Visions of 1968:
Radical Aesthetics in *Porcile*, *WR* and *Tout va bien*

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Abstract

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In my thesis, I examine the responses of four politically radical filmmakers—Jean-Luc Godard and Jean-Pierre Gorin, Dušan Makavejev, and Pier Paolo Pasolini—to their cultural, ideological and theoretical contexts. I am particularly interested in the filmmakers' respective conceptions of the politically radical work of art and their understanding of the role of the politically committed intellectual in the aftermath of the 1968 movement. I undertake an analysis of Godard's and Gorin's *Tout va bien* (*All's Well*, 1972), Makavejev's *WR:Misterije organizma* (*WR: Mysteries of the Organism*, 1968-71), and Pasolini's *Porcile* (*Pigsty*, 1969), in light of the filmmakers' political modernist projects. The first chapter establishes the cultural and political contexts in which the filmmakers worked. I pay close attention to the intellectual debates in France, Yugoslavia and Italy that shaped the directors' understanding of the role of the committed intellectual and the social and political function of art. The second chapter discusses their respective "returns" to the avant-garde aesthetics of Sergei Eisenstein and Bertolt Brecht. I examine Godard-Gorin's, Makavejev's and Pasolini's use of the montage and collage techniques. The third chapter examines understanding of revolution and revolt, highlighting the directors' different ideological and political positions.

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Table of Contents

Introduction

The politically and aesthetically radical films of Jean-Luc Godard and Pierre Gorin, Dušan Makavejev, and Pier Paolo Pasolini should be situated within the cultural and political context of the 1968 student and left-wing movements. My comparative analysis of *WR: Misterije organizma* (*WR: Mysteries of the Organism*, Dušan Makavejev 1971), *Porcile* (*Pigsty*, Pasolini 1969) and *Tout va bien* (*All's Well*, Jean-Luc Godard and Jean-Pierre Gorin 1972) takes into account the historical context and explores the filmmakers' political and aesthetic responses to the 1968 movements. In these films, the directors engage with the political problems associated with the 1968 revolts and they adopt the "political modernist" aesthetic prominent in the experimental, political cinema of the late nineteen-sixties and early nineteen-seventies. In that sense, *Porcile*, *WR*, and *Tout va bien* can be seen as 1968 films *par excellance*.

The three films deal with the theme of revolution and revolt, and engage with the problem of the role of the politically committed intellectual and artist in the revolutionary struggle. One of the most important questions that these films raise is the relationship between the ideological and political crisis of the year 1968 and the spearheading of new forms of artistic expression. For Pasolini and Godard-Gorin, at stake was the function of art in "late capitalist" society; for Makavejev, the frame of reference was the "post-revolutionary" society. The filmmakers sought a mode of representation that had the potential to influence significantly social and political life, and that offered the audience new ways of engaging with social reality. Godard-Gorin, Makavejev and Pasolini emerged from culturally, ideologically and politically different *milieux*, but their films

dealing with the 1968 revolt illustrate how much the filmmakers shared. They were all committed to radical politics and radical aesthetics. They looked back to the nineteen-twenties and nineteen-thirties avant-garde works of Eisenstein and Brecht for inspiration. Godard-Gorin, Makavejev, and Pasolini believed that radical modernist art had the potential to change the social fabric.

WR, *Porcile*, and *Tout va bien* do not have the same status within the directors' oeuvres. *WR*, Makavejev's fourth feature-length film, is the also his best-known work; it definitively established his international reputation, and it also ended his Yugoslav career. Moreover, this film is arguably Makavejev's most artistically mature work up to that point, as it fruitfully brings together and develops his interests in the techniques of collage, montage and narrative disjunction. Makavejev's work would move in a new direction after the completion of his next film, *Sweet Movie* (1974), which also deals with the problems of revolution and avant-gardism. For this reason, *WR* and *Sweet Movie* can be seen to form a distinctive period of his work: between 1968 and 1974, Makavejev was concerned with the formal problems associated with the use of avant-garde techniques of montage and collage, and the fragmentation of narrative, as well as with the theme of revolution in the aftermath of the 1968 movement.

Tout va bien and *Porcile*, on the other hand, do not hold such a central place in either Godard's or Pasolini's oeuvres. *Tout va bien*, a lesser-known film, is the last work that Godard made during the politically militant phase of his work.[1] *Tout va bien* marks

[1] Between 1968 and 1972, Godard made a series of politically militant films, both on his own, and with Gorin and the so-called Dziga Vertov Collective: *Le Gai savoir* (1968), *Un Film comme les autres* (1968), *British Sounds* a.k.a. *See You at Mao* (1969), *Pravda* (1969), *Le Vent d'est* (1969), *Luttes en Italie* (1969), *Vladimir et Rosa* (1971), *Tout va bien*, and *Letter to Jane* (1972). *La Chinoise* (1967) can arguably be seen as a precursor to this series of works. After *Tout va bien*, Godard would stop working with Gorin and begin collaborating with Anne-Marie Miéville.

the end of this cycle characterized by collective, low-budget, non-commercial, militant filmmaking. With *Tout va bien*, Godard's and Gorin's sought to reach a wider audience by making the work more approachable, and they reluctantly returned to the realm of commercial filmmaking. Like, *WR* and *Porcile*, *Tout va bien* deals with the issues central to the 1968 movement (i.e. revolutionary struggle, the role of the intellectual, the function of art) and does so in a Brechtian manner.

Like Makavejev's *WR* and *Sweet Movie*, Pasolini's *Teorema* (*Theorem*, 1968) and *Porcile* arguably represent a separate stage of his work. These two films, both starring Anne Wiazemsky, deal with the theme of revolution while focusing on the bourgeois family. In the films made prior to and after *Teorema* and *Porcile*, Pasolini deals with mythology and adapts literary works.[2] At the same time, *Teorema* and *Porcile* are different from one another, each having a distinct tone and sensibility. *Teorema*, with its invocation of Tolstoy's short story about death, "The Death of Ivan Il'ich," and Rimbaud's poetry, is both more literary and more somber than the second, which is divided between a Brecht and Grosz-like burlesque and a poetic, experimental segment dealing with the notion of revolution and absolute freedom. As this description already indicates, *Porcile* is formally more experimental than Pasolini's earlier film, and it overtly deals with the subject of political and artistic avant-gardism. In *Porcile* (and to a lesser degree, with *Teorema*) Pasolini engages with themes and questions that form the central point of interest in his last film, *Salò o le 120 giornate di Sodoma* (*Salo, or the*

[2] Before *Teorema*, Pasolini made *Edipo re* (*Oedipus Rex*, 1967). After *Porcile*, Pasolini moved into a new phase with *Medea* (1969) and the so-called Trilogy of Life: *Il Decamerone* (*The Decameron*, 1971), *I racconti di Canterbury* (*The Cantebury Tales*, 1972), and *Il fiore delle mille e una notte* (*A Thousand and One Nights*, 1974).

120 Days of Sodom, 1975): the link between bourgeois decadence and sadism, and the nature of authentic freedom.

Through an analysis of the corpus, relevant texts written by the filmmakers, and relevant contemporaneous critical and theoretical material, I attempt to account for the similarities in Godard's, Makavejev's and Pasolini's political-artistic projects that were realized in the aftermath the 1968 movement. The similarities in their works can be partly explained by the influence of the historical avant-garde and the contemporary transnational cultural developments. Post-WWII modernist experimentation had begun to appear outdated, and its influence was supplanted by that of Sergei Eisenstein, Dziga Vertov and Bertolt Brecht, who became the heroes of revolutionary art. As Godard would phrase it echoing the Soviet avant-gardists, there was a desire to find "new form for new content" in the hope that a society increasingly defined by conformism, consumerism and technological advancement could be changed.

The revival of interest in "revolutionary art" found expression in new ideas about authorship, the role of the politically committed artist and intellectual, and his relationship to the audience. I examine the ways in which these filmmakers respond to the important contemporary ideas and cultural debates about political commitment in art. One important debate that shaped leftist discourses about art was the Brecht-Lukács debate from the nineteen-thirties about experimentalism in art, which resurfaced in the nineteen-sixties. In 1960, the avant-garde journal *Tel Quel* was launched by a group of young writers who championed the *nouveau roman* and other avant-garde art. By the end of that decade, *Tel Quel* had turned toward radical politics. In 1968 Roland Barthes published his influential 1968 essay, "The Death of the Author," which was followed by

Michael Foucault's 1969 text "What Is an Author?," both of which challenged traditional ideas about art and suggested that artistic meaning is radically fluid.[3] These new ideas about art's relationship to the social sphere would exert a strong influence on both literature and film. During the same decade, the so-called Italian *Novissimi* poets would revive the avant-garde in Italy. Along with critics like Umberto Eco, they founded the avant-garde journal *Il Verri*. In 1962, Eco wrote his famous work *Opera Aperta* (*The Open Work*), in which he championed artistic works that demand the reader's participation in the production of meaning.[4] In the first chapter of my thesis I aim to highlight the political currents and the culturally significant ideas that are relevant for Godard-Gorin, Makavejev and Pasolini in order to offer a nuanced understanding of the filmmakers' political modernist film practices.

At the same time, the object of my analysis of *Porcile*, *WR*, and *Tout va bien* is also to see clearly the differences in filmmakers' respective artistic projects and ideological positions. The second and third chapters of the thesis are a close analysis of these three films, which takes account of the cultural and political debates to which the films respond. In Chapter 2, I look at the influence of Eisenstein and Brecht's avant-garde poetics on Godard-Gorin, Makavejev, and Pasolini. I am particularly interested in the way that the latter three directors incorporate and develop the devices of collage and montage in their radical films.

In Chapter 3, I examine the filmmakers' treatment of the themes of revolution and revolt, which sheds light on their ideological positions and their artistic responses to the events of 1968. Godard-Gorin's political militancy, as well as their sympathies for the

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[3] Barthes, "Death of the Author;" Foucault, "What is an Author?," 205-223.
[4] Eco, *The Open Work*.

Maoist group *Gauche prolétarienne* (GP), strongly shaped the political rhetoric and the didactic message of their collaborative political films, including *Tout va bien*. In that sense, it is natural that they found an artistic model in Brecht's *Lehrstücke* (the Learning Plays): the goal of Godard-Gorin's cinema during the late nineteen-sixties and early nineteen-seventies was to draw their audiences to the revolutionary struggle by educating them about the tenets of Marxist-Leninism. With *Tout va bien*, they would try to capture a larger audience than they did with their militant, Dziga Vertov films. Makavejev's *WR*, on the other hand, unequivocally rejects left-wing didacticism in all its forms. However, he remained committed to the revolutionary ideal even though he was not blind to the historical realities of communist countries. Makavejev tried to develop a film form that was intended to draw in a broad audience by exploiting their emotional, affective faculties, and involve the spectator in the creation of meaning. Pasolini would turn towards revolutionary politics with *Teorema* (*Theorem*,1968)*, Porcile*, and *Salò o le 120 giornate di Sodoma* (*Salo: or the 120 Days of Sodom*, 1975). During the last few years of the nineteen-sixties, he tried to develop a radical form that could facilitate discussion about contemporary problems among intellectuals. His treatment of contemporary reality often slipped into poetic abstraction and the domain of myth. For Pasolini, political engagement is understood to inhere in cultural opposition, hence his reverence for the poet's vision and his martyrdom in the tradition of Arthur Rimbaud and Vladimir Mayakovsky.

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Before I move to the discussion of "political modernism" in the cinema, I will briefly turn to the idea of modernism in painting. The combination of the terms political and modernism may sound contradictory if modernism in art is understood to describe a self-enclosed, self-justifying art that seeks formal or spiritual balance and harmony, and that evinces a preoccupation with its own forms and devices rather than with mimetic representation. Delimited in this way, modernism is fundamentally unconcerned with the problem of political commitment and politically radical forms of artistic expression. Clement Greenberg argued that modernism is essentially defined by its "use of [the] characteristic methods of [its] discipline to criticize the discipline itself, *not in order to subvert it but in order to entrench it more firmly* in its area of competence."[5] Thus, he conceives of modernism in painting as a radical engagement with artistic tradition, concentrating on formal matters rather than any even remotely paraphrasable content. Greenberg's understanding of modernism is clearly inconsistent with the politically oriented, radical modernist and avant-garde experimentation.

Modernism can also be understood historically as an umbrella term for a series of national and international movements in modern art spanning the period from the beginning of the 20th century to the post-WWII era, some of which are overtly concerned with the political function of art. Avant-garde movements such as Surrealism, Dadaism and Futurism can be seen as a politically oriented, formally radical strain of modernism. In broad conformity with this usage, in his book *Screening Modernism*, Kovács offers a

[5] Greenberg, *Modernism with the Vengeance,* 85 (emphasis added). For Greenberg, modernism does not represent a break with the past, but rather one historical phase in the development of art.

flexible definition of modernism in film.[6] He argues that if we adopt the view that one of the essential features of modernism is, in the Greenbergian sense, the reflection of a medium's forms and traditions, this complicates the notion of a modernist cinema before the Second World War. After all, during these years the cinema was still in its nascent stages. From this perspective, he argues that "early [cinematic] modernism was *cinema's reflection on artistic or cultural traditions outside of the cinema*," that is the pictorial arts, music, literature or theater.[7] Filmmakers' reflections on contemporary modernist artistic currents were coupled by the their search for the medium's essential nature and their desire to establish it as an art form. Thus, the fundamental problem of those early years was anxiety surrounding the question of medium specificity. For instance, the proponents of "pure cinema" searched for the essential features of the cinematic art, discovering them to be *visual* rather than *literary* or *theatrical*.[8]

Kovács further asserts that, from the point of view of poetics, early cinematic modernism initiated three tendencies that would later resurface in the post-World-War-Two modernist tradition: 1) "reference to extracinematic modern art," 2) an "exploration

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[6] Kovács, *Screening Modernism*. This leads to yet another, complex critical and terminological problem: can we distinguish between modernism and the avant-garde—a question which is beyond the scope of my research. The problem of the relationship between modernism and the avant-garde has invited a whole range of differing positions. Călinescu, for example, sees the avant-garde as the spearhead of modernism; Bürger and Kovács see them as opposed and make a radical distinction between them; Poggioli sees the avant-garde as being parallel to yet distinct from modernism; Greenberg sees them as virtually synonymous. These positions can be further classified with regard to the more general question of the status of the work of art and the role of the artist, a problem intricately tied to the relationship between the avant-garde and politics. The critical position, most often represented by Marxist critics such as Bürger, defines the avant-garde in terms of political or social engagement, while the autotelic position, represented most famously by Greenberg, considers the work of art to be autonomous, self-referential and primarily aesthetic. The middle-ground position taken by Călinescu, Poggioli, Szabolcsi, Huyssen and Wollen tends towards a concrete historical understanding and thus finds the avant-garde to be heterogeneous. See Călinescu, *Five Faces of Modernity*; Huyssen, *After the Great Divide*; Poggioli, *The Theory of Avant-Garde*; Szabolcsi, "Avant-Garde, New-Avant-Garde," 49-70; Wollen, *Readings and Writings*.

[7] Kovács, *Screening Modernism*, 17.

[8] In a 1955 essay, Hans Richter argued that it was no accident that it was modern painters who, in the 1920s, fought to arrive at the essential forms of cinematic expression.[8] "Eggeling and I," he recounts, "came directly out of the *structural problems of abstract art*. . . . The connection to theater and literature was, completely, severed." Richter, "The Film as Original Art Form," 160.

of cinema's potential for visual and rhythmic abstraction," and 3) "the establishment of a relationship between mental and physical dimensions of characters."[9] According to Kovács, modernist cinema after the Second World War should also be understood in relation to the post-war development and evolution of the institution of the "art film." Kovács notes that post-war cinematic modernism, as an aesthetic and cultural phenomenon, becomes entrenched within the institutions of art cinema, which became firmly established by the 1940s and 1950s with the rise of a variety of film festivals such as Cannes, Edinburgh and Berlin, the re-establishment of cine-clubs, and film journals such as *Cahiers du cinéma*.[10] The institutions of art cinema, then, are essential to the development of cinematic modernism, which can be approached in terms of stylistics, aesthetics and institutional practices.

Makavejev, Pasolini and Godard are important European modernist filmmakers that established themselves within the post-WWII art-cinema circuits. Although Makavejev's and Pasolini's films became formally and politically radicalized in 1968, they did not truly belong to a movement or, strictly speaking, to the avant-garde. By the time he made *Tout va* bien, Godard and Gorin were no longer working under the auspices of the Dziga Vertov collective. *WR*, *Porcile* and *Tout va bien* depended on the networks and institutions associated with the art cinema—i.e. its circuits of exhibition, distribution, promotion and funding. In this sense, these films cannot be grouped with the works of avant-gardists like Guy Debord, Isidore Isou, Chris Marker and his collective SLON, nor with the North American avant-gardists who worked in association with film co-ops.

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[9] Kovács, *Screening Modernism*, 19-20.
[10] *Cahiers du cinéma*, (Paris: Éditions de l'Étoile, 1951-).

Indeed, for Debord and the Situationists, "Godard was 'just another Beatle.'"[11] At the same time, the films of Makavejev, Pasolini, Godard and the other notable political modernist filmmakers of the 1960s are representative of a movement within the art cinema to change social and/or political reality with their art. Through the close analysis of *WR*, *Porcile* and *Tout va bien*, I will explore Godard-Gorin's, Makavejev's and Pasolini's modernist appropriation of the avant-garde devices. A more general exploration of the relationship between the art cinema and avant-garde movements exceeds the scope of this work.

My research on radical modernist film has been shaped by several important critical and scholarly pieces on this subject. In his essay "The Two Avant-gardes," the critic and filmmaker Peter Wollen traced the development of the avant-garde in film. He argued that it had split into two separate strains in the nineteen-twenties: an aesthetic and a political one.[12] On the one side, he placed the painterly, formalist avant-garde exemplified by the work of figures like Léger, Eggeling, and Richter, and on the other, the politically oriented avant-garde of Soviet filmmakers like Eisenstein, Vertov and Alexander Dovzhenko. Wollen projects this dichotomy into the post-WWII era. The political strain of the post-war avant-garde was, for Wollen, exemplified by the work of Godard and Jean-Marie Straub and Danièle Huillet in the late nineteen-sixties, while the formal avant-garde was made up of North American, artisanal filmmakers such as Stan Brakhage and May Deren. Although Wollen's treatment of the history of avant-garde and radical modernist experimentation is somewhat schematic, his joining together of figures like Godard, Straub, Huillet, and Miklós Jancsó is warranted and productive.

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[11] Rees, *A History of Experimental Film,* 63.
[12] Wollen, "The Two Avant-Gardes," 171–175.

I use the term "political modernism"—initially coined by Sylvia Harvey—to refer to the politically radical strain of the modernist cinema of the latter half of the nineteen-sixties and early nineteen-seventies. I count as political modernists various artists who emerged from the post-WWII modernist tradition: Vera Chytilová in Czechoslovakia, Straub – Huillet and Godard-Gorin in France, Alexander Kluge in Germany, Bernardo Bertolucci and Pasolini in Italy, Vilgot Sjöman in Sweden, Jancsó in Hungary, Makavejev and Želimir Žilnik in Yugoslavia, Glauber Rocha in Brazil, and Nagisa Oshima in Japan. The political upheavals and the revival of the avant-garde in the late nineteen-sixties prompted such filmmakers to feel that aestheticism and artistic experimentation for its own sake were not adequate to the needs of the time. They claimed a political function for modernism and drew inspiration from the political avant-garde of the nineteen-twenties and thirties.

Sylvia Harvey, was the first to identify "political modernism" as "the arena in film theory within which the aesthetic quarrel of the century, that is between 'Realism' and 'Modernism,' has unfolded."[13] In my analysis of *Porcile*, *WR*, and *Tout va bien* in relation to their cultural and political contexts, I partly rely on Harvey's description of political modernism and, to a lesser extent, on D. N. Rodowick's subsequent discussion of it. Rodowick has developed the notion of political modernism through his detailed analysis of the French cultural developments. He paid particular attention to the tripartite intellectual grid of Althusserian Marxism, Lacanian psychoanalysis and semiology. He delineated the discourse of political modernism through a discussion of the development of the social sciences, as well as literary and film theory. I take Harvey's description of

[13] Harvey, "Whose Brecht?," 45-59. For a discussion of politically radical film culture in France during and immediately after 1968, see Harvey, *May* 1968 Rodowick, *The Crisis of Political Modernism*.

political modernism as a starting point for exploring ideas about political commitment in three different intellectual and ideological *milieux*—in France, Italy and Yugoslavia.

Harvey traced the political modernist trend in film theory to two sources: the politically radical film experiments of Godard—which Wollen has termed counter-cinema—and the "return to Brecht" that accompanied the quest for a "radical art."[14] More specifically, Harvey pointed to the filmmakers' and critics' rediscovery, during the late nineteen-sixties and early nineteen-seventies, of Brecht and the Soviet avant-gardists. Kovács described political modernism as a late phase in the development of cinematic modernism that spans from 1967 to 1975. He sees Godard's 1967 film*, La Chinoise*, as one of the first political modernist films, and Makavejev's *Sweet Movie* (1974) and Pasolini's *Salò* (1975) as some of the last. To my knowledge, this is one of the few accounts of radical cinema of this period that in which the films of Makavejev, Pasolini and Godard are discussed at length in a comparative way. My view of *Porcile*, *WR*, and *Tout va bien* is in broad agreement with Kovács's, and I offer a close reading of these three films.

I have also relied on the work of other scholars, who have been interested in exploring these questions. In his study of radical cinema, Martin Walsh has discussed the influence of Brecht and Eisenstein first and foremost on Godard, and also on Makavejev and Straub-Huillet.[15] The Brechtian aspect of Godard and Gorin's *Tout va bien* has been productively explored by Robert Stam and by Yosefa Loshitzky.[16] Bart Testa has

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[14] Ibid., 49. See Wollen, *Semiotic Counter-Strategies*.
[15] Walsh, *The Brechtian Aspect of Radical Cinema*.
[16] There are numerous studies of *Tout va bien* that examine it in relation to Brechtian dramatic principles. For examples, see Higgins, *New Novel*; Loshitzky, *The Radical Faces*; Thompson, *Breaking the Glass Armor*; Stam, *Reflexivity in Film*.

discussed Brechtian and Eisensteinian strains of Makavejev's work.[17] Luca Caminati has pointed to the influence of Brecht's realism on Pasolini's films.[18]

Methodologically, I combine cultural and historical analysis with a close reading of the films. To that extent, I agree with Stephen Greenblatt's view that "the task of understanding [art] depends not on the extraction of an abstract set of principles, and still less on the application of a theoretical model, but on an encounter with the singular, the specific, and the individual."[19] In conformity with Greenblatt's dictum, my analysis of Godard-Gorin's, Makavejev's, and Pasolini's films is emphatically contextual. I have thus scrutinized multitude of related ideas circulating within a given *milieu*, and the ways in which these notions have been incorporated, excluded, or transformed by particular works of art. In this vein, I view *Porcile*, *WR*, and *Tout va bien* as, in Greenblatt's words, "traces of a particular culture"—in this case, as traces of the left-wing culture of 1968.[20] At the same time, however, I tried to be attentive to the films' formal and thematic structures.

[17] Testa, "Reflections on Makavejev," 229-47.
[18] Caminati, *Pasoloni's Primitivism.*
[19] Gallagher and Greenblatt. *Practicing New Historicism*, 6.
[20] Ibid., 7.

Chapter 1

Contextualizing the Political Modernism of Pasolini, Makavejev and Godard-Gorin

It is we artists, who will serve you as avant-garde: the power of the arts is in fact most immediate and most rapid: when we wish to spread new ideas among men, we inscribe them on marble or on canvas.

--Saint Simon, *Opinions littéraires, philosophiques, et industrielles*

The relationship between political commitment and modernist experimentation became a source of great interest for many artists, critics and intellectuals in the nineteen-sixties. The rediscovery of both revolutionary politics and radical aesthetics by many committed Leftist artists was shaped by Cold War polarization, dramatic changes in the Communist and other Marxist inspired movements, and the widely spread political turbulence of the nineteen-sixties. Politically committed filmmakers like Godard, Danièle Huillet, Alexander Kluge, Makavejev, Chris Marker, Pasolini, Alain Resnais, Glauber Rocha, Jean-Marie Straub developed a radical film aesthetic. This joining of political commitment with modernist experimentation and radical aesthetics was fervently debated by literary figures and art critics figures and art critics like Roland Barthes and Julia Kristeva in France, or Umberto Eco and Pasolini in Italy.

The debates about the relationship between art and politics that were at the center of cultural life in the early Soviet Union and other early Twentieth Century European cultural centers re-emerged in the nineteen-sixties, and shaped the nature of political commitment in art. The nineteen-thirties Brecht-Lukács debate about modernism and

realism raised the essential problem of trying to reconcile the autonomy of art with Marxist ideas about its political determination. The modernism vs. realism debate, which Sylvia Harvey has described as the "aesthetic quarrel of the century," re-emerged in nineteen-fifties and sixties.[21] The problem of the social function of art and the avant-gardist's investment of the "revolutionary" potential of formal experimentation were paramount for political modernist filmmakers like Godard, Makavejev and Pasolini.

This chapter offers a comparative examination of the way modernism and avant-garde aesthetics came together in three countries with thriving modernist film cultures—France and Italy, two Western nations with strong Communist and Marxist traditions, and Yugoslavia, an atypical Communist country that stands somewhere between the East and West. The emergence of a political modernist aesthetic in these three cultural and political contexts produced new journals and publications, new aesthetic theories, and new artistic movements. I offer an overview of those aesthetic and political ideas related to the notion that artistic form should be linked with political commitment that I believe were crucial for the politically radical art of Godard and Gorin, Makavejev, and Pasolini at the end of the nineteen-sixties and the beginning of the nineteen-seventies.

