THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL

"Typical Really"

An Examination of the Emergence of a British Art-Cinema during the 1960s

being a Thesis submitted for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in the University of Hull

by

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March, 2013

Acknowledgements

I want to give thanks first and foremost to my Dad, without whom so much more than just this thesis would not have been possible. Thank you for everything.

More thanks go to my wife, an immeasurable wellspring of support. You helped me through, from proof reading to just about everything else. If you could have done the work for me I know you would have, however reluctantly! You have done so much to help and support me in every way thinkable that I am astounded as I now think about your part in all of this. I thank you and, of course, I love you.

Thanks must be given to Dr. Bruce Woodcock, whose guidance and encouragement started me on this self-destructive path into academia. Thank you also to Dr. John Hoyles and the Hull Film Society minions for my education and amusement, *merci beaucoup*.

I thank Dr. Alan Burton, one of my many supervisors, for your direction and support in the early stages of my research, and Professor Neil Sinyard for sharing his wealth of experience in aid of my work and in introducing me to information and to people.

Finally, thank you Dr. James Aston for your assistance and counsel during my final stretch. Whilst my guidance was thrust unexpectedly upon you, you were a resounding source of help and advice, and for that I am extremely grateful.

There are many people who have helped me throughout my doctoral study and you know who you are, my family, my friends and my colleagues.

I am grateful for your support, friendship, and love throughout my working on this thesis.

Contents

1.0 Introduction: 'Railing Against'—A Cinema in Opposition

Working in opposition to the pervading idea that Britain's art-cinema was non-existent at worst and simply insignificant at best, throughout the decade in question, this study aims to map the evolution of the British art-cinema during the 1960s. I intend to investigate the extent of the synonymity of the terms 'European cinema' and 'art-cinema' and rationalise to what extent 'Europhilia', in the British press, marred the impact and reception of Britain's own fruitful output of art-cinema.

Through this study I shall suggest and establish a definition of 'art-cinema' centred on the inherently indefinable nature of this concept. That is to say that the crux of the art-cinema definition by which I shall work this thesis is that to be 'art-cinema' a cinema must, by its very nature, be new and most importantly progressive. To pin down a definition of art-cinema is, in the very least, problematic and difficult. For my own understanding, an 'art-cinema' is one cinema that is inherently more progressive than the last. Art-cinema, by my definition, must be consistently working against the established norms and against the contemporary mainstream cinema. In order to do that it must be constantly re-inventing and reinvigorating itself and in addition must also be progressive and, to a certain extent, be modernist.

Most critics and indeed cinematic movements and film makers themselves define art-cinema simply as working in opposition to that of classical Hollywood. James Morrison writes that the European cinema is:

> a united front [in its] opposition to Hollywood's domination, valuing character over plot, expressive subjectivity over genre formulae, exploratory style over codified procedure, skeptical inquiry over populist faith, critique over affirmation.[1]

This kind of definition is often used in designating art-cinema, indeed the terms 'European' and 'art-cinema' are often taken synonymously. Bordwell and Thompson in their groundbreaking work, *The Classical Hollywood Cinema*, outline the foundation for the definition of an art-cinema. They classify art-cinema as employing a, 'looser, more tenuous linkage of events than we find in the classical film'; and state that, 'the art-film defines itself as realistic, it will show us actual locations, 'realistic' eroticism, and genuine problems [...] Most important, the art-cinema depicts psychologically ambivalent or confused characters'.[2]

It is important to consider, in an appreciation of art-cinema, what it is meant by defining one cinema as 'art' whilst conversely condemning another as not so. In their 1989 book, *The Cinema as Art*, Stephenson and Phelps classify art as:

> a process through which the creator(s) make use of their experience and intuition to select and arrange material which may be related to 'reality' to a greater or lesser extent, and that through the artistic techniques used and the meaning that flows from them, experience is communicated to an audience[3]

[1] James Morrison. *Passport to Hollywood: Hollywood Films, European Directors*. Albany: University of New York Press, 1998, p. 7.

[2] Staiger Bordwell and Thompson. *The Classical Hollywood Cinema: film style and mode of production to 1960*. London: Routledge, 1988, p. 373.

[3] Ralph Stephenson and Guy Phelps. *The Cinema as Art*. London: Penguin Books, 1989, p. 18.

