:

The Function of Cinematic Waves in Communist vs. Capitalist Societies

Madison Gwinn

Chapman University Honors Capstone

15 April, 2019

“That factor in a work of art which enables it to transcend reality certainly cannot be detached from style; but does it not consist of the harmony actually realized, of any doubtful unity of form and content, with and without, of individual and society; it is to be found in those features in which discrepancy appears: in the necessary failure of the passionate striving for identity,” Adorno & Horkheimer, *Enlightenment as Mass Deception*

The consumption of art is historically oppressive as the makers and receivers of meaning depend on an economical and political hierarchy. At the end of the nineteenth century, with rapid industrializing society, modernist thinkers played a fundamental role in shaping culture with the rejection of transactional art. Critical theorists Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer predicted the future success of isolated artists, but overwhelming failure of society to continue in the modernist trajectory of psycho-political progress. Written in 1944, *Enlightenment as Mass Deception* identifies the inherent peril of mass production of cultural content within Capitalist societies.¹ Their pessimistic account of the inter-war rise of the American film studio system with comparison to Fascist regimes around Europe is relevant in examining how the film medium has evolved through late Capitalism. Postmodern audiences are experiencing an exponential bombardment of images, necessitating the filtering of information. Passive, transactional media imposed into culture by Capitalism conditions audiences to seek profitable, what Marx calls, “illusory happiness”.² Even with the resurgence of independent cinema, confrontational content which stimulates mass critical analysis an individual's agency within society is only effective in the form of a Wave.³ Cinematic Waves serve society in disseminating

¹ Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, “Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception,” in *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments* (Stanford Univ. Press, 2002), 94–136.

² Karl Marx, *Critique of Hegel's "Philosophy of Right"* (Cambridge University Press, 2009), 71–72.

³ Status of proper noun for purpose of paper.

the methodology of political change and preserving it within their history. Examining notable Waves in their successes and failures reveals the conditions necessary for one to occur, and why their impossibility in American Cinema (Hollywood) propagates transactional filmmaking.

A case study of the Czechoslovak New Wave and New Hollywood compares the functioning of cinematic movements under Communist and Capitalist societies. The period of the 1960s-70s in which these movements take place is emblematic of the shift from modernist to postmodernist structuring of society, which will be analyzed through the framework of Frederic Jameson, Alain Badiou, and Jean Baudrillard. Jameson distinguishes the artistic creativity in modernism as “the belief that artists should strive to develop unique individual styles that are the direct expressions of their own inner selves” while for postmodern creatives there is an “intense psychic pressure of life under late Capitalism [that] shatters the psyche itself, destabilizing the once-solid core of individual identity and rendering it ineffective as a source of aesthetic expression”.⁴ Filmmakers possess agency within social systems to break tradition and define the present, and as Rimbaud says “one must be absolutely modern”.⁵ Badiou points to the notion of the avant-garde as a tool for filmmakers to define modernity.

Avant-garde art is inextricably linked to politics as it negotiates “difficult double relation between the present and (present) past and that of the coexistence of different truth procedures”.⁶ Badiou puts “present” in front of the the word “past” as a reminder that all of history was once a present. One must consider how the past present informs the present and present future during

⁴ M. Keith Booker, *Postmodern Hollywood: What's New in Film and Why It Makes Us Feel So Strange* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2007).

⁵ Arthur Rimbaud, *A Season in Hell and Other Poems* (London: Anvil Press Poetry, 2006).

⁶ Jan Voelker, "Reversing and Affirming the Avantgardes: A New Paradigm for Politics" in *Badiou and the Political Condition*, by Marios Constantinou Constantinou, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014), 147-63.

ideological revolutions. Literary theorist Terry Eagleton defines ideology as the “nexus between discourse and power,” and Kolker expands that it “constructs the very image of the individual and his or her potency or impotence in the world”.⁷ Badiou’s ‘truth procedures’ can be thought of as the idealist (present) past ideology, such as Marxism, and the present manifestation of its socio-economic functioning in reality, such as Communism. The avant-garde is a heteroglossic (multitude of voices), holding at once the (present) past ideals and the present reality of system’s function.⁸ This will be exemplified in the Czech New Wave’ blending of realism (present past ideal) and absurdism (present reality) to subvert Communist tradition. The antithesis of the avant-garde would be the popular form, the mainstream, born out of “commodification of aesthetic production”.⁹ The cultural industry which Adorno and Horkheimer believe conditions the masses into passivity is evidenced in the art which socio-economic systems reward. For pre-1960s Communism this would be social realist tradition and for early Capitalism this would be Classical Hollywood narratives, what A&H would deem “monoglossic”.¹⁰ Aesthetic innovation and experimentation is necessary in countering monoglossia. In his 1970 seminal essay which considers the role of an artist within society, Michael Kustow frames the creation of art as a revolt;

“A revolt first against culture, against its custom of naming and placing and judging. A revolt against esthetic norms; against existing artistic languages. A revolt in the name of fresh perception, in the name of a tradition ignored by the

⁷ Robert Kolker, *A Cinema of Loneliness: Penn, Kubrick, Scorsese, Spielberg, Altman* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988).

⁸ Mihail Mihajlovič Bahtin, *The Bakhtin Reader: Selected Writings of Bakhtin, Medvedev, and Voloshinov* (Arnold, 2003).

⁹ Voelker, "Reversing and Affirming the Avantgardes: A New Paradigm for Politics," 147-63.

¹⁰ Bahtin, *The Bakhtin Reader: Selected Writings of Bakhtin, Medvedev, and Voloshinov*.

dominant culture, revolt which invents new languages, unsuspected forms, surprising juxtapositions.”¹¹

While Kustow rejects the that it is the responsibility of artists to instigate change in the world, he acknowledges their necessity to understand the system at hand and their agency in transcending it. In refutation of Kustow, this paper frames filmmakers as agents of revolt and having a culpability in upholding dominant culture.

Film theorist Kelli Fuery contextualizes psychoanalyst Wilfred Bion’s idea of “binocular vision” into the framework of cinema’s function in promoting heteroglossia. Bion uses this term to “link thinking (and growth in mental functioning) with a capacity to perceive, most specifically from multiple points of view”.¹² It is one responsibility of cinema to foster perceptive capacities, to challenge rather than sedate. This concept of holding two perspectives at once, wherein “we see one world, though we receive two” is accomplished through structured identification with characters and a forced self-reflectance of their spectatorship.¹³ In a Brechtian framework, it “enable[s] audiences to use the presentation of another’s (albeit screened and fictional) binocular vision as a hinge to loosen the seduction of magical thinking, that is the evasion of thinking for oneself”.¹⁴ Magical thinking is the escapism into the world of the characters, aligning oneself so closely to the experience that it becomes bereft of context and critical analysis. An example of this would be the films of Steven Spielberg whose “images and

¹¹ Michael Kustow, "Is It the Role of the Artist to Change Society?" *The New York Times* (New York, August 2, 1970. 1996. Accessed April 13, 2019).

¹² Kelli Fuery, "A Theory of Thinking for Moving Image Experience" in *Wilfred Bion, Thinking, and Emotional Experience with Moving Images: Being Embedded* (New York: Routledge, 2019), 24-47.

¹³ Fuery, "A Theory of Thinking for Moving Image Experience," 32.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, 33.

narratives that respond or give shape to the current ideological needs of an audience, offering a safe and secure ideological haven".¹⁵ Spielberg's films, which are arguably the product of New Hollywood, reflect the escapist ideology of Old Hollywood's immersion into the mainstream postmodern content of today. Understanding the concept of binocular vision will be useful later in the comparison of its use in Czech New Wave film and disregard for in New Hollywood.

Cinema is paradoxical in its volatile state as being an art and commerce, constantly redefining the present and archiving the past. Like a body of water, cinema flows in the direction of time. It's surface, where one would drink from, is made up of the works that have garnered the most attention from the system which contains it. Underneath are the heteroglossia of voices which are either unexpressed or unheard. One may think of a Wave of cinema as a literal wave which builds up energy beneath in its rejection of the system which contains it. By utilizing both the context of the surface (economic structure, technology, stylistic influence) and multiplicity of ideas beneath (non-dominant ideology), the Wave rises and crashes, disrupting flow momentarily and forever altering the surface pattern.