Art and Political Commitment in France in the Nineteen-Sixties

In the aftermath of the Second World War committed leftist intellectuals in France were faced with the task of redefining their social roles. The harrowing experiences of the War and the horrors of Fascism set the stage for questioning the

[21] Harvey, "Whose Brecht?," *Screen* 23:1 (1982) 45-59.

relationship between the individual and society. Furthermore, at the end of the War, international communism dramatically changed with the formation of the Soviet Bloc and the beginnings of Cold War divisions. In his famous long essay *Qu'est-ce que la littérature?* (*What is Literature?*), Jean-Paul Sartre announced in 1947 that intellectuals had an obligation to "militate [. . .] in [their] writings, in favor of the freedom of the person *and* the socialist revolution."[22] He added that though it "has often been claimed that they [i.e. freedom of the person and the revolution] are not reconcilable," it is the job of the writer to prove that they "imply each other."[23] Sartre made an attempt in the years following the liberation to give to Marxism a "humanist dimension" by superimposing it onto his Existentialist philosophy. He linked the notions of individual freedom, social commitment, and artistic creation when he declared that "literature throws you into battle" and that the artist must perceive the "moral imperative" which lies "at the heart of the aesthetic imperative."[24]

Sartre's launching of *Les temps modernes* in 1945 and the publication of his *Qu'est-ce que la littérature?* two years later were inaugural gestures for the establishment of his notion of *littérature engagée* and marked the beginning of a new commitment in the aftermath of the occupation and in the spirit of the Resistance. According to Sartre's view at that time, the intellectual can live authentically if he embraces the fact of his fundamental freedom and thus understands that he has free agency. In doing so, he must bear the responsibility of making choices. Sartre also sought to develop a program for reaching different classes and wider audiences. This goal cannot be accomplished

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[22] Sartre, *"What is Literature?,"* 223. Many of these essays had originally been published in the journal *Les temps modernes* that Sartre co-founded in 1945.
[23] Ibid.
[24] Ibid., 67-9.

through literature alone; the writer must therefore move into a variety of different media. Sartre thus clearly rejected the tradition of "art for art's sake" and wanted to push for a populist program. At the same time, however, he was unwilling to fully sacrifice art to the demands of politics.[25]

Sartre's influential understanding of the relationship between art, ethics, and political commitment would be re-examined by Roland Barthes in *Degré zéro de l'écriture* (*Writing, Degree Zero*, 1953). For Barthes, the *écriture*, or the mode of writing, is "a morality of form" conceived of in aesthetic and ethical terms.[26] Sartre's idea that the writer of fiction and drama should rely on an instrumental, transparent language in order to fulfill his ethical and political responsibility is not acceptable to Barthes.[27] Barthes sees it as both naïve and prescriptive; one dramatic difference between the two men's positions on committed literature is that Barthes wholeheartedly championed the forms of modernism and avant-garde practice, while Sartre was much more ambivalent. Barthes' *écriture* lies somewhere in-between language and style; the former is understood in the broader sense, as a shared socio-historically determined phenomenon, and the latter as an expression of an artist's sensibility. It is *écriture* that gives purpose and endows with historical and social significance an otherwise an individualistic enterprise. The notion of commitment and the understanding of the historical development of literature in *Degré zéro de l'écriture* bears a resemblance to the Greenbergian account of the evolution of painting, where artists working in the medium of painting come to be preoccupied with

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[25] Ibid., 216-17.
[26] Barthes, "From *Writing Degree Zero*," 36.
[27] For a discussion of Barthes' notion of *écriture* in relation to the Sartrian *littérature engageé*, see Culler, *Barthes*. For Sartre's discussion of the political potential of prose (as opposed to that of poetry, painting and music), see *What is Literature*, 28.

its form in a constant act of self-purification and movement towards abstraction.[28] Barthes' ideas about literary language would change once he came under the influence of Saussurean linguistics in the beginning of the nineteen-sixties; his ideas change again when he adopted post-structuralist notions about the fundamental instability of language.

A new generation of critics, scholars and intellectuals would begin to emerge at the beginning of the nineteen-sixties with the formation of the literary review *Tel Quel*.[29] This new avant-garde group would begin by turning away from Sartrean commitment, which demanded a literature that was "about something other than itself," and towards a notion of an inherently subversive literature.[30] The "Telquelians," who were early advocates of the *Nouveau roman*, insisted that literature had to be concerned with its essential nature and its laws. Towards the end of the nineteen-sixties, the "Telquelians" would begin to move in the direction of politics, embracing a revolutionary avant-garde practice.

French post-war Communism and Marxism have exerted an immense influence on intellectual and artistic developments in France. For example, Sartre's ideas about engagement were important for Barthes' writing about literature in the nineteen-fifties and early sixties, while Althusserian Marxism proved very important for *Tel Quel* (1960-1982) and *Cahiers du cinéma* (1951-) in the wake of the 1968 protest, informing these

[28] Greenberg, "Avant-Garde and Kitsch," 34-49.
[29] *Tel Quel* was founded 1960 in Paris, and was edited by Philippe Sollers and Jean-Edern Hallier.
[30] Marx-Scouras, *The Cultural Politics*, 28.

journals' switch to a resolute, often doctrinaire editorial policy.[31] In spite of the availability of information since the nineteen-thirties about the horrors of Stalinist Russia, many prominent French Leftist intellectuals remained committed to the Soviet cause.[32] Although many intellectuals were not officially members of the French Communist Party, their commitment was in large part the consequence of the close relations between the PCF and the Soviet Union. Arthur Koestler's *Darkness at Noon*—published in 1940 in London, and five years later in French (*Le zéro et l'infini*)—deals with the nature of Soviet totalitarianism in light of the Moscow trials of the nineteen-thirties. The novel was greeted with hostility by Western Communists and by many Leftist intellectuals; figures like Simone de Beauvoir, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and Sartre denounced the Hungarian-born ex-communist author, and remained committed either to Stalinist Russia or to the French Communist Party into the late forties and early fifties.[33]

Khrushchev's 1956 speech at the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union about the horrors of Stalinism followed by the Soviet invasion of Hungary in 1956, however, finally forced the PCF "party philosophers . . . to start entertaining alternatives to a rigid Stalinism."[34] At the same time, in response to the Party's adherence to the Soviet Union and its doctrines after 1956, there began to develop in France a strong sense of disillusionment with the PCF. The move towards re-

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[31] *Tel Quel*, (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1960-1982); *Cahiers du cinéma*, (Paris: Éditions de l'Étoile, 1951-). *Cahiers du cinéma* was founded by André Bazin, Jacques Doniol-Valcroze and Joseph-Marie Lo Duca. The journal was edited by Eric Rhomer until 1963, when he was replaced by Jacques Rivette.

[32] The French Communist Party (PCF) has a long-standing history with French intellectuals. Its members included figures like Henri Lefebvre, Louis Althusser and important Surrealists. Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir were not official members, but were sympathetic though not uncritical "fellow travelers."

[33] For a discussion of the reception of *Darkness at Noon*, see Poulain, "A Cold-War Best-Seller," Scammell, *Koestler*, 310-12. Koestler was denounced by Simone de Beauvoir as a traitor. It was rumored that in both France and Italy editions of the book were being bought and destroyed by the countries' Communist Parties.

[34] Lewis, *Louis Althusser*, 8.

evaluation of Soviet communism, and the search for an alternative road was not isolated to France. For example Italian intellectuals like Italo Calvino and Pasolini would voice their bitter disappointment in the Italian Communist Party. Significant doubts about the hope for revolutionary change based on the model of an oppressive, bureaucratic, Soviet-style "dictatorship of the proletariat" were beginning to emerge in Western liberal democracies. In addition to the change in opinion about Soviet-style Communism, the struggle for national liberation in Algeria, Cuba and Vietnam began to offer politically committed intellectuals in France an alternative model for revolutionary struggle.[35]

In accordance with these dramatic shifts in political and intellectual life, Marxist thought began to change drastically. There was a feeling that orthodox Marxism needed to be updated. At the same time, the French Structuralist thought was rapidly becoming prominent, transforming multiple disciplines from linguistics and literary theory, art theory and criticism, to psychoanalysis and the social sciences. In the middle and late nineteen-sixties, Althusser's re-readings of the later Marx of *Capital*, informed by structuralism and Lacanian psychoanalysis, would eclipse Sartre's Marxist Existentialism and Marxist humanism in general.[36] This shift opened the door for a new generation of intellectuals on the Left for whom, as Tony Judt puts it, "humanist Marxism was going nowhere in particular, while 'official' Marxism had been places they would rather not visit."[37] The reinvigoration of Marxism, inspired by Althusser, was attractive to leftists

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[35] See the *Manifesto of the 121.* The missive, which called for the government's recognition of the validity of the Algerian struggle for national independence, was signed by the most prominent intellectuals of the day, including Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, André Breton, Tristan Tzara, and filmmakers like Alain Resnais, Alain Robbe-Grillet, Marguerite Duras, François Truffaut.

[36] Althusser became quite popular in the middle of the nineteen-sixties, but this brand of Marxist thought really took off after 1968. For a detailed discussion of the reception and influence of Althusser's structuralist/psychoanalytic Marxism, see Dosse, *History of Structuralism*, Vol. 1, 309.

[37] Judt, *Marxism and the French Left*, 191.

who wanted to "save it from its tragic cast," to recapture the utopia of the mythologized revolution in spite of the reality of its outcome.[38]

These developments combined with the social and political problems of the Fifth Republic culminated in the events of May 1968 in France. In response to this turbulent moment, many important politically engaged theorists, critics and artists on the Left tried to reconcile heterogeneous, occasionally even contradictory, aesthetic and ideological positions. *Tel Quel*, *Cahiers du cinéma*, and *Cinéthique*—a new, politically oriented post-1968 film journal—were all trying to find a way to combine a concern with questions of form with political engagement.[39] Lynn Higgins has argued that Leftist intellectuals in the nineteen-sixties were guided by the following questions in their critical and artistic projects: "Was it possible to practice revolutionary art while subscribing neither to existentialism nor to a political party? Could art be both "engaged" and formally innovative? Could one reject realism without giving up politics?"[40] And, for a brief time, there was renewal of hope in the possibilities afforded by a politically engaged, avant-garde art. This tendency in theoretical and critical practices was launched by the members of the *Tel Quel* group, whose politically radical literary criticism championed the great nineteenth century Symbolist and hermetic poet Stéphane Mallarmé, and various modernist or avant-garde writers Antonin Artaud as well as contemporary avant-gardists like the authors associated with the *nouveau roman* like Alain Robbe-Grillet and Philippe Sollers, since the "Telquelians" believed their work had subversive potential. The critics

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[38] Dosse, *History of Structuralism*, Vol. 1, 309.
[39] For discussion on the varying editorial policies and political orientations of *Cahiers du cinéma* and *Cinéthique*, see Harvey, *May 1968 and Film Culture*, 33-40; Mickerton, *A Short History*, 77-80; D. N. Rodowick, *The Crisis of Political Modernism,* Chapter 3, "Ideology and Criticism."
[40] Higgins, *New Novel,* 12.

associated with *Tel Quel* were extremely influential on French film criticism and theory during this period, often setting the terms for the discussion of modern art.

By the mid to late nineteen-sixties, notable literary historians like Barthes and "Telquelians" like Philippe Sollers, Julia Kristeva and Marceline Pleynet began advocating formal experimentalism and avant-gardism as a means of transforming society. A "revolution" in literary language implied a radical departure from established artistic conventions as the only means for altering the audience's social and aesthetic perception. The position on art of the *Tel Quel* intellectuals is indicative of their desire to avoid a "decadent aestheticism," but also to avoid placing textual or theoretical activity completely at the service of politics and at the expense of its artistic specificity.[41] The reluctance of these and other Marxist artists and critics to embrace simple and direct art forms, or any kind of artistic populism, is based partly on the desire to avoid the trappings of the Soviet cultural model and its repressive Zhdanovist policy.[42] The position of the *Tel Quel* intellectuals—an autonomous art that also aspires to political engagement—would require the backing of Marxist theory that departed from the orthodox, often Zhdanovist party-line: the affirmation of a revolutionary potential for autonomous or semi-autonomous textual practice. By the middle of the nineteen-sixties, Althusser's Marxist theories seemed to present a way out of the quandary. His rejection of the notion

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[41] Marx-Scouras, *The Cultural Politics*, 149.

[42] The Zhdanovist cultural policy was established in 1946 by the secretary of the Secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU Andrey Zhdanov, and represents a particularly repressive period for Soviet cultural and intellectual life—distinct from the horribly repressive 1930s, when many artists and intellectuals perished in Stalin's purges. The Zhdanov policy was framed by anti-Western, anti-imperialist, and anti-cosmopolitan rhetoric, and it effectively established stricter Communist Party control over intellectual activity and artistic production. Under this policy, the Communist Party rejected any vestiges of foreign cultural influences. Complexity in art and artistic experimentalism were also rejected in favor or simple, often formulaic artistic forms that, according to the socialist realist doctrine, that mythologized the Revolution and the class struggle, presented positive heroes, and depict Soviet reality in an unambiguously positive light. Important western Communist Parties, like the PCF and the PCI, adopted the Zhdanovist doctrine at the end of the nineteen-forties.

that the superstructure is simply determined by the economic base proved attractive for the *Tel Quel* critics: it provided the basis for the argument that the superstructure is semi-autonomous. In addition, Althusser's distinction between theoretical (materialist-dialectical, scientific), ideological (pre-scientific), and political practices provided a new, attractive Marxist methodological basis. Theoretical activity or "work," under this schema, was seen as a way to reconcile cultural and artistic praxis with a revolutionary political praxis, but without the obligation to view the former as a mere reflection of the latter. In addition, the "Telquelians" (and later the *Cahiers* and *Cinéthique* critics) saw theoretical activity, with its basis on the "science" of materialist dialectics, as an important contribution to the class struggle since its task was to reveal contemporary socio-cultural phenomena as being determined by the dominant, bourgeois ideology. For the *Tel Quel* critics, a theoretical and textual practice based in materialist dialectics, therefore, had a revolutionary function. The discourses of political modernism emerged out of this particular conjunction between aesthetics and politics. *Cahiers du cinéma* followed suit, and had by 1969 entered its "red years."

The editorial policy of *Tel Quel* underwent significant changes between the mid-sixties and the mid to late seventies, ultimately culminating in the journal's abandonment of politics altogether by the middle of the seventies. Although *Tel Quel* is remembered for its advocacy of a radical aesthetics which coincided with the 1968 movement, the journal was strongly aligned with the PCF until 1971, when they officially began to move towards Maoism along with other leftists formerly aligned with the PCF. Thus, before the break had occurred, the editors and staff supported the PCF's position during May 1968,

publicly denouncing the student movement as a petit bourgeois revolt.[43] It can be argued, cynically perhaps, that the ideologically complex and politically turbulent moment of May threw many intellectuals into a battle for power. Sartre, who had by the late nineteen-sixties lost cultural currency as a result of the turn towards structuralism in French thought, saw May as an opportunity to regain prominence by siding with the students—a position that Godard also wholeheartedly adopted after May 1968. In her book on the cultural politics of *Tel Quel*, Danielle Marx-Scouras suggests that "Telquelians" did not side with the students in May because it would mean renouncing the leading role traditionally accorded the intellectual.[44] By 1971, however, as *Tel Quel*'s politics shifted, they reversed their position on 1968, bringing them fully into accord with *Cahiers du cinéma* and *Cinéthique* on the question of politics and ideology. In 1971, the year that marked the turn of these intellectuals towards Maoism, an editorial piece published in *Cahiers du cinéma* was jointly signed by *Tel Quel*, *Cahiers*, and *Cinéthique*. The authors defend their "revolutionary theoretical work" against the attacks of the more traditionally leftist *Positif* critics, who are seen as political opportunists.[45]

In her 1982 essay in *Screen*, Sylvia Harvey argues that the "arena" of political modernism in film theory was the site "within which the aesthetic quarrel of the century," namely the one between Realism and Modernism that began with Brecht and Lukács, continued to develop.[46] The publication of the Brecht-Lukács debate was of great

[43] Incidentally, this was also Pasolini's position with regard to the events of 1968; he condemned the student protests, controversially siding with the police as representatives of the working class. See Pasolini, *Heretical Empiricism*, 150-59.
[44] Marx-Scouras, *The Cultural Politics*, 149.
[45] Browne, *"Cahiers du cinéma,"* 187.
[46] Harvey, "Whose Brecht?," 45-59, doi:10.1093/screen/23.1.45.

consequence, she argues, for the terms of a discussion that would begin *Cahiers du cinéma* context.[47] Thereafter, it would be echoed in other countries, notably, Italy, Germany, Britain, and the United States, and eventually enter film studies.[48] The question that held the most currency in those years was how the artist would avoid a decadent aestheticism without adopting a Zhdanovist position. An interest in this question would lead many intellectuals to rediscover the pre-war avant-gardes. In film culture, Brechtian epic theater and Eisensteinian montage[49] (and the Soviet revolutionary culture in general) would serve as an inspiration to committed artists and critics. This parallel interest in the Soviet filmmaker and German dramatist is logical considering that both rejected mimetic representational modes and developed an interest in montage techniques and devices that would distance the viewer. In his essay, "Montage in Theatre and Film," Dietrich Scheunemann compares Eisenstein's montage of attractions and intellectual montage with Brecht's notion of "'a radical separation of the elements'" of a particular medium.[50] This conception of the work of art, which also advocates a blurring of boundaries between artistic media, is a rejection of the traditional values of artistic unity.

1969 was the year that marked a new direction for *Cahiers du cinéma*: a turn towards the Soviet avant-garde and contemporary currents in literary theory (namely, semiotics, psychoanalysis, and Althusserian Marxism). Ethical and political questions

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[47] Lunn, *Marxism and Modernism*, 76. In 1938, Brecht wrote a series of essays in which he polemicized with Lukács. These essays were intended to be published in the Moscow journal *Das Wort*, but never were during Brecht's lifetime. In Walter Benjamin's "Conversations with Brecht," first published in *Versuche über Brecht* (Frankfurt, 1966), Benjamin makes an explicit reference to these unpublished essays. The text "Against Georg Lukács" was first published in Brecht's *Schriften zur Literatur und Kunst* (Frankfurt, 1967). Translations of this text into English were not available until 1974.

[48] See especially the British journal *Screen*, launched in 1969.

[49] Goodwin, *Eisenstein, Cinema, and History*. Eisenstein's experiments with montage were a result of a fruitful exchange with avant-garde contemporaries involved in Constructivism, the Cubo-Futurist movement and the Russian Formalist School. His work should, therefore, not be approached as an isolated instance.

[50] Scheunemann, "Montage in Theatre and Film," 123.

would now be of equal, if not greater, importance than aesthetic ones. The March 1969 issue of *Cahiers du cinéma* contains excerpts from a discussion on the formal and political function of montage technique that engages with the central themes of political modernism, namely those of signification and the role of the spectator.[51] It is artistic form that "generates" a critical work whose "movement" goes beyond the internal dynamics of the film itself; in this way, montage as a form is transformed into "montage as act," which is intended to impact the spectator.[52] The work of art is no longer autonomous since it is fundamentally oriented towards the social, finding in the encounter with its audience its *raison d'être*. This encounter with the audience, along with the possibility of challenging the viewer's perception of reality, is dependent on the form of the work. The function of art is here defined in relation to the social and political effect of form and structure, that is, their capacity to implicate the spectator in the creation of meaning.

The return to a revolutionary formalism was inspired by Soviet avant-garde. Manifestos, documents, and theories of literature and film were translated into French at this time. In 1970, *Cahiers* launched a special issue on Russia in the nineteen-twenties in an attempt to make available these earlier discourses on revolutionary aesthetics. In the introduction to their collection of translations of Soviet avant-garde texts, Ian Christie and Richard Taylor point to two important anthologies on Soviet film and literary culture, *Le cinéma soviétique par ceux qui l'ont fait* and Tzvetan Todorov's *Théorie de la littérature; Textes des formalistes russes* [Theory of Literature: Texts of the Russian Formalists], that placed important documents into circulation and, in this way, paved the way for a revival of interest in the Soviet revolutionary period after the turbulent events

[51] The published discussion on montage in *Cahiers du cinéma* was between Jacques Rivette, Sylvie Pierre, and Jean Narboni.
[52] Browne, "*Cahiers du cinéma*," 31.

of 1968.[53] Around the time of the 1968 movements, a number of filmmakers joined together to form collectives in the spirit of Soviet revolutionary art. Godard famously formed the Dziga Vertov Group, while Chris Marker worked with a group of filmmakers under the auspices of the Medvedkin Group.

The influence of the Soviet avant-garde practices on cultural journals like *Tel Quel* and *Cahiers du cinéma* was immense. Christie and Taylor argue that "the rediscovery of Russian Constructivism, along with Meyerhold's 'biomechanics,' Mayakovsky's 'production art' poetics, Vertov's 'factography' and Eisenstein's synoptic aesthetics, established a new and eclectic series of alliances with non-Soviet currents of modernism."[54] Thus, the revolutionary avant-garde model was embraced, but recast within a whole range of contemporary theoretical and ideological positions and contemporary art movements like the *nouveau roman*. The pre-war project for the development of experimental, avant-garde practices capable of social transformation, and the rejection of bourgeois realism and hermetic modernism—also heavily indebted to Brecht—now found expression in a variety of newly developed theories relating to the role of the artist, the relationship between the text and audience, and the attendant concern with a work's form and content.

During the same period, many French radical leftist filmmakers like Godard and Straub-Huillet, film theorists and critics like Narboni, and Comolli, and exemplary literary figures like Barthes embraced Brecht's critical-realist artistic project. In his famous text, "Against Lukács," Brecht strongly advocated experimentalism and rejected

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[53] Taylor and Christie, *The Film Factory*, 11, see note 98. Schnitzer and Schnitzer, *Le Cinéma soviétique* (Paris, 1966); Tzvetan Todorov, *Théorie de la littérature; Textes des formalistes russes* (Paris, 1965).
[54] Ibid., 12.

what he saw as György Lukács' programmatic realism.[55] In this article, the dramatist calls for a new kind of realism:

> Realistic means: discovering the causal complexes of society / unmasking the prevailing view of things as the view of those who rule it / writing from the standpoint of the class which offers the broadest solutions for the pressing difficulties in which human society is caught / emphasizing the element of development / making possible the concrete, and making possible abstraction from it.[56]

Realism is, from this perspective, not defined in relation to specific models (i.e. the nineteenth century realist novel), styles or narrative modes—"we shall not stick to too detailed literary models; we shall not bind the artist to too rigidly defined rules of narrative," but rather in accordance with its ability to perform a critical function, one that is appropriate to a given historical moment.[57]

In a 1973 essay entitled "Diderot, Brecht, Eisenstein," Barthes joins the Brechtian and Soviet avant-garde currents, examining the function of the *tableau* in the work of the three artists mentioned in the title.[58] In his article, he argues that "the epic scene in Brecht, the shot in Eisenstein are so many tableaux; they are scenes which are *laid out* [. . .], which answer perfectly to that dramatic unity theorized by Diderot."[59] In *"erecting a meaning but manifesting the production of that meaning*," Barthes continues, "they

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[55] Brecht, "Against Lukács," 39-53. 50. http://0newleftreview.org.mercury.concordia.ca/?page=article&view=183
[56] Brecht,"Against Lukács," 50.
[57] Ibid.
[58] Barthes, *Image, Music, Text*.
[59] Ibid., 70-1.

accomplish the coincidence of the visual and the ideal *decoupages*."[60] Clearly, the value of the tableau lies equally in its meaning and its emphasis on the manner of its articulation. The series of tableaux that constitute a Brecht play or an Eisenstein film are "pregnant moments" that immediately evoke the unfolding of a series of events conforming to a specific, abstract logic (social, historical, ethical, etc.).[61] Barthes' essay gained seminal status within the study of film. His isolation of these two models of avant-garde practices point to their significance for political modernism. For political modernist filmmakers like Godard, Alexander Kluge, Makavejev, Pasolini, and the pair Straub-Huillet would all experiment with Brechtian theatrical techniques, just as Godard, Makavejev, and Chris Marker would experiment with montage and collage in the tradition of the Soviet avant-garde.

As early as 1960, a special issue of *Cahiers du cinéma* was devoted to Brechtian stylistics, and the possibility of adapting his theories about stage drama for cinematic practice and criticism.[62] By 1968, the influence of Brecht's Marxist critical realist practice on the cinema had become deeply entrenched. In a departure from their earlier aestheticist, modernist, *auteurist* approach, the critics associated with *Cahiers* launched a return to Brecht's critique of illusionist forms of representation that marked a new, politically radical direction. For instance, in their famous two-part article "Cinema/Ideology/Criticism," Comolli and Narboni propose a form of radical cinematic practice employing disruptive formal devices that are capable of expressing radical

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[60] Ibid., 71, my emphasis.
[61] As an example, Barthes refers to the moment when Mother Courage bites a coin offered by a distrusted official, in effect losing her son. Her past as a merchant, her mercenary "blindness," and the consequent death of her children are all encapsulated within this moment. Ibid., 36.
[62] For an example, see Dort, "Towards a Brechtian Criticism of Cinema;" for a discussion of the influence of Brecht on *Cahiers du cinéma*, see Lellis, *Bertolt Brecht."*

content.[63] As Rodowick points out, the interest in radical form marked a new understanding of political commitment, one that asserted that "equal attention had to be given to the internal dynamics of textual form" and the "presentation of given contents and arguments."[64] The development of a radical modernist film poetics under the sign of Eisenstein and Brecht would eventually be linked to the notion of theories of language.

The emergence of Barthes' notion of *écriture* from *Degré zéro de l'écriture*, according to Rodowick, "the fundamental problem" that shaped the development of political modernism.[65] The idea was introduced into film criticism in the middle of the nineteen-sixties. It would be used to describe an artistic mode belonging to self-reflexive, autonomous modernist practices that took an increasingly formalist character. In his 1967 text for *Cahiers du Cinéma* entitled "Towards Impertinence," Narboni called for a modernist, formalist cinema which places a wide gap "between image and object, signifier and signified," and that "constitute[s] film as an autonomous and irreducible object.[66] In an article in the 1967 Christmas edition of *Cahiers* on Makavejev's *Ljubavni Slučaj ili tragedija službenice PTT* (*Love Affair, or the Case of the Missing Switchboard Operator*, 1967), Jacques Aumont refers to the filmmaker's *écriture* "of pure narration," typical of the new tendency in modernist film to "cast off the shackles of Representation" in its move toward a "perfectly closed fiction."[67] The manner in which this new modern cinema is described points to a strong influence of *Tel Quel*'s championing of avant-garde practices, and in particular, of the New Novel's rejection of Realist representational

[63] Narboni and Comolli, "Cinema/Ideology/Criticism."
[64] Rodowick, *The Crisis of Political Modernism*, 68.
[65] Ibid., 15.
[66] Narboni, "Towards Impertinence."
[67] Aumont, "Several Routes to a Reading."

conventions.