By this definition then all cinema is art. Films are unquestionably created through intuition and careful selection in order to communicate experiences to an audience. What is in question here is not whether these celluloid creations meet the criteria of artistic definition but it is more a matter of discerning their artistic worth.

Following the broad definitions layout out of art-cinema, it is important that I define explicitly how these definitions of art-cinema manifest themselves in the British cinema of the early 1960s, the argument which this thesis pertains to. I will begin by considering what Britain had to offer, cinematically, to the art-film market of the early 1960s. A major component of this work will encompass a consideration of the work of the Free Cinema directors. From Lindsay Anderson's insistence that the British cinema did indeed need revival, to his actual initiation of a new kind of cinema through his and his Free Cinema and social realist film-maker colleagues' work, it is clear that he was a central figure in the foundation of a British art-cinema. Through the British cinema's inevitable association with Hollywood and the problems with the industry, so vehemently claimed by Anderson, it is easy to conclude that as Hollywood has inescapably become art-cinema's antithesis, so too has British cinema been relegated to an artistically inferior position.

The dichotomy of 'art' and 'not art', and its relationship to the British cinema, is an argument which came to a head in Lindsay Anderson's seminal 1956 article 'Stand Up! Stand Up!' in which he considers the implications of critics claiming film as a whole not to be art.[4] Anderson takes the earlier example of C.A. Lejeune and the comments from her 1947 Observer article in which she declared that film was not art, her rationale for which was the suggestion that, 'It is not within the power of electrical engineering or mechanical contraption to create. They can only reproduce. And what they

[4]Lindsay Anderson. "Stand Up! Stand Up!" In: *Sight & Sound* 26.2 (1956), pp. 64–71.

reproduce is not art...'[5] For *Sight & Sound* Anderson argued:

> It is of course inevitable that the majority of films made for popular entertainment in a capitalist society, where the general educational level is low and popular culture increasingly corrupt, should be of poor artistic quality; nor is it surprising if people whose only experience of the cinema is through such films form a low opinion of it. What is surprising [...] is a tendency among critics - that is to say among the articulate representatives of the educated minority - to subscribe to this opinion themselves, and even to encourage it[6]

Lejeune's argument is that film is not, and cannot be, art, simply by its mechanical nature; while, Anderson's opinion is in fact quite the converse. Anderson boldly concludes his article in stating that it is 'a matter of fact, not of opinion, that the cinema is an art'.[7]

Something is evident from his statement, 'if Griffith, Renoir, Jennings and de Sica are not artists, we will have to invent a new name for them'.[8] For Anderson, a film artist is a film-maker who is not out to serve mainstream appeal and certainly not a director who makes films for commercial gain as these film makers were all to be found operating outside of the mainstream cinema. Renoir and de Sica, great artists of the French and Italian cinemas respectively, perhaps by virtue of their exclusive language, are automatically attributed art-cinema status outside of their national borders. From the British camp, even Humphrey Jennings of the British Documentary Movement, famously championed by Anderson as, 'the only real poet the British cinema has yet produced',[9] was working outside of the classical film within

[5]C.A. Lejeune quoted in Lindsay Anderson. "Stand Up! Stand Up!" In: *Sight & Sound* 26.2 (1956), pp. 64–71, p. 64.
[6]Anderson, "Stand Up! Stand Up!", op. cit., p. 64.
[7]Ibid., p. 66.
[8]Ibid., p. 66.
[9]Lindsay Anderson. "Only Connect: Some Aspects of the Work of Humphrey Jennings".

the confines of the British Documentary Movement.

Anderson wrote about film that with regards to this 'vital and significant medium' there is, 'no such thing [...] as insignificant art'.[10] Anderson is suggesting here that the distinction between art and mainstream cinema is an absolute one. For him there is no grey area, but a film either is, or is not, art, and if it be art thus it is significant cinema.

In the summer before Anderson published his article, 'Stand Up! Stand Up!', he considered the position of cinema in Britain and America in his analysis of the 1956 Cannes Film Festival. He suggested that Britain was in danger of allowing its national cinema to dwindle and he questioned:

> "Is television killing the cinema?" - so journalists are instructed by their editors to ask the great men of the film industry. And the great men look serious, as they envisage the possibility: or assume an air of confidence as they dismiss it. But ask this question outside of Britain or America [...] and all you are likely to get is a frown of incomprehension[11]

This 'frown of incomprehension' iterates that the cinema outside of Britain and America is very much alive. Anderson's motive is to question whether the cinema is still 'alive' and claims that if it is it must be moving but questions, in which direction? He observed that, 'Here and in America (and increasingly, it is to be feared, in Western Europe as well), the obsession is with the technical developments which have issued from Hollywood in recent years'.[12] It was Anderson's claim that the quality of cinema in Britain by this point in 1956 had declined a great deal and had become unworthy in its distinct lack of 'progress'. He believed Lorenza Mazzetti's *Together* (1956) to

In: *Sight & Sound* 23.4 (1954), pp. 181–186, p. 181.