It is necessary to first redefine the cinematic Wave by analyzing its terminological implications in the retrospective associations to past cinematic movements. Using Cihat Arinc's list "A Global History of Film," with almost three hundred distinct groupings, one must consider the multuous terms associated with groupings of films within a cultural, temporal, and historical context.¹⁶ Four key terms can be discerned from this list: Cinema, Movement, School, and New. "Cinema", as in Indian Parallel Cinema (1952-1976) or European Art Cinema (1950-1980),

¹⁵ Kolker, "A Cinema of Loneliness," 238.

¹⁶ Cihat Arinc, "A Global History of Film: Eras, Schools, Movements, Collectives." MUBI. Accessed April 13, 2019. <https://mubi.com/lists/a-history-of-global-film-movements>.

“Movement” as in the Dadaist Experimental Film Movement (1916-1925) or the Feminist Film Movement (1970s), “School” as in the Polish Film School (1955-1963) or the French Documentary Film School (1980s-1990s) “New” as in New German Cinema (1962-1982) or New Hollywood Cinema (1965-1982). The term “Wave” is always either attached to the term “New” as in the French New Wave (1950-1969) or Czechoslovak New Wave (1963-1970), a degree, as in the Chinese First New Wave (1983-1990) or Soviet Second New Wave (1974-1978) , and a combination of terms as in Hong Kong New Wave Cinema (1979-2000) or the Yugoslav Black New Wave Cinema (1963-1972). It must be noted that these are the popular terms within academia of the English language and are interchangeable with the original verbage or metonymy (“La Nouvelle Vague” for the French New Wave or “das neue Kino / Oberhausener Group” for New German Cinema). The term “Wave” can be dissected and understood in its relation to the linguistic implications of the other terms, “Movement”, “School”, and “New”.

These three terms are signifiers of the conditions under which a Wave may be born and retrospectively determined. “Movement” identifies the socio-political context of a society who is undergoing, or prepared to undergo, a counter-culture upheaval in response to their current faulty system. “School” delineates the creative force behind the intellectual teachings and imaginative innovations of the technical and narrative style. The metaphorical setting of a “School” notates a diversity of opinion and argumentative competition of intellects. “Movement” and “School” in conjunction describe the group of filmmakers within a Wave as a cohesive force of social and intellectual agency. The group must be united by a shared dissatisfaction with the current state of their socio-economic system and in conversation with one another, and their disaffected society,

about possibilities of change. The term “New” suggests an understanding of past and current systems, hope for the future, with a new plan of action. A Wave utilizes the economy in place as means to stimulate social and political change. In summary, a Wave can only occur under the conditions of a society having: 1. A disaffected audience, 2. A creatively supportive environment where artists convene and converse, 3. An economic system who is willing to support or is susceptible to exploitation of its ample resources.

If a Wave is defined as *a collective of artists whose response to their social, political, and historical environments are confrontational films in conversation with one another*, then the term “Cinema” must be left to categorize groupings which do not align with such a definition. On Arnic’s list, there are many such groupings. A Cinema is broader than a Wave, yet more narrow than a Genre. Barry Langford defines the Genre in its purpose to serve: 1. industry filmmakers in “organizing production around...the promise of attracting and retaining audiences in a reliable way, reducing commercial risk,” 2. audiences in “providing basic product differentiation [and] guarantee that the price of admission will purchase another shot of an experience already enjoyed before,” and 3. for scholars to “establish ‘family resemblances’ between films produced and released under widely differing circumstances, and of mediating the relationship between the mythologies of popular culture and social, political, and economic contexts”.¹⁷ In other words, Genre lays the foundation for the mainstream functioning of cinema within a society, particularly Hollywood, surviving off of a reinforcement the status quo. In Classical Hollywood, only four genres existed; the Western, Musical, War, and Gangster Film.¹⁸ Yet, even in the Golden Age of

¹⁷ Barry Langford, *Film Genre: Hollywood and Beyond* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), 1.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

Hollywood, a breaking and blending of genre began to occur which gave rise to such notorious types as the Melodrama, Screwball Comedy, and later the Noir. Though, the serendipitous film which breaks any mold of Genre merely sets the precedent for other filmmakers to conform to a new commercially successful mode of filmmaking. The concept of both a Wave and a Cinema refute the necessity to become mainstream.

Similar to Genre, a Cinema also “mediates mythologies of popular culture and social, political, and economic contexts” and is “an active producer of cultural meaning and filmmaking practices alike”.¹⁹ While a Wave is inextricably tied to its culture and nation of origin, Genre and Cinemas transcend geographical border and political boundaries. Rick Altman extrapolates that “the very notions of genre and nation depend on a constant conflict among multiple competing but related notions, based on diverse user needs and varied parameters”.²⁰ The competing notions are the mainstream and the counterculture. Genre serves a diversity of needs for the mainstream while Cinemas preserves a multiplicity voices within a mythology which transcends nation, political, or economic situation. Cinema is distinguished from a Wave by its ability to encapsulate the cultural meaning across societies. European Art Cinema cannot be a Wave because of its multitude of inclusion across national boundaries.

By distinguishing a Wave from a Cinema or Genre, it is possible now to explore the conditions and implications of Waves born under differing economic and political systems. Though Waves have come about under various structures, it is most interesting to compare those from Capitalism versus Communism in the decades following World War II. Drawing from the two greatest economic powers of the twentieth century, the American and European film

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Rick Altman, *Film/Genre* (London: BFI Publishing, 2012), 205.

industries provide a breadth of comparisons. Because of the lack of popular attention and my specific interest, the Czechoslovak New Wave will serve as synecdoche for European Communism in comparison to the Capitalist Hollywood structure. Many have argued that the only distinguishable Wave to come out of America was “New Hollywood” or “The American New Wave”. Comparing their similarities and differences unravels the plausibility of their definitions as Waves, and suggests an impossibility for Wave to occur under American Capitalism.

An understanding of the history of the Czech state is essential in comprehending the conditions and ramifications of such a cinematic movement. The Czech state can be traced back by centuries to historical territories of Bohemia, Moravia, and Czech Silesia, which centralized power in the ninth century, and elected Prague as the imperial seat between the fourteenth and seventeenth century.²¹ With the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire after the First World War, the fate of the newly risen Republic of Czechoslovakia rested in what Milan Kundera describes as “the tragedy of Central Europe”.²² In his 1986 essay, Kundera synthesizes that Central Europe, comprising of the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Poland, Slovenia, Croatia, “is not a state: it is a culture or a fate” and “its borders are imaginary and must be drawn and redrawn with each new historical situation”.²³ Each country possesses a unique language and culture which has stood the test of time, and “if this identity is threatened with extinction,

²¹ Petr Mlsna, *The Paths of Czech Constitutionality: On the 90th Anniversary of the Passage of the First Czechoslovak Constitution*. (Praha: Úřad Vlády České Republiky, 2010).

²² Milan Kundera, “The Tragedy of Central Europe” in *The New York Review of Books* (New York: 1984), 33-38.

²³ Kundera, “Tragedy of Central Europe,” 34.

cultural life grows correspondingly more intense, more important, until culture itself become the living value around which all people rally”.²⁴.

With the invasion of the Nazi party in 1939, this conviction held true as the Czech half of Czechoslovakia submitted to occupation, simultaneously denying facilitation and postponing inevitable slaughtering. In 1945, Soviet armies liberated the country from German rule and reinstated Czechoslovak civilian control, though Russian influence lingered. In the post-war years, the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia rose to prominence from popular anti-fascist sentiments, assuming undisputed control of the government in the February 1948 coup d’etat. Party leader Klement Gottwald proclaimed “the next goal is not soviets and socialism, but rather carrying out a really thorough democratic tradition,” promising reinvigoration of Czech Nationalism after years of suppression.²⁵ Though, the shadow of Russia’s cultural influence loomed and puppeteered behind the curtains. This is the essential paradox between thought and action of Communist Czechoslovakia, as “in spite of their linguistic kinship, the Czechs and the Russians never shared a common *world*; neither a common history nor a common culture”.²⁶ The young Czech Nationalists of the 1950s embody this split, as they grew into the consciousness that their society was in denial of its vanishing identity.

After the death of Stalin in 1953, new Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev made an unforeseen speech, called “On the Cult of Personality and Its Consequences” or “The Secret

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Robert C. Grogin *Natural Enemies: The United States and the Soviet Union in the Cold War, 1917-1991* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2001).

²⁶ Kundera, “Tragedy of Central Europe,” 34.