Toward the end of the sixties, under the auspices of *Tel Quel*, the notion of *écriture* now joined various diverse positions, taking on more politically radical dimension.[68] The journal's split with the New Novelists in nineteen-sixty three, and their gradual move towards Marxist-Leninism, Lacanian psychoanalysis, semiotics, deconstruction and feminism shaped a new conception of writing as an activity, namely of the "text" as a "productivity," which is "opposed to creativity or representation."[69] At the end of the nineteen-sixties and beginning of the beginning of the nineteen-seventies, Barthes came under the strong influence of Kristeva's notion of *intertextuality*, which posits the text as an agglomeration of preexisting social discourses. With *S/Z*, his project was to "create a new form writing/reading that was supposed to be the product of the notion of intertextuality," and her notion of productivity.[70] In his 1968 essay "The Death of the Author," Barthes makes two arguments.[71] Firstly, he rejects the traditional nineteenth century notion of the author, wherein the persona, his/her life, artistic project, and worldview serve to safeguard a fixed meaning. The second, more radical, part of his argument has to do, more generally, with the problem of representation. Barthes argues that "a text is not a line of words releasing a single 'theological' meaning (the 'message' of the Author-God) but a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash."[72] Rather, he asserted, "the text is a tissue of quotations

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[68] Rodowick has argued that with "the advent of *Tel Quel* in 1960 [. . .] the emergence of *écriture* as the name of contemporary, avant-garde literary practice tended to dissolve the ethical and existential dimension of 'writing' in favor of the formal and theoretical conceptualization characteristic of discourse of political modernism" Rodowick, Crisis *of Political Modernism*, 15.
[69] Marx-Scouras, *The Cultural Politics,"* 133.
[70] Dosse, *History of Structuralism,*Vol. 2, 59.
[71] Barthes, "The Death of the Author," 142-9.
[72] Ibid., 146.

drawn from the innumerable centres of culture."[73] This part of the argument points in the direction of a more radical departure. The notion of an original message is called into question because it can never exist outside of language, which is seen as being socially and ideologically determined. As Dosse puts it, there is no longer a "total, hermetic text," and interpretations can only proceed along the lines of "multiple meanings."[74] This subjects the writer and the reader—now seen as interchangeable—to new representational constraints, but also affords a greater freedom in the production of meaning.

Influential for this new theory of the text was Derrida's philosophical notion that *écriture*, not *parole*, is the fundamental basis of language, and his rejection of the idea that a preexistent meaning can be given a stable form; these ideas served as the philosophical basis for *Tel Quel*. In addition, an appropriation of Althusserian Marxism led to an understanding of the text as the meeting place between aesthetic and theoretical "work."[75] Althusser distinguished between an oppositional theoretical practice and an oppositional ideological one. Finally, the Bakhtinian-Kristevian conception of language as fundamentally social in nature was of central importance to *Tel Quel*'s understanding of art.[76] The superimposition of these various theoretical discourses made *écriture* an extraordinarily heterogeneous concept that could be applied liberally in both theory and practice, generally under the banner of an oppositional art or oppositional criticism. For example, the *Cahiers* critics began to conceive of *écriture* as a process that seeks to

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[73] Ibid.
[74] Dosse, *History of Structuralism,* Vol. 2, 59.
[75] Though, as Rodowick has pointed out, this appropriation of Althusserian Marxist theory is not in keeping with the Marxist philosopher's, rather limited, writing about aesthetics.
[76] For a discussion of Bakhtin's influence on Kristeva and her notion of intertextuality, see Dosse, *History of Structuralism,* 54-7. On Bakhtin's notion of polyphony, see Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoyevsky's Poetics*; for his discussion on discourse in the novel, which he saw as being constructed out of a various stylistic registers and "social speech types," see Bakhtin, "Discourse in the Novel," *The Dialogic Imagination*, 259-422.

deconstruct signifying practices intending to conduct an ideological critique. Narboni, in collaboration with Jean-Louis Comolli and Jean-Pierre Oudart wrote a lengthy three-part article about Miklós Jancsó's film *Fényes szelek* (The Confrontation, 1969). Narboni and Comolli view the film as a "cinematic object which, while displaying the mechanism of its functioning, is in fact produced as a pure aesthetic object and as the (absolutely naïve) representation of an ultimately almost linear model of *écriture.*"[77] This model of artistic practice is an empty formalism or aestheticism, devoid of any revolutionary function. A productive *écriture* implies that form and structure should be appraised in terms of their social and political function, that is, in terms of their potential for generating knowledge and action. A productive *écriture*, therefore, engenders an open work which suspends meaning, and thus calls for the viewer to intervene.

Art and Political Commitment in Italy in the Nineteen-Sixties

The immediate post-war period in Italy saw the total assumption of power by the Christian Democrats (DC) by 1948.[78] A series of events in 1947 and 1948 had marked the beginning of Cold War polarization, and this put Western Communists and Communist sympathizers on the defensive. The French and Italian Communist Parties were pushed out of the governments in 1947 and 1948, with the result that the PCF and PCI were increasingly politically isolated. The alignment of the Christian Democrats with US, and the adoption of Cold War politics contributed to the disenfranchisement of the Left and the Italian Communist Party (PCI) in particular. At the same time, the Communist world

[77] Browne, *"Cahiers du cinéma"*, 93. The article was published in *Cahiers du cinéma* 219 (April 1970).
[78] For a discussion of the post-war in Italy, see Ginsberg, *A History of Contemporary Italy*, 114.

was experiencing turbulent changes with the formation of the Cominform (The Communist Information Bureau) in 1947 in response to the U.S. Marshall Plan. At the famous 1947 Cominform meeting in Poland, Zhdanov would announce that "the world had been divided camps."[79] This polarized political climate would have a strong impact on the cultural sphere. In addition, the rapid growth of industry associated with the economic boom ("Il boom"), augmented by the Marshal Plan, contributed to the growth of the middle class and the migration of peasants from the agrarian South to the industrialized North. For many Italians it was a time of great optimism, the so-called "la dolce vita" treated by Federico Fellini in the 1960 film *La dolce vita*. The post-war economic miracle left behind the farmers, the urban working classes and the lumpenprolitariat. This dark side of the boom is treated by Pasolini in his first novel, *Ragazzi di vita* (1955) and his feature film, *Accattone* (1961).

After the end of the World War II, the cultural debates in Italy, as in France, largely revolved around a questioning of the social function of art and, concomitantly, of the role of the intellectual within society. The notion that the writer had social and political obligations, referred to as *impegno*, was at the forefront of literary debate through the nineteen-seventies.[80] Croce's aesthetic of "artistic intuition" which he saw as a peculiar form of knowledge, and his emphasis on the uniqueness of the work of art. The post-war turn towards history and social commitment resulted in a rejection of aestheticism and of Crocean aesthetics. At the same time, committed artists also began to sense the dangers inherent in politically oriented art. A fierce debate between the novelist

[79] Ginsberg, *A History of Contemporary Italy*, 114. For a discussion of Stalin's response to the Marshall Plan and the formation of the Cominform, see Gaddis, *The Cold War*, 32-34; Rappaport, *Joseph Stalin*, 54.
[80] For a discussion of the relationship between literature and society in the post-war era, see Hainsworth, "Literature and Society – 1950-2000;" T. O'Neill, "Passione e Ideologia."

Elio Vittorini and the General Secretary of the PCI, Palmiro Togliatti, about the relationship between art and politics was carried out in the pages of the journal *Il Politecnico* (1945-7) in 1947.[81] Togliatti's views on art were consonant with Soviet cultural policies, which required that artistic expression be subordinate to the demands of the revolution, while Vittorini endorsed the view that artistic autonomy ought to be maintained lest art become a handmaiden of politics. Still, like the PCF in France, the PCI exerted immense influence on intellectual and creative life in Italy until the middle of the nineteen-fifties, attracting important cultural figures like the writer Italo Calvino, Elio Vittorini, Pasolini, and the neo-realist filmmakers Luchino Visconti and Roberto Rossellini.

After the 1956 brutal suppression of the uprising in Hungary and Khrushchev's report to the Twentieth Communist Party Congress, disillusioned intellectuals on the left would become increasingly opposed to Zhdanovism and the PCI's Stalinist orientation.[82] Indeed, the crisis of 1956—the "unforgettable 1956"—was a real trauma for Italian Communists.[83] Togliatti's refusal to examine the Soviet past and the PCI's backing of the Soviet clampdown in Hungary prompted many leftist intellectuals, Pasolini among them, to distance themselves from the PCI—for example, the novelist Italo Calvino left the Communist Party in 1957. In a 1956 issue of *Officina* (The Workshop, 1955-9), Pasolini, who already had a complex relationship with the Communist Party, published a highly

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[81] *Il Politecnico* (Turin, Italy, 1945-47). The journal was founded and edited by Elio Vittorini, and co-edited by Franco Fortini.

[82] For a discussion of the crisis of 1956, see Caesar, "Chapter 42;" for a detailed discussion of the relationship of Leftist intellectuals and the PCI, see Bolongaro, *Italo Calvino and the Compass of Literature*.

[83] Urban, *Moscow and the Italian Communist Party*, 227. It has been suggested that the PCI was more independent of the Soviet Union that the PCF, especially after 1956. For a brief comparison of the two Parties, see Judt, *Past Imperfect*, 273.

critical piece entitled "Una polemica in versi" (A Polemic in Verse).[84] Along with Calvino, he was to engage in a polemical debate with the Marxist critic Carlo Salinari about the reaction of the Communist Party to the events of that year, demanding that the PCI admit their guilt.[85]

The political and ideological crisis of the late nineteen-fifties marked a turning point for aesthetics in Italy. By the middle of that decade, there was a backlash against the realist novel—in both its nineteenth century and neo-realist incarnations. In the nineteen-sixties Croce's aesthetics were being challenged anew as Structuralism, semiotics and psychoanalytic theories became increasingly prominent in Italy. Gramscian Hegelianism was loosing some of its currency in the face of new schools of Marxist thought. In this context, the *impegno* of previous decade had begun to loose its appeal.

In 1961, Elio Vittorini would again write an influential essay in a new journal under his editorship, *Il Menabò* (Paste-up, 1959-67), now calling for the rejection of bourgeois realism in favor of experimental modernism in the vein of the *nouveau roman*.[86] If Sartre's literary commitment was eclipsed by the revolutionary formalism of the *Tel Quel* group in France, then in Italy the neo-realist form of commitment was displaced by an interest in the political possibilities to be found in the radical reinvigoration of artistic form through modernist experimentalism and avant-garde strategies. It is also worth noting that Italian intellectuals and artists followed the

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[84] *Officina* (Bologna, Italy: Libreria Palmaverde, 1955-1959). Pier Paolo Pasolini, Francesco Leonetti, and Roberto Roversi, eds. Other contributing members included Alberto Moravia, Franco Fortini, Italo Calvino, Giuseppe Ungaretti, Emilo Gadda, and Eduardo Sanguinetti.

[85] Joseph Francese, "Pasolini's 'Roman Novels,'" 22-40. Francese discusses Pasolini's exchanges with Salinari. He suggests, however, that Pasolini was much closer to the PCI's position on art and culture than it would seem.

[86] *Il Menabó*, (Torino: Einaudi, 1959-1967). The journal was founded by Vittorini and Calvino. Pasolini, Fortini and Eco were regular contributors to the journal.

activities of *Tel Quel* with keen interest from 1960.[87] The dramatic changes in social and cultural life of the nineteen-sixties created a generational gap among intellectuals and artists. The varying aesthetic and ideological positions of the individuals engaged in the polemics and literary quarrels of the nineteen-fifties and sixties are perhaps most clearly to be seen through a brief examination of the differing positions of the major literary journals of the time: *Officina*, *Il Menabò*, and *Il Verri* (1956-).[88]

Officina, edited by Pasolini, Francesco Leonetti, and Roberto Roversi, based first in Bologna and subsequently in Milan, was one of the more important cultural journals of the post-war era. The journal inherited the political-literary program of Vittorini's *Il Politecnico*, and, as Charles Klopp has argued, marked the passage from a committed neo-realism to the neo-avant-garde of the nineteen-sixties.[89] More specifically, *Officina*'s editors tried to fuse the commitment of neo-realism with the formal innovativeness of modernist literature (i.e. hermeticism) or—to put it differently—attempted to walk a fine line between political engagement and formal experimentation. To that end, Pasolini and his colleagues unequivocally rejected the irrationalism of the hermetic poets in favor of a "realistic, rational poetry."[90] Naomi Greene has pointed out that Pasolini's essays of the *Officina* period, like those of Barthes in *Degré zéro de l'écriture*, dealt with the question of literary style and language from an ideological point of view.

It is during this period that Pasolini articulated his artistic position: a rejection of bourgeois literature, whether of the pre-war modernist or of the realist kind, and along with this, a commitment to the development of a new, experimental artistic language. The

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[87] Niilo Kauppi, *The Making of an Avant-garde*, 370.
[88] *Il Verri* (Milano: Edizioni del verri). For a discussion of cultural and literary journals in Italy, see Klopp, "Rallying Points," 53-71.
[89] Ibid., 61.
[90] O'Neill, "*Passione e ideologia*,": 346-62.

latter was for him a tortured quest, a constant movement between a lifelong passion for the "ivory tower" of art and culture, and a rejection of it motivated by ideological concerns; a desire to move from the inner and personal to the social and historical.[91] Thus, in an important 1957 essay, "La libertá stilistica" [Stylistic Freedom], Pasolini argued that "the operation of various experimentalisms is based on a choice *antecedent to that of style*, and [. . .] can be termed an ideological choice: a 'social commitment'."[92] Stylistic freedom, understood by Pasolini as fundamentally apolitical, was for him merely an empty formalism. This position would place a huge gap between the author-filmmaker and the artists of the neo-avant-garde—a point to which we will return.

The *Novissimi* [The Newest], poets and the members of the *Gruppo 63* associated with the journal *Il Verri*, developed an entirely new conception of the work of art based on avant-garde practices. Their interest in formal matters and radical aesthetics, which was championed by Umberto Eco in his *Opera aperta* (*The Open Work*, 1962) represented a new kind of political commitment. The neo-avant-garde and the new critical approach to art emerged out of a context of growing disillusionment with the PCI and the Communist movement, and were shaped by avant-garde experiments in France, Germany and the United States. For this new generation of artists, the formal operations of the work of art were viewed as being of fundamental importance, both in relation to artistic language and its subject matter.[93] Among the major influences on the neo-avant-garde were the *nouveau roman*, the American post-war avant-garde poetry of Charles

[91] When asked why he feels himself to be "a force of the Past," Pasolini answered: "Even my wildest experiments never depart from a determining love for the great European and Italian tradition. We must take the monopoly of tradition away from the traditionalists." Siciliano, *Pasolini*, 260.
[92] *Officina* 9/10 (1957): 341-46.
[93] Though the neo-avant-garde poets considered themselves united in their commitment to a radically new artistic project, they were ultimately a rather heterogeneous group. Its members differed on important philosophical and ideological matters. For a detailed discussion of the two camps of the neo-avant-garde, see Picchione, *The New Avant-garde in Italy*.

Olson, the avant-garde music of John Cage, and in the visual arts, Abstract Expressionism and Informal art. In addition, many of the neo-avant-gardists looked back to the political project of the pre-war avant-garde.

In his famous 1962 work *Opera aperta*, Umberto Eco sought to articulate the artistic program of the neo-avant-garde.[94] In this work, Eco first establishes two opposed principles of artistic form: a closing off that is best exemplified by the development of the devices of Renaissance perspective, and that of openness, which allows for a certain degree of multiplicity in meaning—even though neither meaning nor representation are called into question. His interest lies more specifically in describing a new modern poetics of the "work in movement," the formal structure of which is best suited to the crisis of post-war modernity. Eco insists that in this type of work, meaning is indefinite since it is shaped by, in the words of the Belgian composer Henri Pousseur, "an inexhaustible network of relationships," which denies the possibility of one securely established, decisive reading, and thus of a traditional hermeneutic approach.[95] The radically open work is structured in a way that demands the reader's participation in the act of creation.[96] Even though he advocates a poetics of radical ambiguity, Eco does not deny authorial intention, and insists that the avant-garde work does not devolve into compositional or structural chaos. Eco's book anticipates Barthes' notions of the "readerly" and "writerly" text, described in *S/Z*, and also his concept of the literary text, articulated in the famous 1967 essay, "The Death of the Author."[97] The "readerly" text, Barthes maintained, "holds together," as it prepares "its defense against the enemy that

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[94] Eco, *The Open Work*.
[95] Ibid., 11.
[96] Ibid.
[97] Barthes, *S/Z*; Barthes, "Death of the Author."

may force it to acknowledge the scandal of some illogicality, some disturbance of 'common sense'."[98] In inaugurating the "writerly" text, Barthes called for a literature that sees "to make the reader no longer a consumer, but a producer of the text."[99] In "The Death of the Author," Barthes also privileges the role of the reader in the creation of meaning. By arguing that the notion of the author, both as a real entity and as the organizing principle behind the work, must be dispensed with altogether, he goes much further towards a relativist conception of language and representation.

The Italian literary polemics of the nineteen-sixties took place within the pages *Il Verri* and *Il Menabò*—one of the most important journal of the nineteen-sixties. The latter was devoted to a publication and discussion of literature within the larger domestic socio-cultural context, in keeping with Vittorini's aims for his first post-war journal *Il Politecnico*. In addition, *Il Menabò* did not restrict itself to the Italian literary world and, in taking an internationalist perspective, published articles by important literary figures like Barthes, Maurice Blanchot, and Hans Magnus Enzenberger. Although Vittorini's position with respect to artistic and cultural renewal differed from that of *Il Verri*, he gave voice to important avant-garde poets by publishing Edoardo Sanguineti, Antonio Porta, Elio Pagliarani as well as Eco's critical texts in support of the avant-garde. The fourth volume of *Il Menabò* was devoted to the problem of the relationship between art and industrial society, sparking a literary polemic that continued into the nineteen-sixties. A 1962 issue of the journal featured Umberto Eco's famous essay "Del modo di formare come impegno sulla realitá (Form as Social Commitment)," along with 1962 Italo

[98] Barthes, *S/Z*, 156.
[99] Ibid., 4.

Calvino's "La sfida al labirinto (Defying the Labyrinth)."[100] The essays represent two diametrically opposed views with regard to a variety of seminal issues: the avant-garde art and its approach to artistic form, the question of artistic autonomy, the status of historical consciousness, and, ultimately, of humanist values. Eco and the Italian literary avant-garde rejected literary conventions and codes since its members believed they had lost their expressive and communicative potential—a position that had aesthetic, cultural and political implications.

In "Form as Social Commitment," Eco argued that the only way to make an impact within the socio-political sphere, to renew *impegno*, was to revolt against an entire system of artistic forms and conventions, not merely because they have become worn and tired, but because they belong to a particular world view that is no longer valid. Although, by virtue of this denunciation, the artist "condemns himself to non-communication," his aggressive gesture is a necessary form of rejection of a certain "social model."[101] Eco's notion of the primacy of formal activity is best articulated in his assertion that "the only meaningful way in which art can speak of man and his world is by organizing its form in a particular way and *not by making pronouncements with them*."[102] The formal means adopted by an artist, his "way of looking at the world," must correspond to modern, alienated society. The avant-gardist must assume the "same alienated language in which [society] expresses itself."[103] In this way, artistic form, in and of itself, becomes a social commitment, or as Eco calls it, "the only form" that an

[100] *Il Menabó* 5 (1962). For a discussion of the essays see Picchione, *The New Avant-Garde*, 34-43.
[101] Eco, *The Open Work*, 140.
[102] Ibid., 142.
[103] Ibid., 150.

outdated humanism "can assume."[104] In this essay, Eco clearly sympathizes with the historic avant-garde's project to transform society through a new art, to renew and alter cognition, to make new kinds of demands on the public, and to confront the spectator with the language of the everyday and the banal. But his emphasis on the irrelevance and ineffectualness of the "pronouncement" together with his assimilation of formal play into politicized avant-garde programs would be seen as problematic, even cynical, by certain left-leaning intellectuals.

Calvino, on the other hand, argued that the anti-humanism of the *nouveau roman* (specifically Alain Robbe-Grillet's 1959 work *Dans le labyrinthe* [In the Labyrinth]), its obsessive interest in the formal operations of narrative and its irrationalism amounted to cynicism, to a "death of the self, absorbed by the world of objects."[105] Eco's proposition that the new art should "delve into the world" and adopt its "alienated language" in order to "demystify it" amounts, for Calvino, to a surrender to the labyrinth.[106] Pasolini and Leonetti both sympathized with Calvino's position on the avant-garde. In 1966, Pasolini released the trago-comedic film, *Uccellacci e uccellini* (Hawks and Sparrows, 1966), which heralded the end of ideology and commitment. That same year, in an essay entitled "Technical Confessions," Pasolini offered support for Calvino's argument by drawing parallels between the *nouveau roman* and neocapitalism. Around the same time, he also wrote an essay entitled "The End of the Avant-garde" in which he condemned the "aggressive exhibitionism" of the literary avant-garde. In the more substantive portions of the text, he rejects a style which rids language of its expressive function and becomes a

[104] Ibid., 153.
[105] Picchione, *The New Avant-Garde*, 41.
[106] Ibid., 150.

"flat and regular form."[107] The avant-garde poet's destructive gesture will, "by destroying the social (literary) values of the language, destroying the significative and metaphoric force of the word, [and] finally destroying his own writing and his own temptation to write" and ultimately destroying himself, end in his becoming "insignificant as an actor of a simple and absolute protest."[108] For Pasolini, then, this irrational, aggressive desire to "destroy" the system of literary codes can have neither artistic nor socio-political value since, as Calvino argued, it results in a "death of the self." This debate is representative of the fervent attempts by intellectuals and artists during the nineteen-sixties to revive commitment without submitting either to Lukácsian realism, or, to put it in Marxist terms, a decadent aestheticism.

Thus, in Italy, as in France, the divergent understandings of the function of art under "neocapitalism" caused fierce debate. There was a lack of consensus on what constituted a new political commitment, especially in its relation to the project for a renewal of artistic forms and critical practices. Situating Pasolini within the context of the discourse of political modernism is made complicated by the contradictory and rhetorical nature of his theoretical and critical writings. As we have seen his view on the literary neo-avant-garde and the contemporary Italian theater was unambiguously negative. The filmmaker-poet was pessimistic about the artistic and political possibilities of the experimentation of *Gruppo 63* and the Italian avant-garde theater. Indeed, he viewed the individual artists associated with these currents as diletantes at best and opportunists at worst ("little friars").[109] While there is no doubt that Pasolini's view of the avant-gardists was the consequence of their divergent positions on the aesthetic, cultural and social

[107] Pasolini, *Heretical Empiricism*, 128.
[108] Ibid.
[109] Ibid., 126.

functions of art, his polemics with them also stemmed from a private, individual sense of disappointment with his diminished status in the literary world.

Despite his antagonism toward the avant-garde, a close examination of Pasolini's artistic project in the late nineteen-sixties reveals his apparent commitment to a radical modernist poetics. Both his artistic endeavors and his critical writings were enriched by his encounter with the contemporary avant-garde in Italy and abroad, and with the theoretical developments in psychoanalysis, Marxist thought, semiotics, and finally, with the politically radical, modernist cinema of Godard, Straub-Huillet, Miklós Janscó, and Rocha. Pasolini's formally and politically radical films of the late 1960s are distinctively Italian, and, at the same time, international.

In his discussion of the differences between the Pasolinian, neo-experimental current and the neo-avant-garde, John Gatt-Rutter posited the notion that "what the two rival movements had in common was greater than what divided them."[110] He argues that "both [movements] can be seen as part and parcel of the radical transformation of Italian culture," that sought to "attack, with whatever means, through whatever medium, [of] the discourse of Power itself."[111] Pasolini shared with the avant-gardists both an aspiration to effect an ideological and cultural transformation and a passionate concern for the renewal of artistic form.

In his essay on the end of the avant-garde, Pasolini discusses Lucien Goldman's concept of literature. As Pasolini understands Goldman, a Marxist socialist scientist and literary theorist, literary value, conceived in social and political terms, should be

[110] Gatt-Rutter, "The Aftermath," 557.
[111] Ibid., 557.

appraised according to its content rather than its form. Apropos Goldman's argument, Pasolini postulates the following:

> It is necessary, I have said, to analyze the linguistic structure of a work and to integrate the analysis of the structure of the plot, as effected by Goldman. Here I believe there can be a frank point of agreement and understanding between myself and the avant-garde movements. And it is on this frank point that there had been, I repeat, a moment of necessity of the avant-garde movements (at the beginning of the still not reconsidered and not accepted Marxist crisis, and of the new "collective consciousness" of the neocapitalist bourgeoisies).[112]

When faced with this orthodox Marxist view of literature, Pasolini expresses sympathy for the avant-garde's concern with artistic form and structure. Pasolini's position on formalism finds further elaboration in other essays written during this time. In his 1965 essay, "The Cinema of Poetry," Pasolini describes an emerging language of poetry in film, which represents a rejection of its vulgar, artless cousin, the "cinema of prose." In their poetic cinema, Godard, Glauber Rocha, Jancsó, Michelangelo Antonioni and Bernardo Bertolucci are preoccupied with the formal problems of the medium. Their works are based in poetic intuition, and exhibit a sophisticated technical awareness and a highly developed stylistic register. Yet, the formalist cinema, whose concerns are concordant with the neo-avant-garde and the *école du regard* (the New Novel), makes Pasolini uneasy because of his "Marxist morality."[113] Indeed, a Barthesian "morality of form" was, for Pasolini, the fundamental obligation of artistic activity. During this period,

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[112] Pasolini, *Heretical Empiricism*, 131.
[113] Ibid., 185.

he searched for a radical form as a means to rediscover the mandate of the writer. At the end of the essay on the Italian avant-garde, Pasolini looks to Barthes in elaborating a new approach. Pasolini quotes extensively from a 1963 interview on the modern film that Barthes gave in *Cahiers du cinéma*, where he stated that "meaning, so to speak, is not enclosed within the signified," and further, "[m]eaning is so fated for mankind that art (as liberty) seems to be used, especially today, not for *making* sense, but on the contrary for keeping it in *suspense*; for constructing meanings, but without filing them exactly.[114] In Brecht's theater, it seems to Barthes, its "committed meaning" is a "suspended" or "withheld" one.[115] To Pasolini, this seems to offer a new direction for the committed writer: "'To suspend meaning': here is a stupendous epigraph for what could be a new description of the commitment, of the mandate of the writer."[116] The political upheavals of 1968 would push Pasolini in the direction a more radical approach to formal structure. During this turbulent year, Pasolini published his "Manifesto for a New Theater,"—though he had already been working on his verse tragedies for a couple years—in which he pronounced that "one thing is certain: the days of Brecht are gone forever." He puts the theater into question, demanding that the new theater defer dramatic closure. This new theater would create a dialogical space that involves its audience—comprised of progressive intellectuals—in the creation of meaning.

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[114] Barthes, *The Grain of the Voice*,19.
[115] Ibid., 20.
[116] Pasolini, *Heretical Empiricism*, 136.

Art and Political Commitment in Yugoslavia in the Nineteen-Sixties

The disagreement between Brecht and Lukács during the nineteen-thirties identified what turned out to be a central question for the art of the immediate post-war era: what is the artistic form most appropriate to revolutionary praxis? In the nineteen-sixties, this problem would again become paramount at a time of political upheaval. Yet, the changing nature of capitalism demanded a reconsideration of some of the basic tents of Marxist theory and aesthetics. In the West, this situation resulted in a return to pre-WWII revolutionary aesthetics, while the communist countries conformed, in different degrees, to conservative Soviet cultural policy. Yugoslavia presents a unique case: a post-revolutionary society that rejected Zhdanovism for political reasons, and allowed for modernist experimentation and Marxist revisionism. In the nineteen-thirties, there was some debate about socially committed art in the Yugoslavia, perfectly in keeping with similar debates in Western Europe. The nature of such a debate, however, necessarily underwent a profound change after 1945 within the context of a newly formed socialist republic and a totalitarian regime that officially established socialist realism as ruling doctrine in matters of art. At stake in the post-war realism-modernism debates was the basic right to artistic freedom, and so the issue was not just an ideological debate about the most appropriate means of representation of social reality. In a sense, the dichotomy between realism and modernism becomes even more polarized and radical in such a society than it had been during the pre-war period, or as it was in the West. Yet, the essential questions that this debate implied about the relationship between art and socio-

political life would remain a constant reference point throughout the Communist period (1945-1991).

The doctrine of socialist realism in art was instituted in Yugoslavia at the end of World War Two, while the country had a strong relationship with the Soviet Union. Accordingly, after 1945 free artistic expression had been stifled in the country, due to the adoption of Zhdanovism, which lingered for a number of years even after Yugoslavia's 1948 split with the Soviet Union. According to the Belgrade art historian and critic Ješa Denegri, an official break with socialist realism was signaled by Miroslav Krleža's speech at the 1952 Congress of the Yugoslav Writer's Union, in which the well-known left-wing poet, dramatist, novelist, and critic, a supporter of the Bolshevik revolution from its first day, attacked socialist realism.[117] Soon after, in the major cultural centers such as Belgrade, Zagreb, and Ljubljana, writers drawn to modernism came together in various informal groupings, often associated with new literary journals. They were unified in their desire to, as the Belgrade literary critic, Sveta Lukić, puts it, "liberate current cultural and artistic creativity."[118] The antagonism towards socialist realism was accompanied by an advocacy of stylistic and formal experimentation appropriate to artistic freedom—the latter was seen as an important attribute of a greater movement towards democratization within socialist society. Heated debates about modernism and realism began to emerge in Yugoslavia in the early fifties, becoming most polemical in 1955.[119]

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[117] Denegri, "Inside or Outside," 172.
[118] Lukić, *Contemporary Yugoslav Literature*, 13. Originally published in Yugoslavia under the title *Savremena jugoslovenska literatura*, 1945–1965.
[119] Ibid., 70.

The polarization between the Yugoslav modernist and social-realist camps was definitively established in 1955 with the launching of the journals *Delo* (The Work, 1955-1991) and *Savremenik* (The Contemporary, 1955-1984) in Belgrade, then the capital of Yugoslavia.[120] It is important to keep in mind, however, that this kind of debate was only possible because the Tito regime granted artists and intellectuals a much greater amount of autonomy when compared with the Soviet Bloc countries and the Soviet Union itself. Yugoslavia's main modernist circle was formed in the nineteen-fifties around *Delo*, while the proponents of socialist realism were associated with *Savremenik*. In a 1959 article published in the American journal *Books Abroad*, Ante Kadić, then professor at U. C. Berkeley, gives a picture of the polemic in his discussion of several of the key issues.[121] Proponents of socialist realism argue for a *littérature engagée* that sees art as secondary to politics. The position of the modernists is represented well by the literary critic Zoran Mišić, who declared that "the word 'must' will never succeed," and that the "new slogan: we want a literature modern in form, Yugoslav in content—is often nothing more than a cunning attempt to push through, in the guise of Yugoslav content and a new, attractive style, the same old pragmatic schemes of the ill-famed Zhdanov."[122] Kadić also discusses the differing positions of the two journals on the occasion of the forty-year anniversary of the October Revolution, pointing to *Delo*'s criticism of Stalinist Russia—a position which was politically viable in Yugoslavia after the split with the Soviet Union. The journal articulated its position on Soviet cultural policy by means of its fervent support of the Soviet Futurists. In addition, Kadić points to the fact that many contemporary artists and critics associated with *Delo* were now passionately advocating Western modernists

[120] *Delo; Mesečni književni časopis* (Beograd: Nolit, 1955-1991); *Savremenik* (Beograd, 1955-1984).
[121] Ante Kadić, "Socialist Realism and Modernism," 139-43.
[122] Ibid., 140. Quoted from Zoran Mišić, *Reč i vreme* (The Word and Time).

such as Brecht, Samuel Beckett, James Joyce, Marcel Proust, Franz Kafka and Thomas Mann, concluding that, while socialist realism was predominant in Yugoslavia, a new generation of young and promising modernist artists was beginning to emerge.

The political break with the Soviet Union and the gradual turn towards the West throughout the nineteen-fifties played a decisive role in the cultural shift characterized by greater freedom of expression and an opening up to the influence of Western modern art. Symptomatic of this new current was the 1951 exhibition "Seventy Works of Painting and Sculpture between 1920 and 1949."[123] The modernist artists whose work was shown were a revelation for younger generations of artists and intellectuals, for whom these works had simply been unknown since before the war. The exhibition, held at the ULUS gallery in downtown Belgrade, was a dramatic indication of the process of rehabilitation of inter-war painting and sculpture, which was modernist and strongly influenced by the great modern masters such Cézanne and the major Cubists. During the nineteen-fifties, Yugoslavia hosted a number of international traveling modern art exhibitions, in addition to Yugoslav artists' participations in important exhibitions abroad.[124]

Lukić sees in Yugoslav literary modernism a unique sensibility stemming from the country's particular socio-political situation, referring to the post-war generation of modernists initially associated with the journal *Delo* as "liberators of the spirit."[125] The *Delo* circle included former Belgrade Surrealists like Oskar Davičo, Aleksandar Vučo, Dušan Matić, Marko Ristić and Milan Dedinac, and communist Partisan writers like

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[123] See Protić, *Jugoslovensko slikarstvo šeste decenije*.
[124] For details, see Denegri, "Inside or Outside." For example, in 1956: "Contemporary Art of the United States of America" from MOMA in Belgrade. From 1950 on, Yugoslavia participated regularly in the Venice Biennale. This decade also saw the establishment of an international exhibition in Ljubljana—the Triennial of Contemporary Yugoslav Art, and after 1955, the Biennial of Graphic Art was established in the same city.
[125] Lukić, *Contemporary Yugoslav Literature*, 70.

Dobrica Ćosić and Antonije Isaković. The youngest generation of writers was well represented by figures such as Jovan Hristić (poet, critic, and future dramatist), Ivan V. Lalić (poet), Branko Miljković (poet), Borislav Radović (poet and brilliant translator of French poetry) and Miodrag Bulatović (short story writer and future novelist). Similar modernist literary circles were formed in Zagreb and Ljubljana. The *Delo* circle fostered an interest in modernist poetry, prose and in the essayistic tradition. In different ways in their individual, somewhat different ways, modernist writers throughout Yugoslavia fought against dogmatism and the culturally dominant, simplistic celebration of the New Socialist Man and the socialist reality in Yugoslavia.

By the early nineteen-sixties, Yugoslav post-war modernist art and literature had gained official acceptance.[126] The term "socialist modernism" refers to the cultural formation characterized by an amicable relationship between the regime and the contemporary modern artists.[127] The regime's tolerant attitude towards modernist artistic currents partly stemmed from the desire to project an image of a democratic socialist society open to the West. For Denegri, the term "socialist modernism" is useful precisely because it alludes to the decisive role within the arts of Yugoslavia's political system in general and its cultural institutions in particular. This symbiotic relationship is what made the transition from socialist realism to socialist modernism possible. Indeed, this was a "system of art […] whose organization was almost entirely based on, materially dependent on, and ideologically supervised by the institutions of political power."[128] To speak of the "ideological supervision," however, perhaps goes to far since artistic

[126] See Denegri, *Šezdesete: Teme srpske umetnosti.* Although, Tito launched an attack on abstract art in 1963.
[127] For discussions of socialist modernism, see Stanković, "The Case of Exploited Modernism," 151–159;
[128] Denegri, "Inside or Outside," 174.

production was not regulated through Communist Party directives. As Denegri points out, modern artists offered no opposition to the regime since they felt that they were freely participating in the creation of a new cultural formation and actively involved in building a new society, one that was seen both domestically and internationally as unique—i.e. self-management socialism with a human face. Art historian Bojana Pejić has pointed out that, within the realm of painting and sculpture, the regime censored critical realist work rather than abstract modernist work during the nineteen-sixties and seventies.[129] The politically neutral hermetic modernist art was not only tolerated, but was welcomed by the regime.

It was the critic Sveta Lukić who initially introduced the notion of "socialist aestheticism" in the beginning of the nineteen-sixties to refer to two consequences of the development of post-war Yugoslav modernism in literature and criticism. On the one hand, the gradual turn against socialist realism afforded greater freedom of expression and, as a consequence of the country's turn towards the West, opened to Yugoslav artists the international art scene. At the same time, a marked lack of interest in contemporary reality, what Lukić refers to as the "neutrality" of these modernist works, suited the Communist regime and its bureaucracy. The term "socialist aestheticism" was also adopted by the art historian and critic Lazar Trifunović in his description of the cultural and ideological situation that faced modern visual art of the nineteen-fifties. Trifunović goes further than Lukić in stating that socialist aestheticism developed into the "official art ideology of the 1950s."[130] Trifunović argues that Yugoslav post-war modernist art,

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[129] Pejić, "Socialist Modernism and the Aftermath."
[130] Trifunović, *Enformel u Beogradu* (Informel in Belgrade), 176. For discussions of socialist aestheticism and modernism in the visual arts in Yugoslavia, see Pejić, "Socialist Modernism;" Dimitrijević, "Shaping the Grand Compromise," 33-45.

with its concentration on formal problems, was responsible for the development of a new visual language free from literary influences, but had failed to break decisively with traditional social values. The notion of socialist aestheticism bears certain notable similarities to the Marxist notion of decadent aestheticism, which is seen as an empty formalism. Criticism of both trends is based on the belief that the artist has a social responsibility—what Pasolini would refer to as the intellectual's mandate.

Since the mid nineteen-sixties, a group of primarily Croatian philosophers and social theorists were active through the Zagreb journal *Praxis* and sought to revitalize Marxist theory by a return to the works of the young Marx in which he was more concerned with questions about human nature and man's alienation under capitalism than with narrowly economic issues. Works such as *The Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* (1844) were not widely available until after the Second World War. There was also a Serbian group of Praxis intellectuals, who were mostly philosophers teaching at the University of Belgrade. Marx's earlier writings and the Praxis Marxists' interest in developing a Marxist Humanism were clearly discordant with Althusser's rejection of the humanist Marx for the mature Marx of *Capital*. This return to Marx is, of course, radically different from Western attempts to revitalize Marxism, since it took place within the context of a post-revolutionary, one-party regime. At the same time, the nineteen-sixties in Yugoslavia were years of a relatively benign authoritarian regime, which allowed intellectuals freedoms unimaginable in the Eastern Bloc or the Soviet Union. The country's openness toward the West, and the opportunities for intellectuals to travel abroad, made a dialogue with western Marxism possible. In fact, the journal *Praxis*

had an international and a domestic edition, with articles in the former published in various languages besides Serbo-Croatian. Ernst Bloch, Herbert Marcuse, Jürgen Habermas, and Lucien Goldman, among others, were on the editorial board of the journal. A variety of international thinkers took interest in the journal and participated in yearly seminars held at the Korčula Summer School on the Adriatic.

The group's critique of contemporary Yugoslavia was aimed at social stagnation, class inequality within socialist society, the myths of official Marxism-Leninism, ossified Communist Party doctrines, and in general the institutions of Yugoslav socialism.[131] In its view, the official Marxist-Leninism—institutionalized, ossified, stagnant and anachronistic Marxism—had little to offer within the contemporary context. Faithfulness to the official ideology and its doctrines was thus seen as an aberration. Marxist revisionism, a label that had pejorative meaning within the history of Marxism, was now viewed positively: it hinted possibilities of theoretical renewal and offered the only hope for social change.

The return to the humanist, philosophical Marx implied a specific understanding of man's essential nature and his relationship to society. In the view of Praxis Marxists, man was fundamentally a being of praxis, understood here as a process of creative, productive labor that has the function of transforming reality. They rejected the notion that there is an absolute, final stage of development that eliminates the necessity for a continued struggle for social and individual transformation. The group's denial of the eschatological worldview implied that praxis was a continual process. In an important essay, "Practice and Dogma," Danko Grlić argues that practice can be defined in

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[131] Sher, Gerson S. *Praxis: Marxist Criticism and Dissent in Socialist Yugoslavia*.

"opposition to all that is passive, merely meditative, non-creative, all that is adaptation to the world, a yielding to the nature of the world and to its particular social conditions."[132] A man of praxis is skeptical of all established principles, seeking instead to change them in accordance with his nature and his reality. Only by acting in accordance with his nature can man really be free. This problem, as we will see, is exactly theme that Makavejev develops in *WR* and *Sweet Movie*.

The Yugoslav *novi film* (New Film), which looked to the French *nouvelle vague* and the Czech New Wave for inspiration, enjoyed international acclaim, and a brief period of domestic support. During the second half of the nineteen-sixties, film was generally more politicized than other Yugoslav arts. As a result, the *novi film* directors, together with several members of the Praxis group, were greatly affected by the regime's clampdown following the 1968 student protests.[133] Indeed, by 1969, the regime's campaign against the *new film* movement was in full swing. The official campaign against the so called "black wave" tendency in film would begin with Želimir Žilnik's film, which created political scandal at home and received a considerable amount of positive attention internationally—it was awarded the Golden Bear at the Berlin Film Festival in 1969.[134] The offensive was first launched in the daily paper "Borba" [The Battle] in a 1969 article entitled "The Black Wave in Our Film." This is the first appearance of the term *crni film* (black film). Filmmakers like Makavejev, Pavlović,

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[132] Grlić, "Practice and Dogma," 49-58.

[133] See Goulding, *Liberated Cinema*. This is no accident since, as Goulding points out, the *novi film* directors like Makavejev, Živojin Pavlović, and Aleksandar Petrović were sympathetic to *Praxis* group and its ideas.

[134] As a consequence, Žilnik was be expelled from the Party in 1969, and began to have political problems. In an interview for *Cineaste*, the interviewer recalls that Žilnik gave the sinister reason for his decision to leave Yugoslavia: "A friend of mine, one of the leading film critics in the country, showed me an official letter he received stating that certain film directors were not to be mentioned in his articles–except upon the event of their deaths. The names of those directors were Dušan Makavejev, Živojin Pavlović, Aleksandar Petrović and Želimir Žilnik. I left for Germany the next day." DeCuir, Jr., "Old School Capitalism."

Petrović, and Žilnik were seen as proponents of a *crni talas* (black wave) tendency, as it was pejoratively and threateningly called.[135] Other cultural and film critics followed suit, attacking the filmmakers for ideological deviation.[136]

In one of the most well-known polemical articles on this subject, Milutin Čolić, an important Belgrade critic and former champion of *novi film*, argues that what has been termed *crni film* (a term he claims he is not comfortable with) is really a crisis in *auteur* film.[137] He argues that by 1968 there were signs of "deviation" that subsequently led to this dramatic crisis, and consequently to artistic failure and loss of ideas.[138] He is careful to point out that this crisis is also occurring in France—Čolić has in mind the dangerous influence of the "disoriented and confusing Godard."[139] This anarcho-nihilistic tendency in film is characterized, he argues, by a need to "negate at any price," even if it results in the "devaluation of art," in its coming to resemble "pamphlets" or mere "journalistic reportage."[140] In what is an obvious allusion to Makavejev's *WR*, Čolić argues that slogans like "Down with the red bourgeoisie" do not belong to the language of art, and can only bring about its vulgarization.[141] In the most recent Yugoslav films, he argues, the form is made to dictate the content, rather than the other way around.[142] Čolić's position here is rather problematic. He asserts that art should fulfill its traditional function, i.e. should aim disinterestedly at "Beauty" and "Truth;" at the same time, he insists that art must be committed to historical progress and the socialist advancement of

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[135] For details, see Goulding, *Liberated Cinema*, 79-83.
[136] For a detailed account of official attacks of this and other Yugoslav "black wave" films, see Tirnanić, *Crni talas*.
[137] Čolić, "'Crni film'," 3-25.
[138] Ibid., 4.
[139] Ibid., 14.
[140] Ibid., 7-8.
[141] This was the most famous slogan of the 1968 Belgrade University student protests, which Makavejev quotes in *WR*.
[142] Čolić, "'Crni film,'" 9.

society. Ultimately, Čolić's article is an attempt to disguise his real purpose: the justification of the political counter-offensive by an ill-thought, unconvincing attempt to discredit the *new film* movement on the basis of aesthetic, stylistic and humanistic values.

The counter-offensive against the *black film* would become even more sinister after the Croatian separatist crisis in 1971, marking the end of *new film* activity in Yugoslavia. Makavejev's *WR* was in fact banned in Yugoslavia until 1987, and the director was expelled from the Communist Party. Shortly after, when he became convinced that his life was in danger, he left for Paris, and subsequently the United States.[143] He has, for the most part, worked abroad ever since. In 1972, Aleksandar Petrović made a highly controversial film, *Majstor i Margarita* (The Master and Margarita), based on the famous novel by Mikhail Bulgakov. In the film, Petrović drew parralels between the Soviet Union of the late nineteen-twenties and the early nineteen-thirties and the Yugoslavia of the nineteen-sixties and seventies. *Majstor* was banned from distribution in Yugoslavia shortly after its domestic premiere at the Pula Film Festival. The most dramatic case of outright domestic censorship involved the student film, *Plastični Isus* (Plastic Jesus) of the Belgrade filmmaker, Lazar Stojanović, who was jailed for two years after the film was discovered.[144]

The interest of Yugoslav filmmakers in political modernist practices is a clear indication of their awareness of contemporary international currents in theory, criticism, and artistic practices. Indeed, an examination of the journal *Delo* shows that the Yugoslav

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[143] Like Žilnik, Makavejev was also expelled from the Party and faced increasing political pressure until he left the country in 1973. In an interview published in *Afterimage*, Makavejev described it thus: "The horse's head appeared in my bed in January of 1973 in the form of three screws from the right front wheel of my VW bug, unbolted and pedantically left under the wheel's hubcap, producing a strange farewell noise." "Parallel Realities," 8.

[144] Stojanović's student film was found as a result of an investigation of the filmmaker since he had been accused of "expressing anti-regime and anti-Tito sentiments." See Goulding, *Liberated Cinema*, 237 n44.

intelligentsia was exceptionally well-informed about such international currents. The last pages of many issue of the journal were devoted to the discussion of new cultural developments abroad--USSR and the Soviet Bloc countries, specifically Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary, and East Germany, and in Western European countries like France, Great Britain, Italy, and West Germany. The critics associated with *Delo* were aware of the renewal of interest in Brecht and, particularly, in his notion of a critical realism. In a June 1967 issue, an article by Werner Mittenzwei entitled "The Brecht and Lukács Discussion" was received by *Delo* critics with excitement.[145] In addition, between 1966 and 1968, the *Delo* critics showed a keen interest in the criticism, poetry and drama of the Italian neo-avant-garde (especially Eco's notion of the "open work" and Sanguineti's formally radical poetry experiments). The developments in French literary theory were followed with enthusiasm. In August/September 1967, the journal put out an issue on the new directions of contemporary European literary criticism—largely of French extraction—featuring important texts by Barthes, Paul Ricœur, Charles Mauron, and Lucien Goldman.[146] In the same issue, there is a discussion of the theoretical positions of the *Tel Quel* group, especially their emphasis on the primacy of language and formal matters. In the June 1967 issue, there is a discussion of structuralism (Barthes' "The Structuralist Activity") and psychoanalysis (Baudry's "Freud and Literary Creation"), and the direction it has taken within the Telquelian context. In addition to *Delo*, the Belgrade film journal *Filmske sveske* (1968-1986) was launched in 1968 by the film critic and theorist Dušan Stojanović.[147] He would publish translations of important essays on

[145] *Delo* 13:6 (June 1967). As I have already mentioned, Brecht's polemical essays dealing with Lukács notion of realism were published in German for the first time that year.
[146] *Delo* 13:8-9 (August-September, 1967).
[147] *Filmske sveske* (Beograd: Institut za film, 1968-1986).

film, especially those from France and Italy. For example, the famous debates about the semiotics of cinema between Eco, Pasolini, Christian Metz and Barthes were closely followed.[148] A special issue of the journal in the Spring of 1971 contains translations of some of the most important Soviet theoretical writings about the cinema from the nineteen-twenties—works by Yuri Tynyanov, Viktor Shklovsky, and Boris Eikhenbaum.

In addition to a general interest in these contemporary international intellectual and artistic currents, one can trace during the late nineteen-sixties a notable surge of interest in Soviet revolutionary avant-garde art. The October 1967 special issue of *Delo* published was a celebration of the Russian modernist and avant-garde art during the revolutionary years. The central questions that animated the discussion were: what was the relationship between artists and the revolution, and how did the revolution transform modernist art? Looking back after half a century, the Yugoslav critics were struck by the fact that this chaotic period, ridden with violence and famine, was also a time of great artistic productivity. As Milan Tabaković puts it, "during the years of the most massive emigration of *literati* in history, years of a cruel battle of two worlds, years of hunger … bordering on cannibalism, … Russian poetry flourished in a manner that can be compared only with the Golden Age of Pushkin… and the Silver Age."[149] The issue examines the work of great writers of the first two decades of the Twentieth Century like Aleksandr Blok, Velimir Khlebnikov and Vladimir Mayakovsky, and of visual artists and dramatists like Vladimir Tatlin, Kazimir Malevich, Vsevold Meyerhold, and Eisenstein, who saw

[148] For example, the December 1969 issue of *Filmske sveske* contanins important debates about semiotics of cinema: Jean-Pierre Oudart's 1969 essay "La Suture" (Cinema and Suture), and the papers delivered by Pasolini and Eco at the 1967 Pesaro Film Festival—Pasolini's "La lingua scritta dell'azione" (The Written Language of Reality), and Eco's "Articulations of the Cinematic Code."

[149] *Delo* 13:10, 1322. It is of little surprise that the attitude of a "post-revolutionary" country towards the Russian revolution would be more cynical than that of a country like France or Italy.

themselves, at least in the beginning of the post-revolutionary period, as artists of the revolution. The editors selected and translated various recollections of the heroes of the revolutionary avant-garde—notably, Eisenstein, Meyerhold and Mayakovsky, whose 1927 poem "Good! A Poem of the October Revolution" opens the issue.

Delo's special issue on Soviet art was accompanied by two notable books dealing with Soviet revolutionary art were published between 1967 and 1971.[150] The anthology arranged by Aleksandar Flaker included translations of manifestos by Mayakovsky and *LEF*, Proletkult, the Constructivists, and important essays by Shklovsky, Boris Eichenbaum, Bakhtin, Roman Jakobson and Tynyanov. Mayakovsky's 1918 "Open Letter to the Workers" is of particular interest. This short manifesto calls for the rejection of bourgeois art and, further, for "a revolution of content – socialism-anarchism," which is "unthinkable without a revolution of form – Futurism."[151] The heroic tone of the piece would have been viewed by many Yugoslav critics with caution and distance—since Yugoslav artists and intellectuals, having lived under communism since 1945, did not romanticize the Revolution. In contrast, the interest among politically engaged French and (to a lesser extent) Italian intellectuals in the revolutionary period of Soviet art during the late nineteen-sixties was guided by a revival of the revolutionary project, and consequently, of its art.

In spite of such cultural and ideological differences, the influence of the political modernist tendency was felt in Yugoslav cinema circles. In an article for the journal *Filmska kultura* (1957-1990) entitled "Tendencije političkog filma" ("The Tendencies of

[150] Flaker, *Sovjetska književnost 1917-1932: Manifesti i programi, književna kritika, nauka o književnosti* (Soviet Literarture 1917-1932: Manifestos and Programs, Literary Criticism, and the Literary Scholarship); Lukić, *Ruska književnost u socijalizmu* (Russian Literature under Socialism).
[151] Mayakovsky, "Otvoreno pismo radnicima" (Open Letter to the Workers), 24.

Political film"), Ante Peterlić discusses this current.[152] The political "tendency," as he defines it, encompasses the whole of the international cinematic avant-garde, with Godard cited as the most extreme example of the tendency. These political filmmakers, Peterlić argues, focus on "political problematics or political themes," and the latter determine the "basic element" of their films' "structure."[153] Indeed, this current in film implies the wholesale transformation of cinematic form and "a new understanding of the work of art."[154] Makavejev, Žilnik, and various avant-garde visual artists were attracted to the prospect of the revival of a politically radical form and content.[155] For example, in 1969, Žilnik released his famous, strongly politicized film *Rani radovi* (Early Works), which bears a resembalence to the Brecthian experiments of Godard and Straub-Huillet. Žilnik uses devices such as intertitles, that divide political skits ("Political circus"), his film has a fragmented narrative structure, and he relies on Brechtian distanciation. *Rani radovi* is, in its sensibility and conception, reminiscent of Godard's 1967 film *La Chinoise*. That same year, Makavejev was at work on *WR*, experimenting with Eisensteinian montage and Brechtian distanciation techniques. His project to develop a political modernist cinema emerged out of the Yugoslav *milieu* under the influence of *Praxis*, post-war modernist experimentation and literary debate, but was also shaped by his encounter with Western "radical art."