Speech,” condemning Stalin’s actions during the purges.²⁷ This caused confusion in Satellite states who were growing ever aware of Russia’s despotism, and began the bleak post-Stalinization period. Disillusioned and bound to the kitsch traditions of Socialist Realism, it became apparent that their society was entrapped in what Jean-Paul Sartre would call “living in bad faith,” or, in denial of the self.²⁸ In the early sixties, the economy took a hit by Soviet reforms which standardized manufacturing, negatively affecting the renowned industrial foundation Czechoslovakia had been profitably equipped with since before World War I. While the economy suffered under standardized Soviet reforms, Czechoslovakia's long tradition in the arts remained steadfast, empowered by the advent of art and film schools. Censorship was lessened for students on the basis of exposing them to a breadth historical knowledge. Here, the younger generation was exposed to material which differed drastically from the socialist realist content they had been fed, along with the rest of Czech society, during their upbringing.²⁹ With a countering perspective to the repressive life under Communism, the students became aware of the pervasive dissatisfaction of the Czech people.

The explosion of cinematic genius in the mid-1960s, now considered the Czechoslovak New Wave, was set into motion by a collective of these young revolutionary artists, many from the FAMU Film School in Prague. Among them were the legendary writer, thinkers, and creatives such as Vaclav Havel, Vera Chytilova, Ivan Passer, Ester Krumbachova, and Milan Kundera. Milos Forman stands as the most internationally recognized film director of the

²⁷ Nikita Sergeevich Khrushchev, "Khrushchev's Secret Speech, 'On the Cult of Personality and Its Consequences,' Delivered at the Twentieth Party Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union,” (May 22, 1956-June 11, 1956), C11, Part 7 (June 4, 1956), pp. 9389-9403.

²⁸ Jean Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness: An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology* (New York: Washington Square Press, 1966).

²⁹ Peter Hames, *The Czechoslovak New Wave* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985).

movement as he escaped the country in 1969, reinventing himself as a leading figure in the New Hollywood group. Comparisons of his Czech and American works serve as an interesting bridge in understanding the similarities and differences in the movements.

The Czech New Wave is most easily identifiable as a Wave because of their unification at the FAMU film school with a common goal of spurring change within the stagnant post-Stalin Communist system. While the political leanings varied between the individuals, some wanted to reform Communism while others favored Capitalism, their objective was clear; to counter outdated socialist realism and shake the nation into critical thought. All filmmaking occurred at the state run Barrandov Studios (*Filmové Studio Barrandov*) which was funded and supervised by the Czech Communist Party (*Komunistická strana Československa, KSČ*).³⁰ It appears that their objective and means of production clash as the communist party actively suppressed artistic freedom. Yet, with the decline in productivity and drop in morale during de-Stalinization, the state was conscious of its growing unpopularity in its pushing of overt socialist propaganda. With a quota to fill for artistic content and pressure by other Soviet countries to gain favor with international film critics, Barrandov Studios took a chance on the young graduates of FAMU.

Stefan Uher's *The Sun in a Net* stands as the breakthrough film in ushering in a new era of creative liberties.³¹ The film capitalizes on the pervading aura of apathy within the Soviet Satellite states. Being unpermitted to show disloyalty to the KSČ, Uher mirrors a dysfunctional family to the attitude of citizens towards their government. With every following year, filmmakers in the Czech New Wave strayed further from realism, testing the limitations of a

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Uher, S. (Director). (1962). *Slnko v sieti / The sun in a net* [Motion Picture]. Czechoslovakia: Koliba/ Štúdio hraných filmov Bratislava.

sowed relaxation of censorship. Cleverly, they enacted their crusade through the covert vessel in which Czech culture floated upon long before the Russians; absurdism. Prominent absurdist thinker Franz Kafka hailed from the same land, deriving inspiration from their own identity crisis as Bohemian/ Moravian-native Central Europeans. Their characters are examined through an objective distance, almost never giving the audience a direct avenue into the protagonist's thoughts and opinions. Elaborating on Uher's audacity, Milos Forman began to feel out the possibility of breaks within what appears to be a realist aesthetic in his sophomore film *Black Peter*.³² Playing safely within the confines of what appears to be a realist filmmaking tradition, Forman dares to use an absurdist freeze frame in the final scene.

With a background in documentary, Forman establishes a dichotomy of quasi-documentary and fictitious filmmaking technique, embodying the consciousness of an individual in the absurd confinement to rigid standards. Forman's camera seems casts a sympathetic eye onto the young protagonist, Peter, allowing for the audience to relate their own experience of coming of age within the bigger picture of society. Distancing between Peter and the audience occurs when he becomes inexplicably impotent in a situation where he presumably holds agency. Peter's sole job at a local grocery store is to watch for shoplifters, and when he suspects an obvious culprit, he follows the man out. Yet, his uncertainty inhibits his taking action on this hunch out of personal embarrassment and the moral fallacy of accusing the man unrightfully. Caught between personal and societal allegiance, an awkward sequence ensues. The very amount of time Peter spends weighing his options while following the man incites a uncomfortably comical reaction. Czech audiences would have caught themselves mid-laughter

³² Forman, M. (Director). (1964). *Černý Petr / Black Peter* [Motion Picture]. Czechoslovakia: Filmové studio Barrandov.

because stealing is verboten and informing is mandatory under Communist law. Yet unconsciously, the audience identifies both with Peter and the thief. This is an example of binocular vision, wherein the audience is identifying with morally ambiguous characters, rejecting their behavior, and finding “the transferential poetics within the film through their own lived emotional experience”.³³ Czech audiences would have had the opportunity to reflect on their own culpability in similar minor breaches of the law, and in their culpability to inform the KSČ.

In the final scene, an avant-garde technique suddenly employed in Peter’s father’s rant wherein he looks back to Peter and exclaims “Do you really understand?”.³⁴ The camera halts in a freeze frame on the fathers livid face. It cuts back to a motion-restored scene of Peter looking horrified and confused, as if he literally sees, along with the viewer, time and space freezing around him; this is the moment of realization, for Peter and audiences alike, that both authoritative and individual thought is unsanctioned. The mind enters paralysis. For the censors, the ending sentiment would read as a tale of a morally lost adolescence in need of Socialist guidance. Audiences who too experience both this doubt and apathy of action, would feel a culpability that they are forbidden to express, and be faced directly with their own cognitive dissonance. Absurdism here is applied as a vehicle which “enable[s] the audience to loosen [their] reliance on the illusion or delusion of safety that is provided by magical thinking, and to attempt to engage in genuine thinking”.³⁵ In Communist society where intellectual freedom of thought had been suppressed for over two decades, cinemas now granted the people unrestricted

³³ Fuery, "A Theory of Thinking for Moving Image Experience," 33.

³⁴ Peter Hames, *The Czechoslovak New Wave* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985) 112-113.

³⁵ Fuery, "A Theory of Thinking for Moving Image Experience," 33.

access to their critical agency. Additionally, this dual perspective permitted artists of the Czech New Wave to pass as pro-Communist, pardoning breaks in social realism as an inexplicably profitable new technique. With the censors perplexed by their underscore of intention and boom in box office receipts, these filmmakers continued to push boundaries to the point that it began to create change in legislature. The implications of the CNW's peak and demise, culminating in the Prague Spring, will be discussed later in detail as it affirms their definition as a Wave.

While tragic-comedic absurdism was specific to the Czech New Wave as means of overcoming censorship issues, the movements' catalyst is inescapably tied to the concurrent French New Wave, which the young filmmakers would have been exposed to during their time at FAMU. The French idea of auteurship is the first bridge between the Czech New Wave and New Hollywood movement, as it rose like a phoenix out of the ashes of the European Wave explosion. In order to properly compare the groups, one must also have an understanding of the foundations laid for the shift in Hollywood. The 1960s saw a burgeoning of pent-up discontent in youth generations across the globe. Whereas the Czechs were calling for reformation of the Communist system into one of lighter Socialism, the younger generations of Americans were similarly rejecting the sanctimonious establishment of post-War American culture.