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[152] Ante Peterlić, "'Tendencije političkog filma'" (Tendencies of Political Film), 101-108.
[153] Ibid., 101.
[154] Ibid., 104.
[155] For a discussion of neo-avant-garde currents in Yugoslavia, see Daković, "The Unfilmable Scenario"; Darko Šimičić, "From *Zenit* to *Mental Space*;" Šuvaković, "Conceptual Art."

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We have seen that in France the Brecht-Lukás debate, which raises questions about the impact of artistic form on social reality, would find expression in the debates about how to develop and foster a radical form. This problem was paramount for important cultural journals such as *Tel Quel*, *Cahiers du cinéma*, *Cinéthique* (1969-1985).[156] The Barthesian notion of *écriture* would develop into a productive concept whose flexibility allowed it to be tailored to different notions about the social function of art. The notion of the "death of the author," which implicates the reader in the creation of meaning finds its counterpart in Eco's idea of the "open work." The Italian cultural scene was divided on the question: what form should committed art take? The dichotomy between formalism (aestheticism) and realism (political commitment) was not seen in the same light by the different groups of artists and critics. Eco's emphasis on an "open form" and on "formalism" as a type of "commitment" was unequivocally rejected by Pasolini, who sought to develop a form that combined modernist experimentalism with an overt engagement with revolutionary politics. In communist Yugoslavia, the debate about modernism and realism clearly took a different form because of the regime's post-1945 acceptance of Zhdanov's doctrine. What is of particular interest in the comparison of Yugoslavia with the two Western nations is that Yugoslavia abandoned the Soviet Socialist Realist doctrine in the years following the Yugoslav-Soviet split. Post-WWII modernist practices—especially modernist abstraction—were officially supported by the regime. At the end of the nineteen-sixties, a new generation of Neo-Marxist, politically committed artists would emerge. With their art, figures like Makavejev, Pavlović,

[156] *Cinéthique* (Paris: Cinéthique, 1969-1985).

Petrović, Žilnik, and Branko Vučićević opposed what they saw as a form of aestheticism and political quietism. The turn of these Yugoslav filmmakers to a politicized, rogue modernist practice should be conextualized in relation to political modernism in France and Italy, particularly since Western cultural debates were closely followed in Yugoslavia at that time. An enriched understanding of the issues that influenced the shift to renewed political engagement and related commitment to radical formal experiments forms an important backdrop for the discucssion of *Porcile*, *WR*, and *Tout va bien*.

In their radical films, Godard-Gorin, Makavejev and Pasolini do not simply illustrate these intellectual and aesthetic debates. Through a close reading of *Porcile*, *WR*, and *Tout va bien*, Chapter 2 and 3 highlight the ways in which the filmmakers engage with the important question: what kind of political commitment is demanded in our time?

Chapter 2

The Afterlives of Eisenstein and Brecht:

Collage and Montage in Political Modernism

Once the content becomes, technically speaking, an independent component, to which text, music and setting 'adopt attitudes'; once illusion is sacrificed to free discussion, and once the spectator, instead of being enabled to have an experience, is forced as it were to cast his vote; then a change has been launched which goes far beyond formal matters and begins for the first time to affect the theatre's social function.
-Bertolt Brecht, "The Modern Theater is Epic Theater"

Jean-Luc Godard's and Jean-Pierre Gorin's *Tout va bien* (1972), Dušan Makavejev's *WR: Misterije organizma* (1968-1971), and Pier-Paolo Pasolini's *Porcile* (1969) engage with political problems paramount for the Left before, during and after the 1968 movement. The struggle against authoritarianism and tyranny in the name of freedom and equality during those years inspired a renewed interest in revolutionary politics and culture of the first decades of the Twentieth Century, and concomitantly, in radical aesthetics. The avant-garde work of Sergei Eisenstein from the early nineteen-twenties, and of Bertolt Brecht from the nineteen-twenties and thirties were especially important for Godard-Gorin, Makavejev and Pasolini. Godard's political and aesthetic militancy after the social unrest in 1968 has been extensively written about, especially in relation to the cultural and political developments in France of the late nineteen-sixties; in that sense, *Tout va bien* is no exception.[157] This chapter considers both the impact of the events of 1968 and the radical aesthetics on Godard, Makavejev and Pasolini in light of

[157]There are numerous studies of *Tout va bien* that examine it in relation to Brechtian dramatic principles. For examples, see Higgins, *New Novel*; Loshitzky, *The Radical Faces*; Thompson, *Breaking the Glass Armor,*110-131; Stam, *Reflexivity in Film and Literature*.

what might be termed their "political modernist" project. [158] While all three filmmakers shared a commitment to developing a radical art form capable of transforming social and political reality, their ideological and aesthetic positions, as well as their interpretations of this historical moment are at variance**:** after all, they were shaped by their vastly different socio-cultural and political contexts.[159]

WR, Porcile and *Tout va bien* invoke the revolutionary avant-garde work of the nineteen-twenties and thirties through direct reference to, and through the appropriation of its devices and techniques: the principles of montage and collage, the crossing of boundaries between different media, and a heavy reliance on quotation and allusion.[160] The devices and techniques used by Godard and Gorin, Makavejev, and Pasolini fall into several categories, which will guide my discussion of the films. I will examine the ways in which the filmmakers work in an intertextual mode, with a particular focus on their reliance on quotation and allusion and on the devices of pastiche. I am also interested in their uses of the devices of montage and collage to create a sense of temporal and spatial fracturing, and to create non-linear narrative structures. Finally, I will discuss the filmmakers' uses of caricature and the tableau, which calls attention to the artificiality of the image.

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[158] For a discussion of political modernism, see Harvey, "Whose Brecht?;" Rodowick, *The Crisis of Political Modernism*; Kovács, *Screening Modernism*; in his chapter on political modernism Kovács discusses Makavejev's and Pasolini's radical films—*WR*, *Sweet Movie*, *Teorema* and *Porcile*—from a formal and thematic point of view; Polan, *The Political Language*; Walsh, *The Brechtian Aspect*; Wollen, *Readings and Writings*.

[159] See Chapter 1.

[160] I have in mind Eisenstein's 1921 Proletkult theatrical adaptation of Jack London's story "The Mexican," and his 1923 production of Alexander Ostrovsky's play *Enough Simplicity in Every Wise Man* in collaboration with Sergei Tretyakov. The two men collaborated on two other plays in 1923 and 1924: *Do You Hear, Moscow?* and *Gas Masks*. I also have in mind his early avant-garde films *Strike*, *The Battleship Potemkin*, and *October*. Here also belong Brecht's famous avant-garde productions from the nineteen-twenties and thirties like *The Threepenny Opera* (1928), *The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny* (1927-29) and also his *Lehrstücke* plays like *Saint Joan of the Stockyards* (1929-1931) and *Mother Courage and Her Children* (1939).

These three films were influenced by the broad transnational artistic and intellectual current of the 1960s that Hal Foster characterizes as a "series of returns."[161] On the one hand, Foster points to the return to Marx via Althusser, and Freud via Lacan; on the other, he refers to the return to the avant-garde. Foster argues that the strategy of the theoretical re-readings "is to clarify the contingent strategy of the readings, which is to reconnect with a lost practice in order to disconnect from a present way of working felt to be outmoded, misguided, or otherwise oppressive. The first move (*re*) is a temporal one, made in order, in a second, spatial move (*dis*), to open a new site for work."[162] The artistic "returns," he adds, invoke "different, even incommensurate models of practice," in order "to work them through to a reflexive way of working—to turn the contradictions inscribed in these models into a critical consciousness of history, artistic and otherwise."[163] *Porcile*, *WR*, and *Tout va bien* represent a return to the avant-garde poetics and to the avant-garde project of changing the social reality through the use of disruptive techniques that are capable of transforming the audience's perception and cognition. Sylvia Harvey's description of political modernism as the engagement of filmmakers and critics with the problems of realism, subjectivity and signification is a condensed articulation of the following themes: 1) the social role of the committed artist; 2) the social and political function of art, now within the context of either "late-capitalist" society—or for Makavejev, of post-revolutionary society half a century after the 1917

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[161] Foster, "What's Neo about," 5-32. Foster describes the idea of the return thus: "In postwar art the problem of repetition is primarily the problem of the neo-avant-garde, a loose grouping of North American and Western European artists of the 1950s and '60s who reprised and revised such avant-garde devices of the 1910s and '20s as collage and assemblage, the readymade and the grid, monochrome painting and constructed sculpture. No rule governs the return of these devices: no one instance is strictly contrived, concerted, or compulsive (5)." Also see Foster's book-length study of the neo-avant-garde project, *The Return of the Real*.

[162] Foster, "What's Neo," 7.

[163] Ibid., 8.

Revolution; 3) the problem of the triangle: artist – text – audience; 4) and finally, the relationship of a work's form to its content.[164] These questions will guide our examination of the predominant formal and thematic elements of *Tout va bien*, *WR* and *Porcile*.

Eisenstein, working in the theater at the time, published "The Montage of Attractions" in the Soviet avant-garde journal, *LEF* in 1923.[165] He defined the arbitrarily chosen attraction—any effective combination of elements—as the basic structural unit of theater because it has immense affective potential. This idea had radical implications: in positing the idea of the attraction, Eisenstein shifted the emphasis from the work of art and its laws to the emotional impact it has on the audience and thus to its (possible) social function. Indeed, for Eisenstein it was the audience, whose emotions are roused and *directed* by the montage of attractions, that constitutes the "basic material" of the medium.[166] In 1924, Eisenstein transposed the notion of the montage of attractions to the cinema, a medium he considered better suited for this method than the theater. In the cinema of attractions, the depicted object of staged event is subordinated to the montage fragment the chain of associations evoked through their collision.[167] During this period, Eisenstein's interest in the montage principle lay in the function of a collision of "montage fragments" to create a strong emotional reaction in the audience which led them to perceive the work's "ideological aspect" and the "final ideological conclusion."[168] The formal and aesthetic implications of the idea of the attraction are weighty because Eisenstein rejects the idea of the work of art as an organic whole based

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[164] Harvey, "Whose Brecht?."
[165] Eisenstein, "The Montage of Attractions," 87-9.
[166] Ibid., 87.
[167] See Eisenstein, "Béla Forgets the Scissors," 145-49.
[168] Eisenstein, "Montage of Attractions," 87.

on the artistic values of unity, harmony and coherence. Eisenstein's fruitful exchange with the Meyerhold's avant-garde theater, Futurist experimentation, and Cubist and Dadaist experiments with collage, assemblage and montage techniques shaped the director's ideas about the montage of attractions. The influence of Japanese theater on Eisenstein was also significant: "sound—movement—space—voice [in Japanese theater] *do not accompany* (nor even parallel) each other, but function *as elements of equal significance*."[169] What is at stake here is the relationship of elements to one another, rather than to the whole: the constitutive parts are not hierarchical, but enter into a relationship of where they have equal weight—though not necessarily balance.

In their comparative analyses of Eisenstein and Brecht's work, Scheunemann and Mueller discuss what was common to the artists: the montage of attractions and the principle of the separation of the elements.[170] Brecht's first coherent description of the epic theater (first developed in Germany by the playwright Erwin Piscator) appeared as a preface to the 1930 opera *Mahagonny*. The modern epic theater operates on the principle of a "radical separation of the elements," such that they all attain equal standing, no one element subordinate to another, and each one being "fully capable of life."[171] Thus, the music would rival the text, both of which would rival the setting. Brecht saw his avant-garde theater as a rejection of the Wagnerian principle of "the integrated work of art," which synthesized various media into a unified, organic whole.[172] In this, Brecht differs from Eisenstein: the Soviet avant-gardist, rejecting an art of synthetic unity, strived for its

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[169] Eisenstein, *Film Form,* 20.
[170] See Mueller, "Montage in Brecht;" Scheunemann, "Montage in Theatre and Film."
[171] Brecht and Willett, *Brecht on Theatre*, 70. This source will be referred to as "BT." Cf. Eisenstein's notion of a form that grants equal significance to its elements.
[172] Ibid., 134. "The integrated work of art (or 'Gesamtkunstwerk') appeared before the spectator as a bundle of separate elements."

realization in the spectator's mind. For Brecht, a separation of the elements creates a formal tension that is internalized by the audience, in this way preventing it from becoming critically passive. Whereas Eisenstein emphasized the spectator's emotive response to the work, Brecht placed more weight on the spectator's intellectual engagement with it. The Soviet avant-garde exerted a great influence on Brecht, but it is important to keep in mind the differences in their theories, which are shaped by two diverse cultural, political and intellectual contexts. Brecht was developing a form of art capable of being an "arm of revolutionary agitation" in the turbulent atmosphere of post-WWI Germany, while Eisenstein and his contemporaries sought to find new artistic forms of in the first post-revolutionary society.

The principle of separating the elements is a clear corollary to Eisenstein's juxtaposition of independent attractions. By means of montage technique, Brecht juxtaposed a variety of media and techniques such as rear projection and film, signs and placards, painting, graphic design, the design of mobile, dynamic sets sculptural in nature, and music. Each element was intended to stand alone rather than accompany the action, and to comment on the other parts and the piece as a whole. In his notes to *Mahagonny*, Brecht provides an example: "[. . .] projections adopt an attitude towards the events on the stage; as when the real glutton sits in front of the glutton [that] has been drawn. In the same way the stage unreels the events that are fixed on the screen" (*BT*, 38). The inserts are independent components of the piece just like the music and the text, all of them functioning to comment on the action. Although a particular element would certainly contribute to the work's overall effect and meaning, it weakened a sense of unity and cohesion. Furthermore, each theatrical scene, each tableau was semi-

autonomous. Like Eisenstein, Brecht rejected illusionistic representational modes, narrative continuity and dramatic unity in favor of experimental theatrical practices that relied on disjunctive devices to develop a highly heterogeneous form capable of transforming the viewer's perception.

A notable difference in Eisenstein's and Brecht's approaches to the audience, however, has direct bearing on our discussion of Makavejev, Pasolini and Godard. The Eisenstein of the early to mid nineteen-twenties emphasized the attraction's capacity to trigger an affective response in the spectator. Although Brecht never denied the need for the spectator's pleasure, he, like Godard and Pasolini after him, sought to engage the audiences' critical faculty.[173] To this effect, Brecht advocated a variety of devices from different media that would interrupt the action, creating what he called "alienation effect," wherein the portrayed events were "raised above the level of the everyday, the obvious, the expected" (*BT*, 101).[174]

In a 1973 essay entitled "Diderot, Brecht, Eisenstein," Barthes argues that "the epic scene in Brecht, the shot in Eisenstein are so many tableaux."[175] The scenes in Brecht plays and Eisenstein films are "laid out," and have the function of not only "erecting a meaning but [also of] manifesting the production of that meaning." In *Tout va bien*, *WR* and *Porcile*, the filmmakers make extensive and important use of this technique. At the beginning of *Tout va bien*, Godard and Gorin introduce a series of

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[173] "The essential point of the epic theater is perhaps that it appeals less to the feelings than to the spectator's reason. [. . .] At the same time it would be quite wrong to try and deny emotion to this kind of theatre" (BT, 23).
[174] Frederick Ewen, *Bertolt Brecht: His Life, His Art, His Times*, 224. Brecht developed the notion of the "alienation effect" under the influence of the Russian Formalists, Shklovsky (with whom he met in Moscow in 1935) in particular.
[175] Barthes, "Diderot, Brecht, Eisenstein," 70-71.

tableaux-vivants that accompany the voice-over track. In Godard and Gorin's film, it has the status of a provisional representation. The narrators suggest that in the film they want to make, there would be farmers, the bourgeoisie, and the petite bourgeoisie. Each of these suggestions is accompanied by an image of a "possible" representation of a given class. In the context of film or theater, the tableau implies the fusion of different media in its emphasis on the spatial at the expense of the temporal dimension; in the film it evokes the atemporality of the painting or photograph. The tableau has the characteristic of self-sufficiency with respect to the text as a whole because it is a complete, fulfilled dramatic moment. It calls attention to the conventionality of the frame, and the artificiality of both the story and the image. In one of the more memorable moments of *WR*, Makavejev inserts a tableau-like scene evoking agit-prop imagery: Milena, standing against the striped wall in a leopard-print suit, shouts feminist slogans. In the absurdist, grotesque end of *Porcile*, a group of peasants enters the Godesberg manor to announce that Julian has been devoured by the pigs. Shot frontally, they stand perfectly still, as though posing for a photograph. Their cartoonish postures and exaggerated costumes give the scene a tableau-like character. The principle of the tableau, with its ability to emphasize the work's artifice is of fundamental importance for the three films. This quality is brought out more dramatically by the caricatural, cartoonish quality of the images, by the stylized, flattened filmic space, and the transparent incorporation of quotations and allusions.

In the fictional Belgrade sequence of *WR*, a sense of two-dimensionality and artificiality is emphasized by the use of simple, bright color schemes: a red wall and window frame, a green carpet, a blue kitchen table, and a pink and black striped wall in Milena's apartment. The use of this technique in film is, of course, nothing new; with his 1963 film

Le Mépris (Contempt), Godard had already begun to emphasize the essential features of the medium and to underline their two-dimensional character with the use of primary color schemes. By the time he made *La Chinoise*, the color scheme would be pared down to a dramatically simple color pattern of blue, white, red and yellow; in *Tout va bien*, the scheme is reduced to just the first three colors in an evocation of the French flag. In the Godesberg sequence of *Porcile*, Pasolini uses a different technique to achieve a similar effect. The setting, the Klotz mansion, which is overflowing with paintings and ornamental décor, is itself suggestive of artifice and flatness. The characters are always placed in perfect symmetry in relation to their setting. Their cartoonish quality and their relative immobility make them appear separate from the setting.

In *WR*, as in *Tout va bien* and *Porcile*, the devices used to emphasize the image's artificiality are also used in service of caricature and satire. The dramatic personae of the Belgrade sequence are completely flat. They are parodies of Reich's character types (i.e. Vladimir Ilich, the sado-masochistic "red fascist") or satirical renderings of social types (i.e. Ljuba "the Cock," an officer in the Yugoslav Army, who shouts "Onward People's Army!" while making love). The characters have the one-dimensional quality of cardboard figures devoid of any psychological depth and charged with political symbolism. Similarly, in Godard's film, the characters function as the embodiments of given ideological and political positions: e.g., the buffoonish factory boss, Marco Guidotti, the champion of the economic boom and the technocratic society and the CGT delegate, advocate of reformism and supporter of PCF politics. Each character's monologue consists of fragments and excerpts from other texts—contemporary

newspapers and other sources of political discourse.[176] In *Porcile*, Klotz, his wife, and his rival are Groszian caricatures of the bourgeoisie, while Julian and Ida are a parody of Guillaume and Veronique from *La Chinoise*.

The tendency toward caricature and parody is emphasized in all three films by an intertextual mode of structuring the text. In his notes to the *Threepenny Opera*, while discussing the use of transmedialization, specifically the incorporation of titles and screens into the performance, Brecht argues that "footnotes, and the habit of turning back in order to check a point, need to be introduced into play-writing" (*BT*, 44). This is a way of arguing for the principle of interruption through collage and montage. In *WR*, *Porcile* and *Tout va bien,* the layering of textual, figural, or aural quotations through a variety of techniques becomes the fundamental principle behind the text's construction. The use of quotation and allusion gives the films great structural complexity, and in turn, places considerable interpretative demands on the spectator: for example, the allusions to Godard's earlier film *Le Mépris* [Contempt] that open *Tout va bien*. The protagonists profess their love for one another in a manner that immediately recalls the opening of *Le Mépris*. The tragic love story of Camille and Paul is in *Tout va bien* transposed and drastically transformed: "His" and "Her" romance is here subordinate to political and historical pressures. The filmmakers build the *Tout va bien* story, as it were, on top of *Le Mépris*, incorporating within their film a whole complex of extradiegetic, referential elements. For example, Anne Wiazemsky's brief appearance in the film as a *gauchiste* evokes her roles as a militant in *La Chinoise*, *Le vent d'est* (The Wind From the East, 1970) and *Vladimir et Rosa* (Vladimir and Rosa, 1971). In *Tout va bien*, Wiazemsky

[176] See Stam, *Reflexivity in Film and Literature*, 128. For a more detailed discussion of Godard's incorporation of political discourses, see Loshitzky, *The Radical Faces,* 36-7.

starts a "revolution" in a supermarket, inciting the shoppers to take what they want and leave. In the same way, Pasolini's reference to *La Chinoise* evokes both militant filmmaking and the student movement of 1968.[177] Ida, the young student radical who hopes to marry Julian, announces her intention to attend a freedom protest in Berlin where the students will collectively urinate on the Wall. Her language is shot through in the revolutionary rhetoric; she calls Julian a "disgusting individualist," adding that he is "on papa's side," that he is with "the void: the establishment." In a particularly humorous moment, she implies that this will be an effective form of protest given that their strength is in numbers: they are "ten thousand strong." Ida will become engaged to Puby Jennings, whose "reformism is clean" and whose "morality [is as] strong as his muscles." She is a typical bourgeois youth, with the face of a spoiled child, as he put it in his infamous diatribe against the students "The PCI to the Young!!"[178] They are indeed the children of Grosz's and Brecht's caricatures of the bourgeoisie from the nineteen-twenties and thirties, and belong to a rapidly growing, triumphant bourgeoisie.

In *WR*, the structural principle of the layering of quotations and allusions is overemphasized. The sequence which begins with Milena's speech about a Reichian sexual revolution, given to the tenants in her apartment building, is filled with quotes and allusions. Her posture and manner of speaking are a parodistic allusion to the oratorical

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[177] Pasolini, "The Unpopular Cinema," *Heretical Empiricism,* 121-142. This collection will be referred to as "HE." Pasolini wrote this essay in 1970—the same year Godard was shooting *Le vent d'est* in Italy with Gorin and Wiazemsky. He laments Godard's turn to a militant cinema: "[Godard] has thrown himself headfirst into the void of martyrdom—a martyrdom without pleasure because lived only as passive fault. The words of Che Guevara, publicized by the student 'crowd,' have been fatal to him: that the intellectual should commit suicide is a foolishness, it is a pure clause of the 'art of rhetoric'; even a child would understand it. But Godard, more defenseless than a child, believed it [. . .]. And instead of continuing to martyr himself in front of the moviola, to exhibit his metalinguistic wounds as infractions of every cinematographic code, he opted for an aprioristic total negation [. . .]" Pasolini, *HE*, 271.

[178] Pasolini, "The PCI to the Young!!" in *HE*, 150. Originally published in *Nuovi Argomenti* 10 (April-June 1968).

style of Tito, the Yugoslav communist leader. The tension in Milena's agitational speech mounts, paralleled by Jagoda and Ljuba's sexual acrobatics, only to be interrupted by the audience breaking into a Kozaračko kolo.[179] The call for liberation and freedom is answered by a cautionary reminder of that the revolution can result in the formation of oppressive regimes. This shot is interrupted by archival footage from a Mao rally in Beijing, which for Makavejev symbolizes revolution in its purest form.[180] This image is interrupted by a shot from Mikhail Chiaureli's 1947 propaganda film *Klyatva* (The Vow) in which a mass of Soviet citizens that adoringly surround Stalin begin to march triumphantly over the superimposed images of the Nazi flag. The original significance of the image--Soviet victory over Nazism--dramatically shifts when the favorite Nazi song "Lily Marlene" is suddenly heard, suggesting a parallel between Hitler's Germany and Stalin's Russia. A photograph of an unsmiling Reich tinted in red follows, reminding us of his views on tyranny. Finally, another shot of Stalin is succeeded by horrifying Nazi archival footage depicting torture. When asked about the function of citation and allusion in his work, Makavejev said that an author typically resorts to this technique out of dissatisfaction with the text. He referred to this device as "stepping out of the text."[181]

In his radical film practice, Makavejev turned primarily to the early Eisenstein of the nineteen-twenties and the spirit of the Soviet avant-garde: "I was dissatisfied with

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[179] The traditional folk dance, a hallmark of Communist festivities, was performed by some students at the Belgrade Law School after Tito's speech about the student demonstrations then still taking place in Belgrade. It was widely interpreted as a sign of the students returning to the fold, and indeed the demonstrations were called off soon after.

[180] Makavejev, *WR*, 19. For Makavejev, this footage depicts revolution in its purest form: ". . . this enormous energy of the Chinese is . . . a biological will to survive. We don't understand this Asian revolution; we understand them only in social terms. Because we are obsessed with these class things. This revolution is also the wish of a fantastic number of people *just to survive*."

[181] Makavejev, telephone interview with the director, December 2006.

[Eisenstein's] intellectual montage . . . [h]e had marvelous ideas, but practically it was just a pile of shots."[182] The reasons for Makavejev's discontent with Eisenstein's later work are multiple. The Yugoslav director's conception of the cinema as a "guerilla operation," his desire to create a "political circus" required a socially dynamic form.[183] Thus, Eisenstein's later interest in the idea of a synthesized, integrated and organic work of art, his movement away from avant-garde principle of fragmentation and discordance, would have seemed to Makavejev to have less potential for impacting the audience.[184] By contrast, Eisenstein's earlier interest in the affective potential of the collision montage, which led him to an interest in popular, spectacular forms of entertainment—*commedia dell'arte*, the circus, and the music hall—could draw in the audience, and demand their participation in the creation of meaning. Makavejev was drawn to the idea that a guided emotional response could lead to political and ideological awareness and transform of the spectator's social and aesthetic perception. The idea of eliciting an emotional response through visceral associations and rhythmic constructs is announced at the beginning of *WR*, which opens to the sound of a heart beat.[185] Yet, Makavejev did not wish, as

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[182] Makavejev, Dušan. *WR,* 16. There was a surge of interest in Soviet revolutionary culture during the time that Makavejev was working on *WR*. For example, a Belgrade student magazine called *Vidici* [Horizons] ran a special issue in September 1970 (Numbers 142 and 143) on the Soviet political avant-garde and contemporary dissident culture, with a special focus on Meyerhold and Eisenstein.

[183] Makavejev quoted in Arthur, "Escape from Freedom," 15.

[184] This shift in Eisenstein's thought was partially motivated by his growing interest in film language and form. His work on the "dominant," and alternately on "dynamic integration" at the end of the nineteen-twenties shifted his attention from the impact of an "aggressive moment" to the overall structure of the work. The notion of montage as attraction and collision, with its emphasis on the effect of the juxtaposition of fragments, fails to address the question of how meaning and sense are carried from one filmic segment to another. Interestingly, Oksana Bulgakova suggests that the seemingly dissonant ideas of the attraction, the dominant, the dynamic integration and the dialectical unity of oppositions were intended to "exist simultaneously," as a kind of montage of distinct theoretical constructs. For her discussion on the idiosyncrasies of Eisenstein's theoretical film concepts of the late twenties, see Bulgakova, "The Evolving Eisenstein," 38-52.

[185] Eisenstein corresponded with Reich during the nineteen-thirties about the relationship between sex and revolution. In a 1934 letter to Eisenstein, in which he thanks the director for the interest in his ideas, Reich asserts that: "the cause of the cultural revolution would be well served if we could one day grasp the fundamental significance of sexual politics for the revolutionary film and put it into practice," adding that

Eisenstein did, to rouse and then *direct* emotions that led to particular ideological interpretation. Makavejev wanted to develop a form that allowed for emotional and interpretative freedom built on an endless interplay of associative chains, so that the spectator could react to the work "according to [his] own mood, according to [his] own interest in politics, or sex, or science, or story, or humor," so that each one could "make different connections."[186] The difference between Makavejev and Eisenstein could be attributed in part to their respective socio-historical contexts. Eisenstein saw his avant-garde work a part of the revolution in culture of the immediate post-revolutionary period, and felt a responsibility to contribute to the building of the new society by transforming its art. Makavejev was shaped by the neo-Marxist, revisionist critical project of the 1960s, and wanted to re-evaluate the concept of the revolutionary praxis through his art. Makavejev's striving to create a film that encouraged playful interpretative freedom—a "political circus" stems from his aspiration to engage a large audience. [187] Godard and Pasolini both wanted to produce social change through their political cinema, but approached the problem of the audience differently. While Makavejev and Pasolini were uncomfortable with overtly didactic forms, the politically radical Godard was drawn to a form of cinema that created a space for teaching and learning—the so-called "blackboard cinema"—in the tradition of Brecht's *Lehrstücke* Plays.[188] The films produced between 1968 and 1972 in collaboration with Jean-Pierre Gorin and under the auspices of the revolutionary, militant film collective "Dziga Vertov," never reached beyond elite

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rhythmic artistic structure is "a direct continuation of the basic biologico-sexual rhythm." See "Sergei Eisenstein and Wilhelm Reich," 79-86.

[186] Makavejev, Dušan. *WR*, 21.

[187] Makavejev did achieve the goal of animating his audience judging by the reception of *WR* at the 1971 Cannes, where a several extra screenings had to be organized because the film was so popular.

[188] For a discussion of Godard-Gorin's, Makavejev's and Pasolini's relationship to didactic form, see Chapter 3.

audiences of politically radical militants. *Tout va bien*, large-budget, star-vehicle film, was a signal that he wanted to reache a wider audience.

With *Tout va* bien, Godard and Gorin sought to soften the formal and ideological severity of the Dziga Vertov works. With this film, Godard and Gorin return to what Brecht called the "culinary" in art (*BT*, 35-6).[189] In *Tout va bien*, they incorporate popular, slap-stick comedic forms, caricature, popular workers' music in an effort to draw the audience in. Nevertheless, they did not abandon their didactic intentions; their aim in *Tout va bien* is to convince the audience to join the revolutionary struggle. In this film, they combine the love-story of a leftist French filmmaker (Yves Montand) and his American journalist wife (Jane Fonda) with an account of a factory strike, both of which are placed within the context of post-1968 France. The couple find themselves at the factory, where the workers lock them in with the manager. Confronted with the problem of the "worker's struggle," they once again begin to reevaluate their political convictions, shaped by 1968 and its aftermath. The ideological crisis leads to a crisis within their relationship. In *Tout va bien,* the conventional dramatic conflict of the Hollywood romance—will the couple resolve their differences?—is here pointedly left unresolved. The film's political message, however, is made explicit when the voice-over narrator announces that "in this film, we leave Him and Her looking at each other wordlessly. We'll just say that He and She have started to think of themselves in a historical context." *Tout va bien* opens to the sound of out-takes (i.e. "*Tout va bien*, take one") from the film, in this way declaring its fictional status. A discussion between two unidentified speakers about the necessary conditions for making a film follows on the voice track. As various

[189] Or art for consumption; in the notes to his experimental opera *Mahagonny* (1930), Brecht describes the work as "a piece of fun," adding that "the use of opera as a means of pleasure must have provocative effects" that in turn introduce "reality once more."

crucial elements for a commercial film are listed, an image of a written check appears in extreme close-up. The manner in which filmic elements (i.e. design, staging, and performance) are correlated with their monetary value is overt. This didactic moment functions as an obvious critique of the cinema conceived of as an institution and, implicitly, of its effect on the audience. This interest in the cinematic apparatus in relation to ideology recalls Brecht's own interest in the relationship between the apparatus of theater and its ideological effects.[190] Although the cinema and the theater are different media, it is clear that all three artists object to the commodification of art and to the dissemination of bourgeois values and ideology through art.

Formally, *Tout va bien* builds on the experiments of Godard's 1967 film *La Chinoise*: the fusion of fictional and documentary modes, the Brechtian separation of the elements, and the continued use of collage and montage techniques.[191] In his notes to *Mahagonny*, Brecht makes it clear that he no longer accepts the theatrical convention of linear narrative and dramatic development, now advocating interruption through montage and jumps. A theater in which "one scene makes another" is to be replaced by a one that pulls scenes and theatrical elements apart so that each can stand alone (*BT*, 37). As if following Brecht's instructions, the narrative of *Tout va bien* consists of separate spectacles: the factory strike, a subsequent clash between the students and the police, scenes from the domestic and professional lives of the protagonists identified at the beginning of the film only as "Him" and "Her," a *gauchiste* takeover of a large supermarket, and a series of smaller episodes. The most formally interesting of these is the scene of the factory strike. Here, Godard and Gorin used a simplified model of the

[190] The problem of the ideological effects of the apparatus was of paramount importance for French film theory and criticism during the late nineteen-sixties and seventies.
[191] *La Chinoise* (1967) predates Godard's work with the Dziga Vertov collective.

traditional movie set, one which lacks a fourth wall. At first, it is employed traditionally; the camera is placed within each individual partition in such a way that the "fourth wall" is not called into question. When they want to shift to simultaneous action taking place in another room, the directors initially use classical montage. Suddenly, a cut reveals the entire set; the dramatic action continues within each partition, but is now perceived simultaneously. It becomes apparent that the setting is contrived, so that the filmic convention is exposed. Thereafter, the camera follows the action in a slow panning motion, moving across the façade from one partition to another. This treatment of montage is based in a montage within the shot because it is a part of the *mise-en-scène*. This gesture is playful, not aggressive. The set itself recalls the much more elaborate one used for Jerry Lewis' *The Ladies Man* (1961), a film that revels in ornamental, artificial design. At the same time, Godard's set recalls Meyerhold and Brecht's experimental sets that relied on montage to depict simultaneous action juxtaposing distinct spaces. This contrast between the avant-garde and Hollywood spectacle is a Godard self-reference: it is an allusion to his and Gorin's return to Brecht through the commercial cinema.

WR consists of two distinct, but thematically linked narrative lines: a documentary about Wilhelm Reich shot by Makavejev in the United States and a fictional story set in Belgrade in 1971 about a tragic romantic encounter between a Soviet ice-skater, Vladimir Ilich, and Milena, a young Yugoslav Reichian revolutionary. The documentary segment depicts a sinister, MacCarthian American society that managed to destroy a man who had fled from Hitler's Germany and denounced Stalin's Russia. The fictional segment is a parody of Reich's theses about the social dangers of sexual repression and suppression, grotesquely illustrated when Ilich, the embodiment of the totalitarian structure, a

"genuine red fascist," severs Milena's head with his ice skate.[192] In an interview with Phillip Lopate and Bill Zavatsky, Makavejev suggested that the fictional segment builds on the documentary about Reich, and can actually be considered to belong to it.[193] The film's two narrative lines are subjected to repetitive interruption by heterogeneous inserts: photographs, Nazi archival footage, Soviet social realist films, and original documentary footage depicting the American sexual liberation movement. Each of these fragments, whether documentary or fictional, elicits an association, evoking a feeling which is carried over to the next segment of the film. Makavejev has made a distinction between his own montage practice and montage conceived of as the juxtaposition of two distinct, significant elements to arrive at a third meaning. Speaking of the Russian revolutionary filmmakers, he asserts that "they never thought about montage and distance," which amplifies the associative potential of filmic fragments and makes possible a multiplicity of meaning.[194]

The Belgrade sequence is introduced by the caption "May 1, 1971 Belgrade, Yugoslavia," superimposed over a brief title insert from a Reichian Sex-pol educational film which reads "Filme der Sexpol." Since this title fragment also appears at the beginning of the documentary sequence, two filmic segments are tentatively connected, even if their relationship is not immediately clear. It will become evident that the fictional

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[192] In *The Mass Psychology of Fascism* (1933), Reich argues that the failure of the Communist Left in Germany can be attributed to its refusal to deal with the problem of sexual suppression alongside the problem of economic exploitation. Fascism's victory over Communism and its mass appeal, Reich argues, are the result of a twofold operation: the summoning of repressed sexual longings rechanneled into mystical longing, and at the same time the cultivation of repressed sexuality, which in turn incites fear and anxiety, and reinforces authoritarian structures. In addition to his analysis of fascist totalitarian regimes, Reich also denigrates the Soviet system and its "dictatorship of the proletariat," which he sees as just another form of totalitarianism similarly built upon the fear and anxiety of the masses about the responsibility of self-governance.

[193] Makavejev, Dušan. *WR*, 17.

[194] Ibid.

story is an illustration of Reich's sex-economic principles.[195] Makavejev builds the film's texture through the incorporation of visual and aural quotations in the form of posters, journals, photographs, sounds, music and speech, encompassing the action, themes and commentary. Milena enters her Belgrade apartment to find her roommate Jagoda engaged, quite literally, in sexually revolutionary praxis underneath the framed photograph of the smiling Reich. The scene can be seen as an echo of the one of the more memorable slogans from the documentary segment: "Comrade lovers, for your health's sake, fuck freely!" Makavejev heightens the comic effect when the camera passes over a poster for a 1959 pseudo-erotic film titled "The Mating Urge," which depicts a naked couple in the jungle next to a caption that reads "unashamed love rites." While this is going on, Milena is shown reading an issue of a communist paper dealing with the burning question of "How Karl Marx Fell in Love;" the communist publication is likened to a gossip magazine and its reader to a silly schoolgirl. Through parody, Makavejev undercuts the young women's revolutionary rhetoric and practice.

Makavejev further develops the motif of Reich's distorted, trivialized ideas by associating the fictional segment with vignettes depicting the sexual liberation movement in America.[196] A man rubs a model of a vagina against his face in the office of the leftist pornographic magazine *Screw*, tagged by one of its editors as patriotic because it represents what America should have been in 1776. Reich's ideas about the importance of healthy sexuality are here hyperbolized and sexuality is treated as a pure commodity. In the next shot, one of Warhol's transvestites, Jackie Curtis, is shot in tableau: he stands against the background of the American flag in the pose of a beauty queen with a baby

[195] Reich launched the Sex-pol movement in 1929 in Berlin. He had the support of the German Communist Party until he was expelled in 1933 because he came to be considered a political liability.
[196] See note 25.

pacifier in her mouth, and throws glitter at the camera. Her sexual liberation is shown to be tempered perversely by her social conformism: she explains that she gleefully accepted a marriage proposal from Eric, an "unconventional," "all-American hero," because she could not bear to go through life without being asked. This segment is brought to an end with a shot of Milena shouting empty feminist slogans. If the dogmatic Milena turns Reich's ideas about sexual health and revolution into mere slogans, the sexual liberation movement represents the perversion of these ideas.

If in *WR* the montage elements have the potential to form multiple "chains of associations," in *Porcile* they form the structure of "ambiguous works whose rules are 'suspended.'"[197] The author and spectator would both be involved in the creation of meaning: "For the author, the spectator is merely another author. [. . .] If then we speak of works by an author, we must consequently speak of the relationship between democratically equal individuals."[198] This was for Pasolini a new concept of politically committed art capable of leading to genuine dialogue. Around 1968, Pasolini began to search for an artistic form that would incite social and political change while avoiding what he perceived as the cynicism and nihilism of the Italian neo-avant-garde, whose aggressive position towards both culture and history he disapproved of.[199] In 1968, he published a manifesto calling for a post-Brechtian "theater of the word," which he opposed to both the avant-garde theater of "scream" and the bourgeois theater of "chatter."[200] This sketch of a new theater would not be addressed to a proletarian audience as Brecht's was, since Pasolini was convinced that this class was loosing its

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[197] Pasolini, "End of the Avant-garde," *HE*, 121-142. The idea of a suspended meaning comes from Barthes who discusses it in an interview for *Cahiers du cinema*. See Barthes, *The Grain of the Voice*, 21.
[198] Pasolini, *HE*, 269.
[199] See Pasolini, "The End of the Avant-garde" *HE*, 121-42.
[200] Pasolini, "Manifesto for a New Theater," 126-38.

revolutionary potential, and was becoming a part of a technocratic, homogenized middle class.[201] Pasolini's political theater would therefore be addressed to a progressive bourgeoisie, which is now seen as the mediator between the revolutionary message and the working class. Pasolini's emphasis on rationality and open dialogue was counterbalanced by his desire to develop a genuinely poetic cinematic form of expression.[202] For him, this meant exploiting its potentially oneiric qualities, and developing a new metaphoric language. *Porcile* is his attempt to reconcile these seemingly contradictory tendencies—the oneiric and the rational.

With *Porcile*, Pasolini establishes a dialogue with Godard, and like his French counterpart, overtly engages with contemporaneous revolutionary rhetoric and aesthetics. The film stars Godard's then wife, Anne Wiazemsky as Ida and Jean-Pierre Léaud as Julian, both of whom starred in the 1967 film about young French Maoists, *La Chinoise*—a film that Pasolini greatly admired, but whose ideology he rejected.[203] *Porcile*, arguably Pasolini's most radical film besides *Salò, o le 120 giornate di Sodoma* (Salo, or the 120 Days of Sodom, 1975), is a partial adaptation of the eponymous play with an additional, original fictional segment. The film's structure is based on the alternation between two stylistically distinct narrative lines, and their juxtaposition through montage. One segment, based on the 1968 play *Porcile* and set in Godesberg, Germany, in 1967, is the satirical farce whose protagonist, Julian (Léaud), the son of an ex-Nazi industrialist, is in the end devoured by pigs with whom he has intimate relations. Julian is unable to assume an ideological or political position so he neither obeys nor

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[201] In this respect, his outlook in the aftermath of 1968 until the end of his life became increasingly pessimistic.
[202] For an idea of Pasolini's earlier notions about a poetic cinema, see the 1965 "The 'Cinema of Poetry'," *HE*, 167-87.
[203] *La Chinoise* appeared prophetic after the events of 1968.

disobeys his father. The other narrative line depicts the wanderings of a cannibal (Pierre Clémenti) and his clan through the desert, until they are captured and brutally put to death. Each narrative thread remains essentially autonomous and thus, in Brecht's words, "fully capable of life." Julian and the unnamed cannibal, both tragic figures who will be destroyed, commit the ultimate antisocial, transgressive acts of patricide, cannibalism and bestiality. The cannibal confesses to having murdered his father, while the viewer is given to understand that Julian's only real passion is a monstrous love for pigs. In *Porcile*, breaking social taboos is presented as the only form of authentic protest and rebellion, and the social outcasts become martyr figures. The authentic desire for liberation and freedom is elusive.

The setting of the cannibal sequence is only vaguely established: it is a vast desert landscape, and takes place in an indeterminate distant past, giving it a timeless, mythical quality. The camera's frenetic, purposefully unskilled movement and the absence of transitions between extreme long-shots and close-ups drastically fragment and distort the space. The roughness of the camera's movement and the uneven editing make the spectator constantly conscious of intrusive mediation, while a minimal use of sound and an almost complete absence of speech place the emphasis on visual qualities. There is a tension between the sequence's brute quality on the one hand, and its sense of lyrical poise on the other. Through the obsessive repetition of images, Pasolini achieves a sense of rhythm and structural consistency. Viktor Shklovsky has argued that in literature, poetry can be distinguished from prose by virtue of a replacement of "arbitrary semantic resolution" with "formal geometric resolution."[204] Extending this principle to the cinema, he argues that a poetic cinema can be discerned from prose cinema by its emphasis on

[204] Shklovsky, "Poetry and Prose in Cinema," 177.

rhythm and parallelism, the "prevalence" of "technical and formal over semantic features," the repetition of images and their transformation into symbols. Pasolini achieves a sense of rhythm through the obsessive repetition of unmotivated rapid tracking shots across the landscape in *Porcile*. Pasolini assembles a sequence of ghastly images: a burning fire, followed by the images of severed limbs, and finally, a shot of a severed head being thrown into the volcano. The sequence is condensed and repeated; it becomes a symbol of the cannibals' sacrificial ritual and a metaphor for a kind of radical liberation through the act of transgression.

The lyrical, mythopoeic sequence stands in stark formal and stylistic contrast to the satiric Godesberg sequence. The satiric thread has an emphasis on caricature, theatricality and artifice. As in *WR*, the relationship between the two "narrative" lines is of structural importance. The shifts from one sequence to the other in *Porcile* operate on the principle of collision of the two distinct diegetic spheres in the service of a destructive effect.[205] In Makavejev's film, the associational montage has the effect of weakening the sense of the work's unity through the apparent rejection of the codes of narrative construction and the abandonment of the conventional boundaries between fiction and document. At the same time, Makavejev's aim in *WR* is to develop a productive form of montage that stimulates a series of visceral associations in the spectator. In *Porcile*, this destructive principle takes the form of abrupt interruptions of one narrative by the other, the overall effect of which is the feeling of arbitrary alternation between the two disconnected stories. Thus, the film begins with a rapid montage sequence which follows the logic of successive alternation: a shot from the Godesberg narrative is followed by a shot from the cannibal narrative. This segment of the Godesberg narrative consists of an establishing shot of the

[205] For a different interpretation, see Viano, *A Certain Realism*, 215-236.

manor and a scene in which Julian, standing in front of a wall covered with an ornamental display of small portraits, is met by his girlfriend. The sequence is regularly interrupted by the other narrative, in which the cannibal desperately searches for food, comes upon a pile of human remains, and then falls asleep. It is clear that there is no spatio-temporal correlation between the two segments, nor is there a readily apparent thematic association resulting from the juxtaposition. The overall impression is one of aggressive disruption of narrative continuity and diegetic coherence.

The film lacks a narrative and dramatic center because of Pasolini's alternation between the two narrative threads—one set in Germany in 1967, the other in a distant past. The disparity of the two segments creates a formal-stylistic and narrative tension that is not overcome through a synthesis of associative material, as it is in *WR*; rather, the rapport between the segments takes place on a purely abstract, symbolic plane. Clémenti's pronouncement before his death sentence is carried out, "I killed my father, I ate human flesh and I quiver with joy," introduces the theme of patricide, which in turn echoes the rebellion of Ida and the students from the Godesberg sequence, patricide being the eternal fantasy of rebellious youth. This narrative centers on the fundamental themes of Freud's *Totem and Taboo*. For Freud, the roots of civilized social structures, moral laws, and religion can be traced to the "primordial" crime, man's "original sin": patricide and the cannibalistic act.[206] This act of rebellion is, paradoxically, the origin of authoritarian structures and our "subsequent obedience," which forms the central theme of the Godesberg segment.[207] Unlike Freud's primordial man, Clémenti is not overcome

[206] See Freud, *Totem and Taboo,* 234.
[207] Ibid., 236.

by guilt, but "quivers with joy." In an iconoclastic move, Pasolini conflates the cannibal with a Christ figure, here the embodiment of the revolutionary ideal.

This analysis of Godard's, Makavejev's and Pasolini's political films focuses specifically on the filmmakers' return to the avant-garde of the first half of the twentieth century. Affected by the events of 1968, they undertook the impossible task of trying to revive the avant-garde project within the framework of post-WWII modernist filmmaking. The films were intended to reach wide audiences, but remained confined to art cinema institutions such as the festival circuit and the art-house theater. This was a far cry from Brecht's and Piscator's street theater, or Eisenstein's Proletkult days. Godard's "blackboard" rhetoric and difficult formal structure failed to establish a rapport with the public. In his formally radical experiments of the late sixties, Pasolini was weary of the public, targeting an audience of the progressive intelligentsia. Pasolini's increasing cultural isolation and political despair give his "return" to the avant-garde the tone of a eulogy. He even alludes to this in his manifesto for the new theater when he proclaims that he is "invoking" Mayakovsky's "grand illusion," and that his theater is "dedicated" to the poet's "ideal."[208] Makavejev's *WR* is closest to the avant-garde spirit in his effort to make a film that would be "communicative." Unlike Godard who sought "to make political films politically," Makavejev strove to create a political spectacle with wide appeal, defining his political cinema in relation Godard: "concerning the political film by Eisenstein and Godard—I was conscious of it. But I wanted to do it with *soul*." The ideal of an avant-garde "revolutionary form" died with the lost hopes of 1968 which

[208] Pasolini, "Manifesto for a New Theater," 131.

Makavejev described as "a year of awakened hope and at the same time a year of announced catastrophe."[209] After *Tout va bien*, Godard would move on from his militant aspirations and his collaboration with Gorin. With the Makavejev's *Sweet Movie* (1974) and Pasolini's *Salò o le 120 giornate di Sodoma* (1975), they would also bury the revolutionary aspirations of 1968.

[209] Makavejev, *Funkcija orgazma*, 323.

Chapter 3

The Tragedies of the World Revolution and the Ruins of Utopia

Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please . . . And just when they seem engaged in revolutionizing themselves and things, in creating something that has never yet existed, precisely in such periods of revolutionary crisis they anxiously conjure up the spirits of the past to their service and borrow from them names, battle cries and costumes in order to present the new scene of world history in this time-honored disguise and this borrowed language.

–Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumiere of Louis Bonaparte*

In his book, *Return of the Real*, Foster wonders whether the post-war neo-avant-garde "acts on" its pre-war counterpart, or whether it merely repeats it or re-stages it.[210] The problem of the post-war "return" raised by Foster is essential for understanding the relationship that *WR*, *Porcile*, and *Tout va bien* have to the historical, "heroic" avant-gardes and concomitantly to revolutionary politics. While Godard, Makavejev, and Pasolini do not belong to the avant-garde, they were clearly affected by its revival in the nineteen-sixties and early seventies. In Chapter 2, I considered the influence of the pre-WWII avant-garde—Eisenstein and Brecht in particular—on the filmmakers from a formal perspective, examining the ways in which Godard-Gorin, Makavejev, and Pasolini appropriated and transformed the techniques of montage and collage. I will now examine their artistic responses to the most important political and cultural debates of the late nineteen-sixties and seventies through an analysis of the films' major themes. I am specifically interested in two things: their treatment of revolution, revolt and their protagonists in the wake of the events of 1968 and, correlatively, their treatment of the

[210] Foster, *Return of the Real*. The problem of the return to the avant-garde had initially been raised by Bürger with his 1974 book *Theory of the Avant-Garde*.

role of artist or intellectual in transforming the social fabric. The role of the intellectual and artist has always been a central concern for committed art, and it was understandably at the center of cultural debates on the left during the 1960s.

WR, *Porcile* and *Tout va bien* show that the filmmakers had understood the role of the artist and intellectual in markedly different ways after the events of 1968 than before. This cultural-political shift had an immense influence on Godard. His political militancy was inaugurated by May, when he denounced the intellectuals' privileged status and rejected their position at the forefront of social transformation and the "class struggle."[211] Godard explained it thus: "[W]e have to learn from [the students] instead of pretending to teach them. That's why we cannot speak of being . . . an artist or making a piece of art. This has to be completely destroyed."[212] Pasolini and Makavejev, on the other hand, were skeptical and ambivalent respectively towards the student protests and their vision of the revolution. In his "Manifesto for a New Theater," Pasolini suggested that his dramas will target an audience of intellectuals, "advanced elements of the bourgeoisie," thus opening up the theatrical space for a "discussion of the problems posed."[213] He still believed that the intellectual had a responsibility to *spearhead* social change. Pasolini's poetic sensibility along with his belief that art must not be compromised distinguished his political modernist project both from Godard's and from the militant-art tradition. Makavejev, who strongly influenced by Praxis Marxism, ultimately believed that the creative individual (as conceived by the early Marx) was of central importance to the project of social change. The Yugoslav filmmaker's works are thus a testament to his

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[211] See Chapter 1, specifically the discussion of the cultural politics of *Tel Quel*. Also, see Marx-Scouras, *The Cultural Politics*, 149.
[212] Brody, *Everything Is Cinema*, 336.
[213] Pasolini, "Manifesto for a New Theater," 127.

sense that the artist has a fundamental responsibility to his audience: he must reveal the realities of the contemporary world and confront history if he is to reach and influence those creative individuals who have an irreplaceable role in the process of genuine social change.

I am particularly interested in Godard's, Makavejev's, and Pasolini's divergent visions of the revolution, which were shaped by their respective ideological positions and artistic sensibilities. I think *WR* and *Porcile* could profitably be discussed against the background of *Tout va bien*—seen as a typical example of doctrinaire "revolutionary" cinema. Serge Daney's assessment of Godardian radical cinema is especially resonant, particularly in relation to the question of didacticism: "In *Tout va bien*, *Numéro deux* (*Number Two*, 1975) and *Ici et ailleurs* (*Here and Elsewhere*, 1976) the family apartment has replaced the classroom . . . but the essential remains. The essential: people giving each other lessons."[214] *WR* and *Porcile*, it seems to me, offer a more nuanced picture of the inherent difficulties of political avant-gardism, and its attendant message of revolutionary utopianism.

Revolutionary Themes, Thematizing the Revolution

Godard's and Gorin's return to fiction after their experiments with political collage and the essay film during the Dziga Vertov years was ultimately an attempt to reach a wider audience by relying on the Brechtian model of theater. The film's texture is woven out of PCF, *gauchiste*, and other contemporaneous political discourses. Robert

[214] Daney, "Theorize/terrorize," 117.