What is now considered "Old Hollywood" is the amalgamation of film technique and economic industry from the advent of cinema in the late nineteenth century until the mid-twentieth century. With the end of the Second World War, the United States, and therefore Hollywood, came to the forefront of industry, leading entertainment across the globe. The American Studio System was dominated by the "Big Five," 20th Century Fox, RKO Pictures, Paramount Pictures, Warner Brothers, and Metro Goldwyn-Mayer, who controlled the market for

imported and exported film entertainment.³⁶ The system can be thought of as a warehouse of media content which paired A-list stars to formulaic scripts and gargantuan budgets. Driven by over productive mindset like that of a Wall Street Investor rather than a creative influencer of culture, the system fell out of touch with changing times in the 1960s, much like the Soviet states after the fall of Stalin. The studios were struggling to hold attention of the masses towards films over the new advent of television. Population patterns began shifting towards “the suburbs and watch[ing] television rather than going out to the movies once or twice a week”.³⁷ The impact of television on this time in history and its relevance in today’s industry will be returned to with regards to the effects of content consumption. With an alarming drop in theater attendance, executives scrambled to piece together even bigger budgets to draw attention back to the silver screen. By the mid-1960s, the younger generation who had lived through the Golden Age of Cinema and birth of the new short-form television format quickly became discontented and disillusioned by the disconnect between screen content and reality. Film historian Bernardoni cites that “the educated young adults of the baby boom generation who were breaking free of outmoded social and attitudinal restrictions and who were looking for signs of the same breakthrough in American films”.³⁸ Recent graduates from new film programs such as at the University of Southern California and University of California Los Angeles, sought to take advantage of this transitional state, using knowledge of the Old Hollywood system and technical expertise to push counter-culture agendas.

³⁶ Thomas Schatz, *Old Hollywood New Hollywood: Ritual, Art, and History* (Ann Arbor, Mich: UMI Research Press, 1983,) 36.

³⁷ Kolker, “A Cinema of Loneliness,” 3.

³⁸ James Bernardoni, *The New Hollywood: What the Movies Did with the New Freedom of the Seventies* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland Classics, 1991,) 1.

Much like with *The Sun in a Net* and *Black Peter*, the unforeseen success of *Easy Rider* and *Bonnie and Clyde* with critics and audiences alike proved that straying from past aesthetics could be politically and economically viable. Having a few years under their belt in the industry, Arthur Penn and Mike Nichols helped pave the way for up and coming filmmakers to pitch ideas to studios who were bathing in the “euphoria over the the apparent renaissance in American filmmaking”.³⁹ This renaissance is referred to as The New Hollywood, “a cadre of technically sophisticated filmmakers, frequently welcomed with open arms by the new generation of studio executives who were ready to try almost anything to reverse the decline in box office receipts”.⁴⁰ Pioneering figures in the nomenclature of “New Hollywood” include Arthur Penn, Mike Nichols, Robert Altman, Stanley Kubrick, John Cassavetes, among others. While the use of this term for the majority of the paper will refer to the founding group, it extends to later filmmakers such as George Lucas, Steven Spielberg, and Brian De Palma.⁴¹ Seeking stylistic refutation of Old Hollywood, these filmmakers were inspired to imitate the artistic movements in Europe, looking to amalgamate them into their own content and cultural context.

Both the Czechoslovak New Wave and New Hollywood owe their initial efforts in part to Bazin and Truffaut for their development of auteur theory. Both groups were consuming content being put out by *Cahiers du Cinema*, the prolific French film journal and zeitgeist of the French New Wave, through exclusive access at the FAMU Film School and distributor Irvin Shapiro through “Films Around the World” in the US. Published in *Cahiers* in 1954, Truffaut’s essay titled “A Certain Tendency of the French Cinema” distinguishes “‘tradition of quality’ in French

³⁹ Schatz, *Old Hollywood New Hollywood: Ritual, Art, and History*, 36.

⁴⁰ Bernardoni, *The New Hollywood*, 2.

⁴¹ Kolker, “A Cinema of Loneliness,” 9.

filmmaking, centered on the stylistic trappings of psychological realism, and the emergent ‘auteur’s cinema’...stark, never-before-seen artistic style driven by the personal visions and subjective perceptions of its directors”.⁴² This tradition follows the hiring of a director to adhere an archetypal script determined by a studio in order to cater to mass audiences and make maximum profit. An “auteur,” the French word for author, is a director whose creative involvement throughout the production process is evident in its inextricable ties to the sentiment of the directors persona, or authorship. In 1962, American film critic Andrew Sarris simplified the identification of an auteur to appear in three layers, “the director’s technique and mastery of form, personal vision and idiosyncratic style, [and] reflection of his or her psychological makeup as part of a film’s meaning”.⁴³ Self-appointed auteurs of the French New Wave including Francois Truffaut, Agnes Varda, Jean-Luc Godard, Eric Rohmer, and Jacques Rivette were privileged in their economic and political freedom relative to filmmakers of Czechoslovakia and the United States. Infusing their highly politicized ideology into their work, the French New Wave propagated civil unrest which led to the student revolutions of May 1968 in Paris.

Along with a receptive audience and the intellectual-social space of the *Cahiers* collective, the French New Wave most importantly had the financial support of the Centre national du cinéma et de l’image animée (CNC).⁴⁴ Being a sect of the French Ministry of Culture, they held the responsibility of protecting French cinematographic heritage as well as promoting the next generation of filmmakers. State sponsorship and subsidy is one of the

⁴² Jim Greene, “Auteur Theory and Authorship” in *Schirmer Encyclopedia of Film*, 2007. 141. <http://search.ebscohost.com.libproxy.chapman.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,uid&db=edsgwh&AN=edsgcl.2587600024&site=eds-live>.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ Sylvie L. Waskiewicz, *Negotiating Culture: Hollywood and the Renewal of French Cinema, 1945--1954*. (Dissertation Abstracts International: New York University. 2003.)

fundamental differences which to this day separates the economic functioning of the European film industry from Hollywood. The Department of Culture in Communist Czechoslovakia and the Ministry of Culture in France guaranteed funding to production companies, lessening the sense of pressure to make profits back, which is central to the functioning of the Hollywood studio system. Although the United States has a similar National Endowment for the Arts, they very rarely support film ventures and are not involved in Hollywood's industry.

Like the Czech New Wave, the political identity of individuals in the French New Wave spanned across the spectrum. Though, Czech filmmakers were subjected to putting up the facade of support for the Communist party. This is the reason why they could not at the time, nor retrospectively, be identified as auteurs. While upon inspection, their use of absurdism and thwarting of the Socialist Realism tradition was anti-establishment, their "personal visions and subjective perceptions" are not identifiable.⁴⁵ Conversely, New Hollywood like the French New Wave, were able to express their varied political stances, being mostly leftist and anti-Eisenhower, Nixon, and later Ford. Even though the studios followed their decisions closely throughout the filmmaking process, they allowed their directors to take on a level of auteurship seen in anomalies of Old Hollywood such as Orson Welles, Alfred Hitchcock, and Jean Renoir. Paradoxically, the political freedom granted to American filmmakers in a way subdued their agency in attacking their Capitalist system, which was at once economically and socially oppressive, but indivisible from Hollywood. With the exception of Stanley Kubrick, the New Hollywood directors were more interested in using their freedom as auteurs to experiment with form and "although their films sometimes carry on an ideological debate with the culture that

⁴⁵ Greene, "Auteur Theory and Authorship," 141.

breeds them, they never confront that culture with another ideology, with other ways of seeing itself, with social and political possibilities that are new and challenging”.⁴⁶ While they certainly shocked audiences with violent, sexual, counter-culture content, in defying Old Hollywood tradition, their effort to capture attention by audience-identification tactics hindered their political agency.

New Hollywood’s lack of a unifying force such as *Cahiers* or FAMU, where artists both conversed in person and in their bodies of work to establish a common ideology, caused them to be isolated, “without community or security”.⁴⁷ Directors grouped with New Hollywood such as Hal Ashby, Robert Altman, Francis Ford Coppola, and Martin Scorsese might certainly have been aware of each other's work, or had conversations together, floating around the same social groups, but did not have a space or idea to conglomerate around. One might claim that producer Roger Corman could provide the uniting link by jumpstarting the careers of Dennis Hopper, John Sayles, Martin Scorsese. His devotion to low-budget pictures “under the aegis of American International pictures... offered [them] an entry into the film business and simultaneously something to escape from”.⁴⁸ Yet, with no ideological link or communication within their experimentation, their body of work cannot be examined as a force which aimed to make statement on their current political upheaval. For the Czech New Wave, technique varied, but they all utilized absurdism to create fissures in the mandated realist tradition in order to subvert Communist ideals and suggest the possibility of liberalized reforms within the government.

There is an unspecificity in New Hollywood’s aim, other than to reinvent the system from that of

⁴⁶ Kolker, “A Cinema of Loneliness,” 10.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid, 160.

Old Hollywood. Instead, one can generally categorize their films as successful in backing the counter-culture revolution in America by “integrating, in narrative incidental ways, story information and stylistic devices counterproductive to narrative purpose... place an uncommon emphasis on irresolution... and prompt spectator reponses more uncertain and discomfoting than those of more typical Hollywood cinema”.⁴⁹ The range of sensibility in the directors of New Hollywood is emblematic of their freedom as auteurs, but ultimate failure to unite and use their agency to create political upheaval.