Stam has noted that *Tout va bien* is "structured around a tripartite play of ideological languages: that of capital, that of the Communist Party, and that of the Maoists," which for him points to a fundamental feature of the novel that Mikhail Bakhtin identified as heteroglossia.[215] It is clear that Godard incorporates political discourses that are not only distinct, but also politically and ideologically dissonant: the factory manager reads an excerpt from Saint-Geours' *Vive la société de consommation* (Long Live the Consumer Society, 1971); a representative from the CGT (Confédération Générale du Travail)—the largest French labor union at the time which was strongly associated with the PCF (*Parti Communiste Fançais*)—reads an excerpt from the PCF journal *La vie ouvrière*; and finally the young worker, Georgette, reads an excerpt from the Maoist journal *La Cause du peuple*.[216] Yet, it is also clear that the Maoist discourse, and the attendant agitational register, is rhetorically privileged and emerges as the film's dominant "voice." A closer analysis of Godard-Gorin's treatment of revolution and revolt confirms this initial impression.

In one sense, *Tout va bien* is a condemnation of the splintered, impotent left, which is seen here as solely responsible for the fading of popular support for the 1968 revolts. A young worker who is sympathetic to the far left and particularly the Maoists is perhaps the most positive characters in the film. Upon describing the ways in which the PCF and CGT abandoned the workers, he concludes that all one "can do is light a candle for the left." In *Tout va bien*, Godard-Gorin give voice to the notion that revolution can only result from direct, unmediated revolt and struggle, not through the Communist

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[215] Stam, *Subversive Pleasure*, 51. Heteroglossia is the term that Bakhtin uses to refer to the practice of incorporating a number of distinct social discourses into the novel.

[216] Alexander, *Maoism in the Developed World*, 73-4. The editors of the journal were arrested in 1970, after which Sartre took over its editorship. After the journal was suppressed by the government, a new journal called *J'Accuse* was founded under the patronage of Sartre and Godard.

Party's directives—an idea that is entirely in keeping with the Maoist rhetoric of the Cultural Revolution. An older factory worker explains that the union, along with the Party, is only interested in "figures." Since workers' interests are clearly not being represented, he explains, the workers have to act on their own. His monologue introduces the notion that if the workers rely on traditional channels, that is, if their intermediaries are the Party and the unions, revolutionary change will never take place. Godard-Gorin also place great emphasis on the Marxist-Leninist notion that a successful revolution hinges on the revolutionized working class. When a character, Suzanne, discusses the function of the newspapers in the "class struggle" with the workers after the strike, the young Maoist sympathizer explains that bleak images of a helpless, miserable working class are counter-revolutionary. To this notion, Godard-Gorin add the May 1968 ideal of the union of workers with students, the Maoist doctrine that intellectuals should be ideologically "re-educated" and that intellectual and manual labor should no longer be separate.

The film's last sequence reveals the extent of Godard-Gorin's sense of desperation about the socio-political situation in contemporary France. The camera pans left along an empty, dirty street on a gray, rainy day, as the refrain of a popular song by Eric Charden called "Il y a du soleil sur la France" (It is Sunny in France) plays on the voice track. The camera continues panning, first across a brick wall in close-up and then a gloomy industrial landscape. An intertitle insert—"The CGT says"—is linked, through collage to the same sugary Charden song ("Let's all live life to the fullest/It's sunny in France/Nothing else matters") which is, in turn, juxtaposed to the dreary industria l landscape, here symbolic of the dreary situation in contemporary France. The song is

then drowned out by the sound of a train, and the voice-over narrator reminds us that if each one of us should be "his own historian," we would necessarily have to be "more careful about the way we live."

The disappointment with the outcome of May 1968 and the bitterness about the splintered French left is counterweighed by a sense of doctrinaire optimism about the legacy of 1968. For Godard-Gorin, the events of that year show that the possibility of revolution is not lost—provided it is modeled on Mao's cultural revolution. Reflecting on the workers occupation of the sausage factory, Jacques says:

> There were about 10 people there doing something new, and who were happy to be doing it, and what they were doing was the result of May 1968. We probably saw each other . . . in early June in Flins. We thought it was the end, but now we know it was a beginning.

A newly politically conscious Jacques serves as a mouthpiece: his pronouncement is meant as a rousing cry to the masses (workers and intellectuals alike) in the name of the revolution under the intellectual leadership of the far-left.

The same young worker that is supportive of the Maoists becomes the spokesmen for a revolutionary future. He links the tactics employed by the sympathetic workers at the sausage factory to the agenda of the French Maoists. Addressing the camera directly, he (innocently) notes, "I don't know what a 'Mao' is but if it's saying what I just said, then there are lots of 'Maos' here"—"Mao", he explains, being a favorite derogatory term used by the unions to scare the protesting workers. Godard-Gorin joined the students, and the various different factions of the *gauchisme* in rejecting the PCF and denigrating its politics.

Believing that Mao's China with its Cultural Revolution should serve as the model for socialist society, Godard-Gorin adhered to Maoist doctrine. They took at face value Mao's rhetoric of a "permanent revolution," "the permanent class struggle," the remolding of the intellectual and the "cultural revolution;" under this banner Mao purged the Chinese Communist Party and carried out a violent campaign of oppression on his people which resulted in an estimated half million deaths and the destruction of countless works of art and other cultural objects. In *Tout va bien*, the failed 1968 revolt is seen as the direct consequence of "revisionist" tactics.[217] The filmmakers recapitulate the Maoist *gauchiste* position that revolutionary change can be achieved through spontaneous, direct action.

The allure of Maoism for French students and intellectuals in the late sixties and the first half of the seventies was on the one hand a consequence of the disillusion with the Soviet-style communism—now seen through the Maoist lens as a form of "revisionism"—and a dissatisfaction with the rigid, still pro-Soviet PCF, and on the other hand, stemmed from the sense of horror with the capitalist, consumer-driven society. Among the French *gauchistes*, and within the context of the Sino-Soviet split, Mao's China was misguidedly seen as an alternative model, and Mao himself as an anti-dogmatist that had rejected the Soviet Union. Peter Star points out that " what Maoism promised its French adherents was the return to a purity of revolutionary purpose, a Marxist-Leninist rigor, that had been progressively corrupted by a spirit of compromise permeating and buttressing the capitalist order."[218] In a more fundamental, and far less

[217] "Revisionist" is a term of abuse within the orthodox communist movement that goes back to the early Soviet days. In the time of the Sino-Soviet split, Mao began to refer to the Soviets as revisionists, and saw himself as the real heir to the Marxist-Leninist heritage.
[218] Starr, *Logics of Failed Revolt*, 90.

historically specific sense, the appeal of French Maoism was an expression of the desire to find a new revolutionary ideal, to revive a lost utopia. Richard Wolin has put it well: "French Maoism operated at a dangerous remove from the reality principle. Mao's China became a projection – a Rorschach test – for the students' overheated revolutionary fantasizes." [219] He adds that "the sordid realities of contemporary China mattered little. What counted was that the illusion of a radiant utopian future was preserved."[220] Godard's attraction to Maoism can be understood in the same way; thus, what lies at the center of the filmmaker's vision of the revolution in the aftermath of May and June of 1968 is actually an imaginary China, which becomes a symbol of an authentic revolution and, even more importantly, a guarantee that revolution is still possible.

The problem of revolutionary action in post-WWII France remains schematic in *Tout va bien*, a film that seems to be an illustration, even an explication, of the tenets of Marxism-Leninism. The questions of the "class struggle," the student protests, and the role of intellectuals are synthesized into a single problem that forms the film's central concern: the necessary subjugation of the intellectual—here seen as one of the preconditions of revolution—is made possible by the re-education and remoulding of the intellectual through contact with the working class and the revolutionary youth. Indeed, this is the central theme of the film, while the dramatic events rooted in individualistic concerns are seen as peripheral. Godard-Gorin want to show that personal pursuits—for example, Jacques' artistic pursuits—and all individual concerns—such as his marital problems with his wife, Suzanne—must be subordinated to socio-political projects. Moreover, they are seen as being conditioned by—in Marxist terms—class and the

[219] Wolin, *The Wind From the East*, 122-24.
[220] Ibid.

relations of production. The crisis in Suzanne's and Jacques' relationship has its origins in a political and ideological crisis. Jacques' and Suszanne's marital crisis (as I mentioned in Chapter 2) is a direct consequence of the protagonists' becoming aware of their political quietism and conformism. Romantic love and betrayal, important themes for Godard's earlier films, are overtly referenced in *Tout va bien* in the opening sequence only to be repudiated in the Brechtian way as "bourgeois" topics.[221]

For a film that engages with the themes of revolt and revolution in the light of 1968, *Tout va bien* is curiously silent on the essential goals behind revolutionary change: man's liberation, social equality, and the creation of a just society. In that sense, Godard-Gorin's film stands very much apart from *Porcile* and *WR*. Moreover, the French filmmakers also ignore the question that the revolts of May and June 1968 raised about the outcomes of revolutionary action. Of course, *Tout va bien* is saturated with references to key events of May and June. The outbreak of violence at the Flins factory on June 6th between the police and the workers and students, the PCF's refusal to give support to the students and the ultra-left, their negotiations with the de Gaulle government—all these are important themes in *Tout va bien*. The evaporation of revolutionary fervor, however, and the retreat of the workers and students is not explored for its possible implications. As *Porcile* and *WR* demonstrate, these were important and troubling questions in the immediate post-1968 years.

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[221] See Chapter 2 for a discussion of Godard-Gorin's reference to Godard's 1963 film, *Le Mépris*. In the opening of *Tout va bien*, the protagonists (Jacques and Suzanne) express their love for one another in a way that refers to the opening of *Le Mépris*. The love story of *Le Mépris*' Camille (Brigitte Bardot) and Paul (Michel Piccoli) is transposed and drastically transformed in *Tout va bien*. Incidentally, at the time the film was made, Jane Fonda was married to the French director Roger Vadim, who had previously been married to Bardot. Vadim made both actresses sex symbols—Bardot with the 1956 film *Et Dieu … créa la femme*, and Fonda with the 1968 film *Barbarella*.

In *WR* and *Porcile*, the theme of revolution is approached from a less dogmatic and more humanist perspective. I agree with Kovács' view of Makavejev's and Pasolini's political modernist projects. Kovács argues that although their ideological orientations were clear and emphatic, their reliance on "the parabolic form" as opposed to the agitational mode made their work less "aggressive as in the political activist variant"—by which he refers to Godard-Gorin's work between 1968 and 1972.[222] The ideal of the revolution is for Makavejev and Pasolini a "grand illusion."[223] Nevertheless, it is clear that they felt this ideal should not be abandoned. This is why Pasolini did not abandon what he called his "Marxist morality," and why Makavejev (along with his protagonist in *WR*, Milena) did not feel ashamed by "his communist past." However, Makavejev and Pasolini are painfully aware that the mythical revolution has served as an alibi for some of the most horrible events of the 20th Century.

Godard-Gorin and Makavejev explicitly engage with the concrete historical events—the 1968 revolts, the Soviet revolution, the Second World War and Fascism, the Chinese Cultural Revolution. After his first two films, Pasolini, unlike Godard and Makavejev, would often turns towards the realm of myth, to a prehistoric moment.[224] The fascination with "prehistory" is felt in fictional films like *Teorema*, *Porcile*, *Edipo Re*,

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[222] Kovács, *Screening Modernism*, 371.
[223] See Pasolini, "Manifesto for a New Theater."
[224] I have in mind Pasolini's *Il Vangelo secondo Matteo* (*The Gospel According to Matthew*, 1964), *Edipo Re* (*Oedipus Rex*, 1967), *Medea* (1969), and the three films grouped under the title *Trilogy of Life* (1971-1974). Caminati, *Pasolini's Primitivism*. Caminati has also written about Pasolini's Orientalism: *Orientalismo eretico*. Pasolini made several such documentaries, including *Appunti per un film sull'India* (*Notes for a Film on India*, 1968), *Appunti per un'Orestiade africana (Notes for an African Orestes*,1970), *Le mura di Sanaa* (The Walls of Sana'a, 1974). Caminati has compared this "turn to prehistory"—with specific reference to Pasolini's "Third World" documentaries—to the Italian *arte povera* movement of the nineteen-sixties. This turn to the primitive in modernist art, argues Caminati, results in it being "caught in the fold between an anti-modernist ambition and modernist technique" Caminati, *Primitivism*, 44.

and others. This particular relation to history has its roots in Pasolini's view of the revolution and its ideals.

One facet of Pasolini's revolutionary utopian sensibility was born of his encounter with contemporary realities. By the late nineteen-sixties, it seemed to him that Europe was in a state of decline and decay of cultural and ethical values. Any revolutionary program (i.e. the student revolts) in this context was for him quixotic and misguided at best, and cynical and opportunistic at worst. At the same time, Pasolini's was a hermetic idealism, which often seemed vague and ill-formed from the Marxist or practical-political point of view. As Sam Rohdie points out, the "revolutionary nature of the working class did not reside for him in its relation to modern capitalism, but rather to a pre-capitalist archaic, peasant world," adding that "politically, this was nonsense and did not even correspond to Marxism."[225]

Pasolini's political commitment was always inseparable from his commitment to culture and art. Through his art he would seek to take an oppositional stance and create a scandal. His personal revolutionary ideal is to a great extent a poeticized one, and in that sense Naomi Greene is right to refer to his project as being under the sign of Rimbaud.[226] In a letter that Rimbaud wrote during the days of the Paris Commune, he explains how he sees his new calling: "I'm now making myself as scummy as I can. Why? I want to be a poet, and I'm working at turning myself into a seer. [. . .] The idea is to reach the unknown by the derangement of all the senses. It involves enormous suffering, but one must be strong and be a born poet."[227] Pasolini's role in a possible revolution was, as he

[225] Rohdie, *The Passion*, 120-21.
[226] See Greene, *Pier Paolo Pasolini*.
[227] Robb, *Rimbaud*, 79-80.

saw it, that of a poet-prophet, of a seer, in the tradition of Rimbaud.[228] While French Maoism was "a projection . . . for the students' overheated revolutionary fantasizes," Makavejev's return to the revolutionary Wilhelm Reich reflected the questions of man's essential nature and his capacity for freedom. By the same token, Pasolini's idealization of the peasants, his Third Worldism, and his turn to the mythical are the revolutionary utopia of a *poète maudit*.[229] The archaic and the ahistorical were, as Caminati has argued, not an "escape" but a "possible geographic alterity."[230]

Porcile's importance in Pasolini's *oeuvre* stems from the fact that he alternates between two temporal modes: a historically specific and an ahistorical, symbolic mode.[231] These are brought into a productive tension with the result the film's thematic center lies in the clash between the revolutionary ideal and what Pasolini saw as a sinister contemporary social and political situation in Europe. This conflict is far more prominent than the engagement with the Revolution as a concrete historical phenomenon. The historically situated narrative line often lacks a real sense of historical specificity; while the filmmaker explicitly places his story in the Germany of 1967 during the time of the brewing student unrest in Italy, this segment does not recreate truly a specific historical time. The Cologne of that year is fused with an earlier historical moment: the years leading up to and during Nazi Germany. The earlier historical time is, as it were, superimposed over the later one. This point is emphasized when an alliance is formed

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[228] Interestingly, Makavejev also touches on this theme in *WR*. During Milena's fervent speech about sexual revolution, Radmilović the shock-worker exclaims, "Maria, give it to me!"—a line from Mayakovsky's 1915 poem *Oblako v shtanakh* (A Cloud in Trousers), a poem about erotic obsession in which the poet assumes the a prophet.
[229] Wolin, *The Wind*, 122-24.
[230] Caminati, *Pasolini's Primitivism*, 57.
[231] For a discussion of the manner in which Pasolini relates the two separate narratives in *Porcile*, the use of montage to create a narratively de-centered film, see Chapter 2. In *Edipo re*, there are also interesting shifts in the temporal modes.

between Herdhitze and Klotz. The former is representative of the post-war big industry, the marriage between neo-capitalism and neo-Fascism.[232] He is far more menacing than his rival, the wartime capitalist, Klotz. Unlike Klotz, Herdhitze disguises his Nazism (we are told that he had facial surgery), and he gives in to flagrant displays of enthusiasm for Nazi racial policies. Pasolini's depiction of Herdhitze presents the face of a new order, and parallels the last lines of the epilogue to Brecht's 1940 play *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui*: "Don't rejoice in his defeat, you men!/Although the world stood up and stopped the bastard/ The bitch that bore him is in heat again."

The temporal narrative situation is made explicit through references to the year 1967, the student protests in Berlin, and the intertextual references to revolutionary cinema – Pasolini's casting of Léaud, Wiazemsky, and Clémenti. The Nazi years are evoked explicitly through the characters of Herdhitze and Klotz, who are given to cheerfully wistful recollection of the time of Hitler's Germany. Pasolini also makes references to that time period through a pastiche and a parody of two prominent avant-gardists of the proto-Nazi years. George Grosz' iconography—his unmistakable, acerbic caricatural style—and Brecht's feeling for the grotesque and the carnevalesque in *The Threepenny Opera*, *Mahagonny*, and *Arturo Ui* are clearly evoked. Pasolini emphatically shows *Porcile*'s Cologne through the eyes of Grosz and Brecht, thus evoking their bitter attacks on bourgeois culture and values.

[232] Pasolini's notion that capitalism and fascism are linked stems in part from an adherence to the Marxist belief that capitalism is inextricably linked with fascism, and that the bourgeoisie is fundamentally implicated in the rise of fascism. For a discussion of this point, see Antonios Vadolas, *Perversions of Fascism*, 58-59.

As we have already noted, Pasolini was unequivocal in his statement in the "Manifesto for a New Theater" that "the days of Brecht are gone forever."[233] Viewed in this context, Sig. Klotz's repeated pronouncements in *Porcile* that the days of Brecht and Grosz are in fact not gone are of particular interest. Pasolini's invocation of Brecht and Grosz through pastiche is an elegiac, sincere lament of the death of the heroic avant-garde. But it is possible that the phrase " the days of Brecht" has for Pasolini a double meaning. His evocation of the avant-gardists recalls both the culturally thrilling nineteen-twenties German avant-garde as much as it recalls the social and political turbulence of the time that culminated in the formation of the Third Reich. In that sense, Klotz's insistence that years of Brecht and Grosz are not gone gains a different and rather menacing tone.[234]

The title of Makavejev's film refers very clearly to both Wilhelm Reich and to the World Revolution; as Milena explains to Ilich, Reich's "name is World Revolution." Makavejev's coupling of Reich, the social visionary and advocate of individual freedom, with the revolution gives this heterogeneous and disjunctive work a strong thematic framework. Reich's story, as Makavejev emphasizes in *WR*, is inextricably tied to the 20th century abortive or futile revolts and revolutions. Unlike Pasolini, Makavejev treats the theme of revolution as a concrete, historical phenomenon.

In a thematically significant and formally interesting montage sequence towards the end of the film, Makavejev juxtaposes dramatically disparate collage elements in order to create a nexus of associations. The young Belgrade Reichian revolutionary,

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[233] Pasolini, "Manifesto for a New Theater," 126-138.
[234] The link established by Pasolini in *Porcile* between neo-fascism with neo-capitalism will become even more central in his final and most controversial film, *Salò*.

Milena, brings the Soviet People's Artist, Vladimir Ilich to her apartment, where their courtship develops. Their sexually charged conversation revolves entirely around politics: the question of Soviet-Yugoslav doctrinal differences, the revolution and the role of the state in post-revolutionary society, the fate of Trotsky and Reich. In a short insert, Milena reads Lenin's statements on the necessity of the State for the protection of the people from enemies—i.e. the so-called dictatorship of the proletariat. There is a brief interlude, in which a scantily clad woman is shown sculpting the erect penis of the editor of the American alternative pornographic magazine, *Screw*. In the next segment, Ilich exuberantly and good-naturedly emerges from a wardrobe, despite the fact that he was rudely thrown into it by Milena's jealous former lover, the "shock worker" Radmilović.[235] The image of the emerging Ilich—a substitute for Lenin—is followed by an insert from *The Vow*, depicting Stalin's arrival at a formal dinner. A close-up of the finished model of the magazine editor's penis immediately follows the image of Stalin. This grotesque image of a sculpted erection is clearly an ironic reference to Reich's ideas about the danger of interrupting the release of the vital force of sexual energy, an interruption which he saw as being directly implicated in neurosis, aggression, and political oppression and repression.[236] Another excerpted segment from *The Vow* follows

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[235] The term shock worker, or *udarnik*, is originally Soviet, and refers to model Soviet workers whose commitment to Soviet progress and productive capacities make them symbolic of proletarian virtue and morality. In the Soviet Union, the model worker would come to be typified by Aleksei Stakhanov, a miner who exceeded his work quota fourteen times over in one night. In post-WWII Yugoslavia, shock worker brigades were formed in order incite rapid development and growth. Many of these workers were forced to work, often in terrible conditions. For a discussion of the term in the Yugoslav context and in relation to film, see Goulding, *Liberated Cinema*, 23-4.

[236] Reich, *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*. Also, the connections that Makavejev establishes between Stalin and Hitler are in turn linked to the story of Reich, who had by the nineteen-thirties became an outspoken critic of the Soviet regime. He criticized what he saw as the Soviet perversion of Marxism, condemned Stalin's totalitarian regime, and referred to Soviet communists as "red fascists." As the narrator in *WR* explains, his horror with Stalinism would lead Reich to renounce the ideology of his youth and become a staunch opponent of communism.

in the heels of the Reichian reference, showing a triumphant Stalin announce that the "first stage of communism" has been "successfully completed." As his audience begins to applaud, there is a sudden cut to archival footage of a madman in a straightjacket banking his head against a wall. This sinister image is accompanied on the voice-over track by a saccharine Soviet Communist *faux* folk-song.

Makavejev's strategic insertion of the music has two functions. The juxtaposition of the cliché phrase "We thank the Party/Our glorious Party," a bit of propaganda glorifying the Soviet state, with the image of absolute, hopeless madness and oblivion functions according to the principle of analogy. At the same time, the image of the doomed insane man also functions as an authorial response to Stalin's ceremonious speech from the previous segment. The revolution, and this celebrated accomplishment—the completion of the first phase of communism—are for Makavejev a monumental lie, or as Milena tells Ilich, "a bunch of lies [. . .] a toy balloon is what it is . . . not a revolution! A petty human lie dressed up as a great historical truth!" Finally, the communist song is the same one that served as the accompaniment to Ilich's ice-skating performance. In this way, Makavejev links the horrifying "completion of the first phase of communism" to the father of the Soviet state—Lenin. The critique of Lenin was a politically risky gesture since, as Jasna Dragović-Soso puts it, Yugoslav communists at this point still regarded "the Leninist heritage as a holy cow."[237] This sequence is a clear indictment of Soviet barbarism and brutality, which is disguised beneath a fake rosy sheen (what Makavejev calls the "wax museum"), and the myth of the great revolution. The symbolic trademarks of Communism—songs and iconic representations of Stalin – are treated irreverently. The general tenor of this segment is hardly surprising considering

[237] Dragović-Soso, *Saviours of the Nation*, 21.

the film was being made in the immediate aftermath of the Prague Spring. Stalin's Soviet Union, which Makavejev likens to Hitler's Germany, appears in *WR* only as the most monumental and most sinister example of the perversion of the revolutionary impulse. The Yugoslav liberation from the Nazis, and the communist myth of the "national liberation front," is linked with the ill-fated Belgrade student protests of June 1968 and these are in turn linked to the film's larger theme of failed revolutions and revolts.

Narratives of Revolutionary Youth

The outcome of revolution as such constitutes a major thematic line in this *WR*. The American counter-culture segment of the film represents one outcome of the sexual revolution and the student revolts, while the Yugoslav segment alludes to the outcome of the Soviet and Yugoslav revolutions. The fictional story also illustrates Reich's notions about the dangers of sudden liberation. In a forward to a Yugoslav edition of *The Function of the Orgasm*, Makavejev discussed the1968 revolts:

> The year of 1968—a year of unforeseen changes, a year when young people of the whole world did unforeseen things turning the planet into a political theater and a new social game—was a year of an awakened hope and at the same time a year of announced catastrophe. All of a sudden, Reich's hypotheses about enormous energies were revealed. Those energies would be ignited by a single spark; Reich's hypotheses would very soon be amended by his darkest fear that humankind has been irreversibly tamed, that its muscles have become rigid, that

its spirit has become rigid, that its economy has become rigid, and that it has thus lost its capacity for freedom.[238]

Makavejev takes up the subject of the Belgrade student revolts—and the student revolts in general—treating them satirically. In *WR*, the revolutionary youth are represented through the characters of Milena and Jagoda, the young Yugoslav Reichians, and the documentary subjects of the New York segment. Tuli Kupferberg marches through the streets of New York with a machine gun in protest of American militarism while the Fugs' song "Kill for Peace" plays on the voice-over track. His audience—consisting of ordinary citizens—however, remains largely unaffected by this affront. The documentary segment that engages with the sexual liberation echoes Milena's Reichian revolutionary rhetoric and her calls for the joining of socialism and the revolution with physical love. Plaster models of erect penises and vaginas point to the commodification and fetishization of sex and sexuality. This process is in turn accompanied by the re-codification of social behavior amongst the sexually liberated: Jackie Curtis' desire to be married to the "all American hero"—albeit an unconventional one, Betty Dodson's prescriptive elaboration of the importance of masturbation in the process of women's emancipation from man. Indeed, at the point when Dodson indicates that having no "masturbatory experience or background" is a "lousy posture to be in," Makavejev juxtaposes the image of masturbating subjects with an image of Jagoda and Ljuba's joyful lovemaking.

Makavejev treats the Jagoda and Milena characters with a clear sense of ironic distance. The young Reichian revolutionaries complement one another: Milena is an

[238] Makavejev, afterword to *Funkcija orgazma*, 344. My translation.

orator and a rhetorician while Jagoda compulsively puts the Reichian notions of free love and sexual revolution into action. This oscillation between theory and praxis finds expression in an absurdist montage sequence that alternates images of Milena giving a speech about free love, while Jagoda engages in sexual acrobatics with "Ljuba the Cock."[239] Jagoda's sensuality and her apparently unremitting, ravenous sexual appetite are never rewarded by sexual gratification. Instead, her eroticism becomes mechanized. Moreover, a Yugoslav militarist subtext is attached to her intercourse with Ljuba such that double entendres take on a menacing tone. When he informs her that she is now under the protection of the Yugoslav army, she apprehensively asks, "but who will protect me from you?" At the same time, Milena's insurrectionist aims and her resolute rebelliousness are undermined when she falls in love with Ilich, a Stalinist authoritarian figure whom she would like to liberate. Makavejev's sense of irony is most pronounced in the scene that depicts her discussing Hugo Jaeger's photograph of Hitler surrounding by adoring women as she herself fawns over the authoritarian Vladimir. The sense that he is a sinister figure is most obvious when Makavejev links images of Lenin and Stalin to the character of the Soviet skater through montage.

This theme of authoritarianism is further developed through Vladimir's polite, but firm assertions about the question of Yugoslav autonomy. Although the Yugoslavs think they will find a separate road to socialism, he contends that they will realize that the Soviet way is the only way. Milena's reply that we have yet to see "who will get whom" appears, when viewed in light of her violent death at Vladimir's hands, as an expression of a general anxiety regarding Soviet militarism and Soviet-Yugoslav relations, which

[239] See Chapter 2 for a discussion of the quotes and allusions that are incorporated into the fictional segment of the film.

grew strained in the aftermath of the events in Prague. Indeed, there was in 1968 a general fear that there would be a military invasion of Yugoslavia.

If Milena turns out to be victim of "red fascism" and authoritarian cruelty, she is also depicted as a dogmatist and a demagogue, both in her superficial understanding of Reichian principles and in her desire to gain control over the masses. In one of the film's most memorable scenes, Milena, in Ljuba's military uniform, delivers an impromptu speech about the need for sexual freedom.[240] Her gestures and particular inflections are allusions to Tito's oratorical style, and more specifically an allusion to his television address on June 9th, in which he cautiously gave legitimacy to the students' demands. This politically shrewd gesture quelled the unrest, effectively putting an end to the demonstrations. Makavejev makes reference to this event, and to the fact that many students came out in support of Tito by incorporating a performance of the Kozaračko kolo.[241] The notion of suppressed revolt and failed revolution is reinforced by the montage, in which he juxtaposes Milena's speech with images of Mao's Cultural Revolution, followed by Stalin and then Nazi archival footage. Both the fictional Yugoslav and the New York documentary sections of the film pose the following questions: what is the nature and outcome of revolution in the contemporary context? what kind of revolution do we need? The film, as a whole, never directly answers these questions, but Makavejev's presentation of historical events shows that they could not have been further from the ideals of the revolution.

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[240] See Chapter 2 for a discussion of the allusions and quotes that Makavejev incorporates in this scene. On the question of demagoguery, see Herbert Eagle, "Yugoslav Marxist Humanism, 131.

[241] See Chapter 2, n. 24 for a discussion of the significance of the performance of the Kozaračko kolo in this scene.

The theme of revolution in the general sense is also accompanied and developed in *Tout va bien* and *Porcile* by the thematization of the student revolts in 1968. These films should be seen in the light of Godard's 1967 film *La Chinoise*, which was an important reference point for the revolutionary cinema of the late nineteen-sixties.[242] Godard's 1967 film is of particular interest because it forms an important subtext in *Tout va bien* and even more so in *Porcile*. *La Chinoise* is thus relevant to the discussion of *Tout va bien*, *WR* and *Porcile* not only because they deal with the fundamental 1968 theme of revolutionary youth, but also because it is prototypical of the revolutionary film of the years of revolt in the late nineteen-sixties.[243] Moreover, Godard-Gorin's later film and Pasolini's *Porcile* are in explicit dialogue with Godard's earlier film, *La Chinoise*.

As in his other films, in *La Chinoise* Godard creates a collage of quotations and allusions. In *La Chinoise* the collage consists of slogans combined with quotes from Althusser, Saint Just, Lenin, and Mao. Starring Léaud and Wiazemsky, *La Chinoise* is the story of a group of Althusserian Maoists who collectively occupy an empty apartment in Paris over the course of a summer, as they intensely study the tenets of Marxist-Leninism through the lenses of Maoist doctrine.[244] The film is loosely based on Dostoevsky's *Demons*, about a group of Russian 19th century socialist revolutionaries. In *La Chinoise*,

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[242] The Yugoslav director Želimir Žilnik's 1969 film *Rani radovi* (Early Works) was equally important in the Yugoslav context. The film, which can be seen as a response to *La Chinoise*, tracks a group of young students travel through the Serbian countryside and the provinces in an unsuccessful attempt to raise revolutionary consciousness among the peasantry and the working classes.If *La Chinoise* was prophetic with respect to events of 1968, *Rani radovi* was a critical interpretation of them.

[243] Bertolucci's 1968 film *Partner* could of course also be added to the list of the initial wave of revolutionary youth films. Yet, because his debt to Godard during those years was so heavy, and because he distanced himself from Godard for political reasons, I have chosen to exclude it. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that Pasolini chose Pierre Clémenti, who plays the role of the young revolutionary in *Partner*, for the role of the cannibal in *Porcile*, a film that can be seen as a response to the revolutionary student generation and its adherents. Interestingly, Makavejev would also cast Clémenti in the role of a doomed revolutionary in his 1973 film, *Sweet Movie*. Glauber Rocha would also participate in the practice of character quoting, and actor swapping within the context of radical filmmaking. He would cast Clémenti in the role of a shepherd in his 1970 film *Cabeças Cortadas* (Cutting Heads).

[244] For a discussion of the quoted texts in La Chinoise, see Godard, "Struggle on Two Fronts," 20-35.

revolutionary theory finally develops into revolutionary praxis when the French Red Guards in-training assassinate the Soviet Minister of Culture. The asceticism and devotion of the revolutionaries is undercut at the film's end, when it become clear that they were experimenting with revolutionary violence over the course of the summer only to return easily to their respective occupations.

In spite of the fact that the protagonists of Godard-Gorin's later film, *Tout va bien*, are two intellectuals (a former filmmaker and a journalist), the film's real heroes are the revolutionary youth and the workers. The militancy of the young revolutionaries in *Tout va bien* evokes the heroes of *La Chinoise*. At the end of the earlier film, Veronique (Wiazemsky) realizes that the revolutionary struggle is a "long march." The initial steps taken by the youth are for Godard full of promise: it is "precisely because she's realized so much that Veronique will be able to make it something more than a day-dream."[245] If the young revolutionaries in *La Chinoise* were making an experiment, Godard-Gorin want to emphasize that the ones in *Tout va bien* have taken the irreversible road of the permanent revolutionary struggle.

In another invocation of *La Chinoise*, the film ends with a *gauchiste* take-over of a large supermarket led by Anne Wiazemsky, one that takes place in front of an impotent, mercenary PCF representative selling Party literature. This *gauchiste* rebellion immediately recalls Jacques' earlier pronouncement that it is only now, in 1972, that he can see "the willingness to fight on the part of some and the hypocrisy of others." His statement is a condemnation not only of the old left (the Communist Party and the unions) but of leftist intellectuals like Jacques himself, who only half-heartedly participated in the events of May. After all, Jacques admits that the events at Flins

[245] Ibid., 22.

distanced him from the movement, and that he was uncomfortable with the notion of the re-education of intellectuals.

In one of the film's most spectacular scenes, Godard-Gorin, in a gesture of commemoration, re-stage the strike at Flins. After the end of the factory strike and the dissolution of Jacques' and Suzanne's relationship, there is a transition to a seemingly unrelated scene in which a group of students clash with the police. It quickly becomes clear, however, how these two scenes are connected. Before the transition, Jacques discusses the fact that he now realizes that the events at the factory have their origins in May, which represents a revolutionary beginning. The scene in question is a Brechtian schematic staging of a real strike that took place at the Flins factory in June of 1968, where a fight broke out between "the police and workers (with a few students) that had led to a young worker, Gilles Tautin, being shot to death."[246] A politically impassioned battle-cry, combined with a eulogy for Gilles, is delivered on the voice-over track, calling on the audience to continue the fight. As an account of1968, *Tout va bien* is overwhelmingly a denigration of impotent intellectuals and political opportunists and a tribute to Gilles and the heroic youth.

As I have already indicated, Pasolini's reaction to the events of 1968 was markedly different from Godard's, and *Porcile* was in part Pasolini's response to the French director—who is here seen as representative of the fervent embrace of

[246] Bourg, *From Revolution to Ethics*, 56. This event was extremely important for the largest Maoist group in France, the *Gauche prolétarienne* (GP) since they had plans to avenge the worker's death the following year. The groups leader, Alain Geismar—who was sent to prison for 18 months on June 25th, 1970—is also mentioned in that scene.

revolutionary politics by intellectuals and artists. In a 1970 article, Pasolini interpreted Godard's situation:

> [Godard] has thrown himself headfirst into the void of martyrdom--a martyrdom without pleasure because lived only as passive fault. The words of Che Guevara, publicized by the student 'crowd,' have been fatal to him: that the intellectual should commit suicide is foolishness, it is a pure clause of the "art of rhetoric"; even a child would understand it. But Godard, more defenseless than a child, believed it; he made a real problem of it for himself. And instead of continuing to martyr himself in front of the moviola [...] he opted for an aprioristic total negation.[247]

Like Pasolini, Andrew Sarris felt that "the death of an artist [was] too high a price to pay for the birth of a revolutionary, even when the revolution seem[ed] to make more sense than ever before."[248] Through Ida's and Julian's story in *Porcile*, Pasolini parodies *La Chinoise* and also challenges the reigning political ethos of the moment.[249] Besides the conflict between Klotz and Herdhitze, there is tension between Julian, a self-professed conformist, and Ida, a young revolutionary. "Sententious Ida," as Julian calls her, declares her intention to go to a Berlin protest, where 10,000 of them will urinate on the Berlin Wall. She attempts to persuade him to accompany her and to join "the nation's best" in peaceful protest. When it becomes clear that he is unwilling to go, she concludes in the language of the students that Julian is a "disgusting individualist," that he is "on Papa's side." Ida character has no psychological depth; in Brechtian and Groszian fashion she merely represents a social type. Her convictions, and those of her fellow

[247] Pasolini, "The Unpopular Cinema," *HE*, 271.
[248] Sarris, "Godard and the Revolution," 50-59.
[249] A film that Pasolini liked, but whose ideology he could not endorse.

revolutionaries, are portrayed as ridiculous: their revolt is merely a childish prank dressed up in revolutionary rhetoric and empty slogans. This apparently monumental protest involving the nation's best is really a "pissing contest" among the "Berlin boys." In this way, Pasolini creates a strong sense of ironic distance in his treatment of Ida and, by implication, of the student "crowd."

The initial characterization of the young couple (Julian as the conformist and Ida as the revolutionary) is reversed. Not only are Ida's revolutionary sentiments ludicrous, they are also fleeting. Upon her return from Berlin, she announced to Julian that she will, in a clear departure from revolutionary politics, marry a certain Puby Jennings, whose "reformism is clean." In an absurdist rendering of the Nazis' rhetoric of the correspondence between racial purity on the one hand, and physical strength and prowess on the other, Ida describes the strength of Puby's morality as being in direct proportion to the strength of his muscles. Despite his Hitlerjugend-like appearance (she admits that he is blond), she insists that he is not anti-communist and that he appears radically un-German—that is Russian. Pasolini's Ida, in a clear reference to *La Chinoise*'s revolutionary summer-camp, is ultimately playing a game of revolutionary dress-up. Her ideal bourgeois match with Puby marks the end of her brief affair with "revolutionary" politics and her return to, in Julian's words, the "infinite repetition of the same thing."

There is an even more somber side to Pasolini's vision of the students. In his polemical "notes in verse" entitled "The PCI to the Young," which were composed in the aftermath of a violent clash in March of 1968 between the students and the police at the University in Rome, he described the student revolt as a classless—and thus depoliticized—conflict, likening it to a family quarrel and a civil war among the

bourgeoisie.[250] The filmmaker saw the students as a new generation of *qualunquista*, just like their fathers.[251] The social polarization and the outbreak of violence between students the police outraged him to such an extent that he polemically proclaimed that "[b]landly, the era of Hitler is returning."[252] He felt that their leftism was beginning to resemble a "fascism of the left." Speaking of the Italian far left, Pasolini argued that "the criticism of Stalinism, not carried out all the way by PCI, has become more rigid through the series of hopscotches to the left, creating precisely a sort of neo-Stalinism by absurdity. [. . .] It is the fascism of the left, as a new phenomenon that is typical of the years 1967, 1968, and probably 1969."[253] His apprehension about the radical left in the late sixties would turn out to be partially justified by the terrorist violence of the Brigate Rosse (Red Brigades) in the seventies and eighties.

If Ida's revolutionary aspirations are shown to be trivial, and if she emerges as a conformist, Julian's professed conformism is called into question. In the beginning of the film, Julian explains that he is fifty percent revolutionary and fifty percent conformist, echoing the placards at the beginning of the film that describe a son of Germany who is neither obedient nor disobedient. Yet, Julian rejects a bourgeois match that would place him in the position of owning half of Germany, just as he refuses to join the student revolts. Instead, he embraces a monstrous love—the ultimate form of sexual and social deviance. Julian explains that his love is his only sincere sentiment; his embrace of it is

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[250] Incidentally, Truffaut took the same position as Pasolini on clashes between the students and the police in 1968, when he argued that siding with the students was the same as siding with the bourgeoisie against the working class. Brody, *Everything Is Cinema*, 335.

[251] A term derived from the name of the post-WWII political party "L'Uomo Qualunque" (The Common Man's Front). The party was financially backed largely by ex-Fascists from the South, where it found most of its support. According to Ginsberg, "its popularity derived mostly from the political diseducation of more than twenty years of Fascism, and from the southerners' traditional hatred of central government." Ginsberg, *A History*, 100. Over time, the term came to denote a lack of social responsibility.

[252] Pasolini, "The PCI to the Young," *HE*, 151.

[253] Pasolini, "What is Neo-Zhdanovism and What Isn't," in *HE*, 159-163.

an act of ethical and spiritual purification. Addressing the viewer, he explains that it is "a grace" that strikes him "like the plague." At the same time, his acceptance of this love is also indicative of his willingness to accept his own difference, to choose nonconformity. The conflict between abnormality or deviance and conformity evokes Moravia's 1951 novel *Il Conformista* (*The Conformist*); this theme would become important in the films of the time that dealt with Fascism.[254]

Pasolini's treatment of Julian is, however, ambivalent since there is yet another, overtly Freudian, facet to the theme of his "difference." The taboo desire to copulate with pigs and, at the same, time to be devoured by them (which is what happens at the end of the film) evokes the Freudian themes of the taboo and the totem, and the oscillation between active and passive aims.[255] For Pasolini, the appeal of Freud's *Totem and Taboo*, which deals with the theme of the violent rebellion against the Father, is clearly based on the filmmaker's preoccupation with the theme of rebellion and revolt within the context of 1968—a theme that is overtly introduced at the beginning of the film. In *Porcile*, a voice-over narrator mimicking the voice of God reads a series of pronouncements that are, like the Commandments, written in stone. Addressing an unidentified interlocutor, the narrator announces it has been decided that the son will be devoured for his disobedience. It is Pasolini's cannibal—who murders the father and eats human flesh—who will radically disobey and thus be destroyed. In one sense then, this cannibal is the primitive Oedipal man. But unlike the Freudian primitive man who will come to feel guilt

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[254] Bertolucci transposed Moravia's novel into the 1970 eponymous film. The linking of sexual deviance with fascism has earlier examples—for example, Roberto Rossellini's 1945 film *Roma, città aperta*. It would, however, be revived at the end of the nineteen-sixties and the seventies with works such as Lucino Visonti *La caduta degli dei* (The Damned, 1969), Pasolini's *Salò o le 120 giornate di Sodoma* (Salo: or the 120 Days of Sodom, 1975), or Fassbinder's *Die Ehe der Maria Braun* (The Marriage of Maria Braun, 1979).

[255] For a discussion of the theme of the Freudian taboo, see Chapter 2.

and remorse, the cannibal "trembles with joy." He is a martyr figure, a kind of inverted Christ figure—a son who disobeys in an attempt to bring redemption. The vision of this mythical revolt is Pasolini's revolutionary ideal. At the same time, Pasolini betrays a certain ambivalence toward the notion of revolution: in *Porcile*, radical freedom culminates in isolation and death. Unlike the cannibal, Julian is neither obedient nor disobedient. The theme of ambivalence is further developed by the narrator's description of Julian as possessing both hardness and tenderness (masculinity and femininity), and by Julian's characterization of himself as half-conformist and half-revolutionary.

If the cannibal is a kind of primitive Oedipal man, then Julian is an inversion of the Wolfman, the subject of one of Freud's most famous case-studies. Viano has convincingly argued that Julian's dream about having his finger bitten off by a piglet is an allusion to the Wolfman—whose ambivalent feelings toward his father (along with his femininity and possible homosexuality) are revealed through a pathological fear of wolves.[256] This ambivalence towards the father is an expression of the dilemma: to eat or be eaten, which is in turn in based in the oscillation between active and passive aims. [257] Pasolini inverts this motif of compulsive aversion into a compulsive attraction with the character of Julian. Julian is irresistibly drawn to that which the Wolfman fears, to being devoured. In a soliloquy that marks a brief transition to a pathetic tone, Julian wonders: "Should we be amazed . . . at night, by our horrible nightmares? They are the sincere thing in my life. I've nothing else to confront reality with." He describes his tragic quest as a "martyr's vocation," and concludes: "Who knows the truth of dreams, beyond that of making us eager for the truth." Pasolini's vision of the contemporary reality, represented

[256] It is perhaps worth nothing that both Julian's and the Wolfman's fathers are cripples.
[257] Freud, *Three Case Histories*.The Wolfman dreams that he has cut off his finger. For a discussion of the Wolfman reference in *Porcile*, see Viano, *A Certain Realism*, pg.

in *Porcile* by the Godesberg segment, is bleak: Julian's poetic self-destruction is the only possible authentic gesture of defiance. From the vantage point of a poet-seer, he perceives that rebellion and revolt (as they are perceived by Ida and the students) are doomed. As David Ward points out, Julian realizes "that their revolt is only a masked, but ultimately sanctioned, protest supervised by power."[258]

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Gorin has described the politically radical films he made with Godard as offering "the perfect image of what was the militancy at that time, that incredible drive of madness which was inside it. They are affected by history, not on a theoretical level, but in the flesh and blood of the films."[259] This description can be extended to *Porcile* and *WR*. Godard-Gorin's, Pasolini's and Makavejev's films offer a window into the ruins of the revolutionary utopia in the wake of 1968. Moreover, the filmmakers' respective utopian visions and relationships to history are representative of three general ideological and political orientations. Godard-Gorin's film is the prototype of the doctrinaire militant film—a tradition that goes back to the early Soviet days. Theirs was a fervent and often blind faith in a revolution, one that demanded absolute dedication and self-denial, and the denial of art. In *WR*, Makavejev's interest is precisely in the historical examples of blind faith. He is predominantly drawn to revolutionary myths and the historical lies they give rise to. Pasolini's investment in culture and art, in addition to the Christian spiritualism that is in contradiction with his Marxism, place him in strong opposition to the militant

[258] Ward, introduction to "Manifesto for a New Theater," by Pasolini, in *Contemporary Perspectives*, 152.
[259] Gorin and Thomsen, *Jump Cut*, 17-19.

Godard, and similarly other militant filmmakers like Bernardo Bertolucci, Chris Marker, Marco Bellocchio, and Glauber Rocha. Pasolini shares with Makavejev a humanist interest in the individual, an interest which Godard subordinates to the needs of the revolution. Makavejev and Pasolini are ultimately interested in whether man is capable of being free, while for Godard-Gorin the question of freedom is indefinitely deferred.

Concluding Remarks

WR, *Porcile* and *Tout va bien* were a part of a transitional moment in the history of film aesthetics and aesthetics in general: the exhaustion of modernism in its immediate post-war form. In film, as in the other arts, the crisis of post-WWII modernism coincided with the 1968 political upheavals and the concomitant rejection of traditional modes of expression. Viewed from this perspective, the transformation of modernism coincided with the renewal of interest in avant-garde aesthetics. By 1968, Godard became a champion of the student protest movement and an ardent Maoist. His cinematic endeavors in the years immediately following 1968 were formally experimental and politically radical, and often didactic. With *WR*, Makavejev became renowned for his irreverent attitude towards oppressive regimes, and for his radical approach to film form. By the late 1960s, Pasolini's desperation grew in the face of what he saw as growing cultural stagnation, and he was distressed about contemporary social and political realities. Both in his journalistic writing and his art, he attacked both what he saw as the morally bankrupt and politically naïve terrorism of the radical left, and the prevailing political conformism or quietism which he thought was socially pervasive.

WR, *Porcile* and *Tout va bien* exemplify the radical shift of a generation of filmmakers who became famous within the framework of European art cinema. Godard, Makavejev and Pasolini were all associated with European post-war New Wave cinematic movements in their respective countries. By 1968, their approaches to filmmaking had been defined in opposition to classical or established cinematic forms. These New Wave works were fresh and bold; along with other important *auteur* films of

the period, they redefined the realm of art cinema.[260] The year 1968 incited these filmmakers to move beyond 'classical modernism' and to make politically and aesthetically radical works—a trend that would set a new tone for the nineteen-seventies and beyond. With *WR*, *Porcile* and *Tout va bien*, Makavejev, Pasolini and Godard-Gorin emphatically rejected the principle of "art for art's sake" and embraced instead a conception of form with radical implications. The common project of these filmmakers was, as Godard famously said, not to make *political* films, but to make films *politically*. Indeed, these works can be characterized both by their opposition to a hermetic modernism and by their shared political determination that shapes their anti-aesthetic impulse.

I have examined closely these three significantly different artistic responses by politically committed artists to the events of 1968, and particularly their engagement with the problem of the social role of the artist and the intellectual. In different ways, and from different national and ideological perspectives, all four filmmakers are concerned with the outcome of revolution and revolt. For Godard-Gorin, the revolution is a historical imperative that must be carried out resolutely, while Makavejev and Pasolini question the nature of dogma and demagoguery. A sense of revolution as a moral, political and existential imperative is, paradoxically, coupled with the awareness that the revolution and its goals may be unattainable. The filmmakers seem to be ambivalent about man's eternal quest for liberation, which has so often been thwarted. Despite this ambivalence,

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[260] Some landmark films made by these filmmakers before 1968 years are: *À bout de souffle* (*Breathless*, Godard 1960), *Alphaville* (Godard, 1965), *Nevinost bez zaštite* (*Innocence Unprotected*, Makavejev 1968), *Ljubavni slučaj ili tragedija službenice PTT* (*Love Affair; Or the Case of the Missing Switchboard Operator*, Makavejev 1967), *Mamma Roma* (Pasolini, 1962), *Čovek nije tica* (*Man is Not a Bird*, Makavejev 1965), *Le mépris* (*Contempt*, Godard 1963), *Teorema* (*Theorem*, Pasolini 1968), *Uccellacci e uccellini* (*Hawks and Sparrows*, Pasolini 1966).

neither Makavejev nor Pasolini abandon the revolutionary ideal. All four filmmakers sought to incite social change in a society increasingly driven by consumerism and cultural and political conformism.

Porcile, *WR*, and *Tout va bien* are different from one another in their approach to the subject of radical, revolutionary politics, but share an interest in montage and collage techniques that were typical in the avant-garde works of Eisenstein and Brecht. All three works can be described, in Gérard Genette's words, as palimpsests or "texts in the second degree."[261] That is, Makvejev, Pasolini and Godard-Gorin's use quotation and allusion to build up the structure of the texts. Brecht has described this technique as "footnoting," by which he means the principle of radical interruption.[262] In a sense, this strategy displaces the central importance of a mimetic approach to representation. Godard-Gorin's embrace of a mode of filmmaking, which aims at a critique of cinematic representation, is guided the by Brechtian device of *Verfremdungseffekt*—the central aim of which is to "defamiliarize," "estrange," or de-alienate.[263] Makavejev was committed to devices through which he could affront his audience. He resorted to collage in order to unite original fictional segments, documentary material, and found footage. In addition, he radicalized the Eisensteinian montage principle of the "attraction," developing on its basis the device of "montage at a distance." Pasolini introduced the notion of a "cinema of poetry" which stands in opposition to a cinema of consumption, in addition to his later post-Brechtian "theater of the word."[264] He was deeply convinced that his role as an artist

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[261] See Genette, *Palimpsests*.
[262] For a discussion of Brecht's practice of footnoting, see Chapter 2.
[263] Thompson and Sacks, *The Cambridge Companion to Brecht*, 216-17. It has been suggested that Brecht's is indebted to Shklovsky's notion of *ostranenie*, or defamiliarization. See Stanley Mitchell, "From Shklovsky to Brecht," 74-81.
[264] Pasolini, "The Cinema of Poetry," *HE* 167-187; Pasolini, "Manifesto for a New Theater," 126-138.

and an intellectual should be to scandalize his audience and the public, and so he developed a transgressive approach to both content and form. At the same time, he followed Brecht in his desire to create a theater capable of inciting rational discussion among the progressive elements of the bourgeoisie. These new forms of artistic expression that were indebted to the avant-garde were the consequences of a larger cultural trend during the violent attack in the late nineteen-sixties on social and cultural taboos and the organizational principles of the film form and representation.

WR, *Porcile* and *Tout va bien*, made roughly four decades ago, remain vital and relevant today. The films speak to the history of revolutions and revolts, the problems inherent in political commitment, and the relationship between the personal and the social. The mythologized events of 1968 have a complex legacy. The year 1968 will be remembered in many ways: for the promise of the Czech "socialism with a human face" and, only months later, the brutal suppression of the Prague Spring; for the political idealism and cultural brilliance of the student movements, which however also ended in failure, with a small but significant minority joining various terrorist groups in the nine-teen seventies; and, finally, for the pervasive sense of social hope in many countries that was swiftly lost as the forces of law and order rallied and struck back on both sides of the still seemingly impenetrable Iron Curtain. In all these ways, that seminal year marks the loss of utopianism. At the same time, the events of 1968 resulted in great cultural changes: greater permissiveness as a result of the liberalization of cultural values, and great changes in art and intellectual attitudes that had significant implications for the social sciences. For that reason, the year 1968 still remains an important reference point for politically engaged artists and intellectuals today.

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