In his essay “Hard Hats and Movie Brats: Auteurism and the Class Politics of the New Hollywood,” Nystrom poses that for American filmmakers, “auteurism presented itself as an infusion of cultural capital that promised to elevate cinema's class standing”.⁵⁰ Whereas in Europe auteurism enabled filmmakers to define their generation within a nation through culturally significant film-art, Americans revered film as an industry of commodity. For the Baby Boomers who were coming into consciousness in the late 1960s and early 70s, sustaining the American dream and promise of social mobility was sanctified in cultural capital. One may think about the “masses” in American Capitalism as what Barbara and John Ehrenreich term the “professional-managerial class (PMC) as ‘consisting of salaried mental workers who do not own the means of production and whose major function in the social division of labor may be described broadly as the reproduction of capitalist culture and capitalist class relations’”.⁵¹ The Baby Boomers would have been situated as the newly graduated second generation of PMC’s

⁴⁹ Todd Berliner, "Narrative Incongruity in Seventies Cinema" in *Hollywood Incoherent* (University of Texas Press, 2010,) 25. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7560/722798.5>.

⁵⁰ Derek Nystrom, “Hard Hats and Movie Brats: Auteurism and the Class Politics of the New Hollywood,” 2004. no. 3: 18. doi:10.1353/cj.2004.0022.

⁵¹ Ibid.

since the Great Depression, causing intergenerational conflict in negotiating “the relationship between cultural capital and the PMC”.⁵² The political attitude New Hollywood caters to Baby Boomer’s who were at once rejecting social conformity of the 50s and reaping the economic haven of Capitalist industry, emerging as what is now known as the cultural left.

Moral ambiguity is pervasive in New Hollywood protagonists, usually of the PMC class, who become martyr figures posited against a general authoritarian system. Proletariat class characters are also typical in Czech cinema, being both out of necessity to satisfy appearance of the realist tradition and to reflect the absurdities of character behavior in the audience themselves. While the morally ambiguous character-actions of Czech films are confrontational to the viewer, such as Peter’s apathetic complacency in a theft, New Hollywood’s framing of protagonist’s heroism asserts magical thinking and identification with the audience. This is exemplified in Forman’s aesthetic shift in his first American film *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest*, after escaping Czechoslovakia during the Prague Spring, which will be detailed later on.⁵³

Forman’s adaptation of Ken Kesey’s pivotal 1962 novel is simultaneously appropriate and puzzling, as Kesey is regarded as a leading counter-culture figure in the Beatnik generation of the 1950s. Both artists share a similar rebellious spirit and creative execution of subverting authoritarian ideals of their respective oppressive systems. Though, it is curious that while Forman’s Czech films attack Communism, Kesey’s novel condemns the despotist tendencies of Capitalism. Kesey vehemently rejects McCarthyism, which is the practice of making accusations without evidence. This definition is also applicable to the system of surveillance under

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Zaentz, S. (Producer), Douglas, M. (Producer), & Forman, M. (Director). (1975). *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest* [Motion Picture]. United States: Fantasy Films.

Communism in which “comrades” were encouraged to be informants of anti-Communist activity, leading to widespread false accusations in order to prove one's allegiance to the Party. In fact, Forman's earlier *Fireman's Ball* is entirely an allegory of this issue.⁵⁴ Kesey's social structure within the mental ward mirrors that of an economic power which transcends individual freedoms. The patients in the ward are free to leave at their own will, except for the mutinous McMurray. It appears that no matter McMurray's actions or behaviors, his release is determined by the subjective authority of Nurse Ratched. While every individual in the ward is typified by their mental illness, McMurray is deemed a rebel who is banned from transcending the ladder of approval because of his refusal to conform. Kesey's specific attack on the American political and economic system under Eisenhower is as clear as *Black Peter's* subversion of the social realist tradition. Yet, Forman avoids confronting Capitalism as it is the system that granted the possibility for his continuation of making films, an impossibility in his home nation.

Being his first major commercial enterprise in Hollywood, Forman was bound to certain conventions of the United Artists who distributed it. Like in his Czech films, Forman was able to work with a cast of non-professional actors, with one major exception; Jack Nicholson, who had just completed *Chinatown* and trailblazer *Easy Rider*.⁵⁵⁵⁶ The creative liberties granted by the studio were clear-cut in comparison to the censorship of Barrandov Studios. Though, being privately funded rather than by the state with limitless resources and national quotas to fill, Forman adhered to a more or less conventional style. His mastery of filmmaking is undoubtedly

⁵⁴ Hájek, R. (Producer), & Forman, M. (Director). (1967). *The fireman's ball*. [Motion Picture]. United States: Filmové studio Barrandov.

⁵⁵ Evans, R. (Producer), & Polanski, R. (Director). (1974). *Chinatown*. [Motion Picture]. United States: Paramount Pictures.

⁵⁶ Fonda, P. (Producer), & Hopper, D. (Director). (1969). *Easy rider* [Motion Picture]. United States: Columbia Pictures.

evident in his visual execution and direction, but is not emblematic of any nation or stance.

Pauline Kael observes the best-selling novel as “contain[ing] the prophetic essence of the whole Vietnam period of revolutionary politics going psychedelic,” while Roger Ebert delinates the film as “toned down for the 1970s into a parable about society’s enforcement of conformism, [and] almost overlooked the realities of mental illness in order to turn the patients into a group of cuddly characters ripe for McMurphy’s cheerleading”.⁵⁷ This should be read not as a belittling of the film’s success and reverence in New Hollywood’s history, but as an example of New Hollywood’s relative conservatism and refrain from specificity of the issues it addresses.

While *Black Peter* engages the viewer with a seemingly realist world, he utilizes tragi-comedic absurdism to subvert expectations and confront the audience with their own complacency in the pitfalls of Communism. *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest* attacks a generalized idea of authority, failing to address the audience and include them in part of the problem or solution, “when they do depict action, it is invariably performed by lone heroes in an enormously destructive and anti-social manner, further affirming that actual change, collectively undertaken, is impossible”.⁵⁸ The audiences’ identification with McMurphy affirms their idealistic impressions of being a martyr of society, rather than one of the patients who willingly participates in conformity. In the end, McMurphy is disillusioned by Nurse Ratched’s power over him and reverts to apathy, supposedly willing himself to a lobotomy. His “sacrifice” is meant to be read as a liberation to Chief and the other ward patients, though Forman does not depict what his death in actually achieves for them.

⁵⁷ Roger Ebert, "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest Movie Review (1975) | Roger Ebert." RogerEbert.com. February 02, 2003. Accessed April 13, 2019.

<https://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/great-movie-one-flew-over-the-cuckoos-nest-1975>.

⁵⁸ Kolker, “A Cinema of Loneliness,” 10.

Isolationist narratives are exhibited in many New Hollywood films, such as *Bonnie and Clyde*, *The Graduate*, or *The Godfather*, where the apathetically rebellious protagonist “sacrifices” themselves in the end by conforming to the system, “these are films made in isolation and, with few exceptions, about isolation”.⁵⁹ One might argue that these narratives can be read through a Foucaultian framework, addressing our corporeal entrapment in socio-economic systems. His seminal work *Discipline and Punish* details society’s conditioning of our bodies and minds to become self-regulatory of our behavior.⁶⁰ McMurphy’s character is the Foucaultian *übermensch* whose denouement returns him to the powerless mental state of the masses. Yet, in aligning oneself closely with the protagonist, there is little room for contextualization of their situation, reading as the “I” being oppressed by the “system”. Blame for immoral actions is then put onto the “other” rather than oneself, furthering audiences’ complacency in being a functioning cog in the system at hand. Audiences unfamiliar with Foucault would discern that regulatory power sources from authoritarian rule rather than the individual. In Capitalism especially, the individual, the consumer, holds the most collective power overthrowing their system, and filmmakers who do not confront the “ideology (Capitalism), [which] many of them find abhorrent, they only perpetuate the passivity and aloneness that has become their central image”.⁶¹

Whereas the Czech New Wave directors point fingers at the audience to challenge their complacent traditions, New Hollywood tends to “evade the difficult questions it raises concerning class identity and affiliation via the use of the culturally privileged filmmaking

⁵⁹ Kolker, “A Cinema of Loneliness,” 10.

⁶⁰ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 1975.

⁶¹ Kolker, “A Cinema of Loneliness,” 10.

strategies that would come to signify the New Hollywood”.⁶² Almost every protagonist is a working class white male. It is easy to criticize this lack of diversity from the vantage point of our current media politics, but one must recognize the culpability of these films in perpetrating patriarchal structure. Even with all of the concurrent social justice movements, not too dissimilar from our culture today, New Hollywood neglected to diversify their casting and character archetypes. Forman’s previous Czech films are notably inclusive, with female protagonists and even a daring love story between Roma and caucasian adolescents, but *Cuckoo’s Nest* is “among other things, profoundly fearful of women”.⁶³ His portrayal of the women characters and the Native American character chief are overtly misogynistic and racist. Forman might not have been intentionally discriminative, but more so exemplifies his assimilation into the framework of a Hollywood’s Capitalist, patriarchal foundations. Privilege is a major factor in how both movements internalized the stylistic framework of the French New Wave and how they sought to tackle social issues at hand.

While both studio systems were willing to take a chance on a new vision, Barrandov’s precedent of censorship which necessitated subversive thinking. Hollywood also its own period of censorship issues, but by 1966 when Jack Valenti became the new president of the Motion Picture Association of America, the outdated mode of rating was reinstated with a liberalized standards.⁶⁵ In fact, American production executives began encouraging profane and violent

⁶² Nystrom, “Hard Hats and Movie Brats: Auteurism and the Class Politics of the New Hollywood,” 2004.

⁶³ Hreljanović, D. V. (Producer), Hájek, R. (Producer) & Forman, M. (Director). (1965). *Láska jedné plavovlásky / Loves of a blonde*. [Motion Picture]. Czechoslovakia: Paramount Pictures. Filmové studio Barrandov.

⁶⁴ Roger Ebert, “One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest Movie Review,” 1975.

⁶⁵ Jack Valenti, “Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA)” *Congressional Digest* 84 (2): 2005. 50–54.

trends after the success of the controversial *Bonnie and Clyde*. Because Czech filmmakers had only one state-mandated option for financing, it was essential for them to invent a clever method thwarting of censorship. Born out of necessity, a binocular reading of their films also served to instigate rebellion. Like the Czech New Wave, American filmmakers never defied the system outright, but as the individuals of the Czech Wave were bonded in solidarity to their commitment to disrupt the system from within, the Americans could not perceive their entrapment within Capitalism. In fact, the filmmakers of New Hollywood reaped their financial success and quickly rose to the top of the business with their non-conforming social messages. What the Czechs grasped as an opportunity to thwart Communism, Americans saw the “possibility of a reconciliation between a studio system dedicated to the production of movies with mass appeal and dedicated to the creation of cinematic art”.⁶⁶ This idea of reconciliation is another point of proof that New Hollywood cannot be classified as a Wave due to its unwillingness to reject the system which it is bound to.

According to my redefinition of a Wave, New Hollywood satisfies the curriculum of having an disaffected audience who sought a revolution to reform society. There was also an economic system in place willing to support new endeavours, and like the Czech New Wave, was inextricably tied to the political system which their ideologies opposed. Though, New Hollywood was not united in an ideological approach to countering Capitalism as the Czech New Wave was with communism. This could be a product of not having a creatively supportive community where artists could convene and develop conversation within their filmography. Instead, New Hollywood is arguably a group of auteurs who experienced “a freedom to be alone

⁶⁶ Bernardoni, *The New Hollywood*, 1.

within a structure that momentarily entertained some experimentation”.⁶⁷ The unintentional effect of this structurelessness within a structure is the postmodern boom of escapist, transactional, proliferation of image. So far the term “New Hollywood” has been used to describe the grouping of auteurs which some have called the “American New Wave,” yet their trends, influencing films to follow in the 70s and 80s is more encapsulating as a Cinema. In addition to its mediation of cultural content, New Hollywood resembles a Cinema in satisfying “diverse user needs,” the mainstream and counterculture, as well as having an extension across borders and societies.

The interpretive value of a Wave must be specific to the nation where it is derived. In order for binocular vision to function, one must be able to hold both a distanced perspective of the characters and identify with their situation, a reflection of their own lived experience. One must be familiar with the cultural context which the film is steeped in order to feel confronted, fostering the capacity to perceive multiple viewpoints. While one does not have to be 1960s Czechoslovakian citizen to appreciate films from their Wave, they must have an understanding of the historical context under which these films functioned in order to recognize their significance. Though inextricably American, films of New Hollywood are not specific to the lived American experience under Capitalism. With Hollywood’s monopoly on worldwide entertainment, there is an expectation in their creation to be accessible to any audience. Their universality in opposing authoritarian rule allows them to transcend into functioning as a national Cinema, which the rest of the world may learn from.

⁶⁷ Kolker, “A Cinema of Loneliness,” 9.

If New Hollywood Cinema is post-Classical American filmmaking, then the filmmakers I have been referring to as “the New Hollywood” are in fact simply auteurs that were pioneers of a stylistically innovative American Cinema which has been proliferated into postmodern media. While the longevity of the Czech New Wave is contained in the 1960s, New Hollywood’s timeline is muddled due to its integration into postmodern form. One may think of the Czech New Wave as a literal Wave which went against the flow and left ripples throughout history and New Hollywood auteurs as a change in the current of flow.

The impact of the Czechoslovak New Wave on the attitude of citizens towards their society, particularly the films of the late 1960s, was staggering. In the period of ten years following de-Stalinization, citizens became increasingly aware and critical of oppression onto their nation’s culture and history. In 1968, Czechoslovakia saw a period of political liberalization known as the Prague Spring led by reformist Alexander Dubcek who condoned protest against Russia, a decentralized the economy, and granted freedoms of travel and speech to the nation.⁶⁸ Among the filmmakers of the Czech New Wave, artists, writers, and other creative dissidents began to express their criticisms of the regime more openly in their work. This period came to an end in August when Soviet troops invaded Prague suddenly overnight, and occupied the country until the following April when Dubcek was replaced by Nationalist first secretary Gustav Hušak.

⁶⁹ Within these few months, most prominent films of the New Wave, including *The Joke*, *The*

⁶⁸ Mlsna, *The Paths of Czech Constitutionality*, 2010.

⁶⁹ Paulina Bren, *The Greengrocer and His TV: The Culture of Communism after the 1968 Prague Spring* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010).

Fireman's Ball, and *Daisies* were banned and their directors forbidden to work in the film industry.⁷⁰⁷¹

Although Czechoslovakia would be barred by stark Communist conditions under the control of the Soviet Union until 1989, hope was forged by creatives of the 1960s who preserved the cultural memory of the Czech people within cinematic history. The non-violent event which restored democracy to Czechoslovakia, around the same time as Communism fell in other Satellite States, called the Velvet Revolution of 1989 was led by students and young dissidents. Much of their strength and inspiration hailed from their former generation of rebels of the Czech New Wave. Working at the National Film Archive since 1965, Vladimír Opela is responsible for the existence of the original negatives of the New Wave films today as he fended off the Communist party confiscations, even making illegal copies of the negatives which he wouldn't bring out of hiding until the nineties.⁷² Currently, the archive is using these negatives to restore hallmark films of the New Wave, particularly those nominated for Academy Awards for Foreign Language Picture. Czechoslovakia still stands as the country with the most consecutive nominations, with *The Shop on Main Street* (1965), *Loves of a Blonde* (1966), *Closely Watched Trains* (1967), and *The Fireman's Ball* (1968), winning in 1966 and 1968.⁷³⁷⁴ Without this Wave to visually mark this period of political upheaval, the world might have missed the dissolution

⁷⁰ Stejskal, M. (Producer), & Jireš, J. (Director). (1969). *Žert / The joke* [Motion Picture]. Czechoslovakia: Filmový Studio Barrandov.

⁷¹ Hájek, R. (Producer), & Chytilová, V. (Director). (1966). *Sedmikráska / Daisies* [Motion Picture]. Czechoslovakia: Filmový Studio Barrandov.

⁷² Notes taken Jan. 2017 during meeting with Michel Bregant, head of the Národního filmového archivu Praha / National Film Archive in Prague

⁷³ Kadar, J. (Director) & Klos, E. (Director). (1965). *Obchod na korze / The shop on main street* [Motion Picture]. Czechoslovakia: Filmový Studio Barrandov.

⁷⁴ Oves, Z. (Producer) & Menzel, J. (Director). (1966). *Ostre sledované vlaky / Closely Watched Trains* [Motion Picture]. Czechoslovakia: Filmový Studio Barrandov.

of the Czech State into Russian heritage. While many were persecuted and banned from filmmaking until the mid-seventies, including Vera Chytilova and Juraj Jakubisko, some were lucky in making the difficult decision to escape during the turmoil of late 1968. Milan Kundera and Milos Forman became hailed as representatives of the sufferings in Czechoslovakia after their emigration to France and the United States. Forman, whose miraculous escape was accompanied by fellow filmmaker Ivan Passer, found almost immediate success in Hollywood due to his track record at the Academy Awards with his involvement and direction of the Foreign language nominees.

The Czech New Wave was successful in their blending of realism and absurdism to confront the viewer with questions of the present reality in contrast to (past) present idealism. Inspired by the aesthetic sensibilities of European auteurship, New Hollywood auteurs failed to experiment with the avant-garde, neglecting to amalgamate style with their own politics. New Hollywood Cinema has become an object of cultural capital which is the verisimilitude of artistic revolt. In his seminal work, *The System of Objects*, Baudrillard theorizes that “objects come to have a status just as ephemeral as that of words and images,” and in the postmodernist America, “all negation becomes impossible. There are no more contradictions, no more structural changes, no more social dialectics”.⁷⁵ This is based on the suggestion that New Hollywood auteurs failed to address the dominant ideology behind the counter-culture movement, which could have been framed as a rejection of Capitalism. With Hollywood being the center of the film industry, whose images transfer cultural object meanings to the entire world, they hold a responsibility in being the “carrier of the dominant ideology and a reflector, occasionally even an arbitrator, of the

⁷⁵ James Tweedie, *The Age of New Waves: Art Cinema and the Staging of Globalization* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014,) 309.

changes and shifts within it”.⁷⁶ New Hollywood Cinema’s inability address and clarify their ideological standing exemplifies “the situation that Jameson identifies as the condition of postmodernity the nearly total expansion of late capitalism and the commodity form so that previous models predicated on an inside and outside, models based on the concept of contradiction, are immediately engulfed by the forces they ostensibly oppose”.⁷⁷ Therefore, New Hollywood Cinema went on to transform into the “proliferation of images’ veracity, images [which] take us further away from the real which today is reaching a point where any firm distinction between reality and representation can tumble over the abyss of hyper-simulation”.⁷⁸ Coming full circle, this is the Spielbergian ideological haven which encourages magical thinking and escapism into narratives which consume the individual and rob them of introspection.

Kolker assents with my claim that “despite the influence, no ‘new wave’ in America occurred, no movement” (Kolker 10). Although New Hollywood was not a radical Wave of political upheaval, they set a precedent of stylistic innovation and milieu of non-conformity. Their accessibility to mainstream and alternative audiences established a platform for future filmmakers to test their unique skillset and ideas. Their status as a Cinema rather than a Wave does not tarnish their excellence or impact on American society, but speaks to the nature of their purpose. The body of work is formally daring and narratively gripping, “but for all the challenge and adventure, their films speak to a continual impotence in the world, an inability to change and to create change”.⁷⁹ Rather than a lack of hope or effort, this is due to the American industry’s

⁷⁶ Kolker, “A Cinema of Loneliness,” 14.

⁷⁷ Tweedie, *The Age of New Waves*, 309.

⁷⁸ Gerry Coulter, “Jean Baudrillard and Cinema: The Problems of Technology, Realism and History.” *Film-Philosophy* (Sherbrooke: Bishop’s University Press, 2010).

⁷⁹ Kolker, “A Cinema of Loneliness,” 10.

reverence to cinema as a commerce over an artform. Since the invention of cinema, American and European opinion of its function diverged as Czech culture “never considered film a substandard form of entertainment, but rather a form of expression to be taken seriously”.⁸⁰ This suggests that European filmmakers recognize their film’s agency for cultivating cultural meaning and revolt, whereas American are more focused on the aesthetic commodity, passively upholding a monoglossic representation of “Hollywood”.

In August 1970, during the zeitgeist of New Hollywood, Michael Kustow headlined *The New York Times* asking if it is the role of the artist to change the world, and answering, “If you care for your interior world—abstain from this motion. If you care for your joy—abstain from this motion. If you care for each other—abstain from this motion”.⁸¹ Abstinence from involving oneself in world, especially as an artist, is not passive but actually detrimental. The leviathan that the media has become, partially a result of New Hollywood, leaves more questions than answers for the next plan of action.

Baudrillard predicted that “the revolution of our time is the uncertainty revolution”.⁸² The works of Adorno, Horkheimer, and Jameson all corroborate this proliferation of images with developments in technology under late-Capitalism has disembodied object-meaning relations. Particularly since the American election in 2016, the mass media has discombobulated audiences’ grasp on ideas of truth and falsity, in fact and perception. This calls into question the power of media over a system and society, and how “cinema is playing its role... in contributing

⁸⁰ Ibid, 8.

⁸¹ Kustow, "Is It the Role of the Artist to Change Society?", 1970.

⁸²Jean Baudrillard, *The Transparency of Evil*. Translated by James Benedict (London and New York: Verso, 1990).

to a deepening (and often seemingly intolerable) uncertainty?”⁸³ Would a Wave ever even be possible under our postmodern Capitalist system? The economic conditions in Hollywood have entered another major shift, similar to as in the fifties as it did with the advent of television. Networks are scrambling now to tap into the market of streaming where content is becoming indistinguishable from the personal and corporate. With the rise of social media, every participant is now both a content creator and consumer.

While independent cinema has made a resurgence through companies such as A24, Annapurna, and Magnolia Pictures, they are dependent on distribution deals with streaming networks to stay afloat. Marketing themselves with a commitment to popularizing independent counter-culture content, just like in the 60s, their filmmakers are inextricably bound to their Capitalist funding conditions. This means that although they have certain creative liberties to experiment with form, especially with the lower cost of the digital age, they are still in the competitive market with studio Hollywood blockbusters. Accessibility to audiences depends on their limited distribution in cinemas and streaming networks, which is strategized down to a science. With this top-down approach, from the corporate level indistinguishable from that of the studios, it seems impossible for filmmakers to team together and make ideologically unified content. These independent production companies are still deeply rooted within the Capitalist system as they are only supporting filmmakers, albeit both financially and intellectually, who can promise a diversity of topical content. Conversely, the big Hollywood studios have found themselves in competition with the content value of these smaller independent pictures and are rewiring their politics to become more inclusive of neo-liberal audiences. An example of this

⁸³ Dr. Jeanne S.M. Willette, "Jean Baudrillard and the System of Objects" Art History Unstuffed. Accessed April 15, 2019. <https://arthistoryunstuffed.com/jean-baudrillard-system-of-objects/>.

would be *Captain Marvel* from this year, with Brie Larson reversing the trope of the male-dominated superhero genre. This is still a desperate attempt as the world would have been socially prepared for a female superhero protagonist in the time of New Hollywood. Still, it exemplifies how the term “mainstream” is becoming blurred by the proliferation of content and “political agenda”.

This seemingly endless amount of money that companies such as Netflix, Hulu, and Amazon are pouring into new shows is unsustainable. Though the consumer base is hungry for content and willing to pay a premium for it, the amount of it that is gearing up to be produced far exceeds the consumers’ realistic budgets. Now with Apple Streaming spending money without seeing a return on that capital just to have their foot in the door, there is becoming an excess of content which will force consumers to choose between these services.⁸⁴ Though, the choice is indeterminate because they all advertise themselves as offering the most “relevant” content, and no one service offers everything.

While there are provoking, innovative films reaching more audiences than ever before, it is difficult for consumers to discern between ideologies, or how the “mainstream” impacts their image-meaning relations. Baudrillard would call this living in a simulation of Capitalist society where media is the simulacra, or copy (of a copy, of a copy) of a moral and value system which is no longer grounded in ideal.⁸⁵ Consumers are ever accepting that the basis of reality is formed through notions of image-meaning relationships propagated by the media. Cinematic Waves expose viewers to the multitude of fractured, heteroglossic realities which shape our postmodern

⁸⁴ Spectator, “Apple Unveiled Its New Television Streaming Platform, Apple TV+, for Which Programmes Would Be Commissioned” (2019).

⁸⁵ Coulter “Jean Baudrillard and Cinema,” 2010.

world and confront our rigid ideologies. Reexaminations of our individuality initiate the reconstruction of society. For a Wave to occur, there must be a demand from the consumer base and a group of people who will stand to reject the proliferation of image. The only possibility of a Wave happening is if American audiences can recognize their entrapment in our postmodernist, advanced Capitalist system. This would begin with a growing disaffection for the American political system. Are we not there already? It is now in the hands of the artists to recognize their own culpability and band together to wield creative agency in revolt.

Bibliography

Adorno, Theodor W., and Max Horkheimer. "Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception." *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments*, Stanford Univ. Press, 2002, pp. 94–136.

Altman, Rick. *Film/Genre*. London: BFI Publishing, 2012.

Arinc, Cihat. "A Global History of Film: Eras, Schools, Movements, Collectives." MUBI. Accessed April 13, 2019. <https://mubi.com/lists/a-history-of-global-film-movements>.

Bahtin, Mikhail Mihajlovič., et al. *The Bakhtin Reader: Selected Writings of Bakhtin, Medvedev, and Voloshinov*. Arnold, 2003.

Baudrillard, Jean. *The Transparency of Evil*. Translated by James Benedict. London and New York: Verso, 1990.

Beatty, W. (Producer), & Penn, A. (Director). (1967). *Bonnie and clyde*. [Motion Picture]. United States: Warner Brothers.

Berliner, Todd. "Narrative Incongruity in Seventies Cinema." In *Hollywood Incoherent*, 25-52. University of Texas Press, 2010. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7560/722798.5>.

Bernardoni, James. *The New Hollywood: What the Movies Did with the New Freedom of the Seventies*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland Classics, 1991.

Booker, M. Keith. *Postmodern Hollywood: What's New in Film and Why It Makes Us Feel So Strange*. Westport, CT: Praeger, 2007.

Bren, Paulina. *The Greengrocer and His TV: The Culture of Communism after the 1968 Prague Spring*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010.

Coulter, Gerry. "Jean Baudrillard and Cinema: The Problems of Technology, Realism and History." *Film-Philosophy*. Sherbrooke: Bishop's University Press, 2010.

Ebert, Roger. "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest Movie Review (1975) | Roger Ebert." RogerEbert.com. February 02, 2003. Accessed April 13, 2019.
<https://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/great-movie-one-flew-over-the-cuckoos-nest-1975>.

Evans, R. (Producer), & Polanski, R. (Director). (1974). *Chinatown*. [Motion Picture]. United States: Paramount Pictures.

Forman, M. (Director). (1964). *Černý Petr / Black peter* [Motion Picture]. Czechoslovakia: Filmové studio Barrandov.

Fonda, P. (Producer), & Hopper, D. (Director). (1969). *Easy rider* [Motion Picture]. United States: Columbia Pictures.

Foucault, Michel, 1926-1984. 1995. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. New York: Vintage Books.

Fuery, Kelli. "A Theory of Thinking for Moving Image Experience." In *Wilfred Bion, Thinking, and Emotional Experience with Moving Images: Being Embedded*, 24-47. New York: Routledge, 2019.

Greene, Jim. "Auteur Theory and Authorship." 2007. *Schirmer Encyclopedia of Film*, 141.
<http://search.ebscohost.com.libproxy.chapman.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,uid&db=edsgwh&AN=edsgcl.2587600024&site=eds-live>.

Grogan, Robert C. *Natural Enemies: The United States and the Soviet Union in the Cold War, 1917-1991*. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2001.

Hames, Peter. *The Czechoslovak New Wave*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985.

Hájek, R. (Producer), & Chytilová, V. (Director). (1966). *Sedmikráska / Daisies* [Motion Picture]. Czechoslovakia: Filmovy Studio Barrandov.

Hájek, R. (Producer), & Forman, M. (Director). (1967). *The fireman's ball*. [Motion Picture]. United States: Filmové studio Barrandov.

Hreljanović, D. V. (Producer), Hájek, R. (Producer) & Forman, M. (Director). (1965). *Láska jedné plavovlásky / Loves of a blonde*. [Motion Picture]. Czechoslovakia: Paramount Pictures. Filmové studio Barrandov.

Kadár, J. (Director) & Klos, E. (Director). (1965). *Obchod na korze / The shop on main street* [Motion Picture]. Czechoslovakia: Filmovy Studio Barrandov.

Kolker, Robert. *A Cinema of Loneliness: Penn, Kubrick, Scorsese, Spielberg, Altman*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1988.

Khrushchev, Nikita Sergeevich. "Khrushchev's Secret Speech, 'On the Cult of Personality and Its Consequences,' Delivered at the Twentieth Party Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union," February 25, 1956, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, From the Congressional Record: Proceedings and Debates of the 84th Congress, 2nd Session (May 22, 1956-June 11, 1956), C11, Part 7 (June 4, 1956), pp. 9389-9403.

Kundera, Milan. "The Tragedy of Central Europe." in *The New York Review of Books*, New York: 1984.

Kustow, Michael. "Is It the Role of the Artist to Change Society?" *The New York Times* (New York), August 2, 1970. 1996. Accessed April 13, 2019.
<https://www.nytimes.com/1970/08/02/archives/is-it-the-role-of-the-artist-to-change-society-is-it-the-role-of.html>.

Langford, Barry. *Film Genre: Hollywood and Beyond*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013.

Marx, Karl, et al. "Critique of Hegel's 'Philosophy of Right.'" *Critique of Hegel's "Philosophy of Right"*, Cambridge University Press, 2009, pp. 71–72.

Mlsna, Petr, Lukáš Šlehofer, and Dan Urban. *Cesty české ústavnosti: K 90. Výročí Přijetí První československé ústavy - The Paths of Czech Constitutionality: On the 90th Anniversary of the Passage of the First Czechoslovak Constitution*. Praha: Úřad Vlády České Republiky, 2010.

Nystrom, Derek. 2004. "Hard Hats and Movie Brats: Auteurism and the Class Politics of the New Hollywood," no. 3: 18. doi:10.1353/cj.2004.0022.

Oves, Z. (Producer) & Menzel, J. (Director). (1966). *Ostre sledované vlaky / Closely Watched Trains* [Motion Picture]. Czechoslovakia: Filmovy Studio Barrandov.

Rimbaud, Arthur. *A Season in Hell and Other Poems*. London: Anvil Press Poetry, 2006.

Ruddy, A. S. (Producer), & Coppola, F. F. (Director). (1972). *The godfather*. [Motion Picture]. United States: Paramount Pictures.

Sartre, Jean Paul. *Being and Nothingness: An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology*. New York: Washington Square Press, 1966.

Schatz, Thomas. *Old Hollywood New Hollywood: Ritual, Art, and History*. Ann Arbor, Mich: UMI Research Press, 1983.

Spectator. 2019. "Apple Unveiled Its New Television Streaming Platform, Apple TV+, for Which Programmes Would Be Commissioned."

<http://search.ebscohost.com.libproxy.chapman.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,uid&db=edsglr&AN=edsgcl.581865601&site=eds-live>.

Stejskal, M. (Producer), & Jireš, J. (Director). (1969). *Žert / The joke* [Motion Picture]. Czechoslovakia: Filmovy Studio Barrandov.

Turman, L. (Producer), & Nichols, M. (Director). (1967). *The graduate*. [Motion Picture]. United States: Embassy Pictures.

Tweedie, James. *The Age of New Waves: Art Cinema and the Staging of Globalization*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014.

Uher, S. (Director). (1962). *Slnko v sieti / The sun in a net* [Motion Picture]. Czechoslovakia: Koliba/ Štúdio hraných filmov Bratislava.

Waskiewicz, Sylvie L, *Negotiating Culture: Hollywood and the Renewal of French Cinema, 1945--1954*. Dissertation Abstracts International: New York University. 2003.

<http://search.ebscohost.com.libproxy.chapman.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,uid&db=aft&AN=70512851&site=eds-live>.

Willette, Jeanne S.M., Dr. "Jean Baudrillard and the System of Objects." Art History Unstuffed. Accessed April 15, 2019. <https://arthistoryunstuffed.com/jean-baudrillard-system-of-objects/>.

Valenti, Jack. "Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA)." 2005. *Congressional Digest* 84 (2): 50–54.

<http://search.ebscohost.com.libproxy.chapman.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,uid&db=aph&AN=16486997&site=eds-live>.

Voelker, Jan. "Reversing and Affirming the Avantgardes: A New Paradigm for Politics." In *Badiou and the Political Condition*, by Marios Constantinou Constantinou, 147-63. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014.

Zaentz, S. (Producer), Douglas, M. (Producer), & Forman, M. (Director). (1975). *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* [Motion Picture]. United States: Fantasy Films.