[10]Idem, "Stand Up! Stand Up!", op. cit., p. 66.

[11]Lindsay Anderson. "Panorama at Cannes". In: *Sight & Sound* 26.1 (1956), pp. 16–21, p. 17.

[12]Ibid., p. 17.

be 'Britain's only really creative contribution to the [Cannes Film] festival'.[13] He felt this film was produced under the conditions he felt were prerequisite for 'significant' cinema:

> [films that come] from small countries without great resources, from industries that are only just struggling into existence, from artists who are still able to maintain a measure of independence, and to work with material they intimately understand[14]

Like many other critics, Anderson clearly considered the terms 'art-cinema' and 'European cinema' as synonymous. Clearly, in his fear that even 'Western Europe' may be submitting to Hollywood production methods Anderson was spelling out his anticipation of the death of an art-cinema.[15] Those smaller countries without great resources to which he refers are indeed European and if *Together* is anything to go by, one can also group British cinema within this classification. For Anderson, then, one can plainly see that British cinema, under the right conditions and direction of the right individuals too can be an art-cinema. For Anderson, the tradition of art-cinema is quite evident through the legacy of an earlier British cinema. One need only consider Britain's artistic dedication to the documentary method in its British Documentary Movement, its Free Cinema movement and Free Cinema's next generation, the social realist films of the period 1959 - 1963.

All of this, Anderson suggests, is a worthy art form as it stands in contrast to the technical developments emanating from the Hollywood studios of this time. Processes such as CinemaScope and colour films were becoming more widely insisted upon by producers, forcing film makers to adhere to technological developments or fall behind. As Anderson acutely highlighted: "'Progress" is hardly the word for a state of affairs like this'.[16] The problem

[13]Ibid., p. 17.
[14]Ibid., p. 17.
[15]Ibid., p. 17.
[16]Ibid., p. 17.

that had begun to occur, as Anderson saw it, was that cinemas in Britain and in Western Europe had ceased to progress the medium of film and had become satiated by simply aspiring to newer technological advances, neglecting the art of film and producing films that were only of commercial significance. If films fail to progress the medium of cinema and begin only to replicate it they cease to be of any artistic significance. Evidently, to work in opposition to Hollywood also acts to define a cinema of significance; it is perhaps, by virtue of Britain's invariable linguistic association with Hollywood, that many critics struggle to define any sort of British art-cinema during this time.

This railing against the suffocating grasp of Hollywood over European cinema had been a recognised difficulty as early as 1947. For *Sequence*, Anderson wrote about classical French cinema that, 'whether it can hold its own in the face of the American avalanche is another, less cheerful matter altogether.'[17] This was an issue emerging throughout the entire 'Western' cinema. In Germany, a country in which, according to one critic there was an, 'artistic failure of [...] films since the second World War',[18] and where German equipment manufacturers suggested that, 'By the end of this year [1955] CinemaScope will be installed in about 50 per cent of all Kinemas in West Germany'.[19] Modern technologies were, by Anderson's standards at least, prohibitive to artistic development but by financial considerations were an enormous help for the cinema. In 1957 it was reported that, in France, 'cinema managers generally admit that, taking production as a whole, Hollywood still holds its advantage'.[20] In order to compete in a modern cinema French production was forced to match and evolve similarly to Hollywood

[17]Lindsay Anderson. "Some French Films - And a Forcast". In: *Sequence* 1 (1947), pp. 4–10, p. 10.

[18]Enno Patalas. "The German Wasteland". In: *Sight & Sound* 26.1 (1956), pp. 24–37, p. 24.

[19]Gustav Genshaw. "East Germany May Take Western Films". In: *Kine Weekly* 455.2485 (1955), p. 23, p. 23.

[20]Louis Marcorelles. "In the Picture: Paris Notes". In: *Sight & Sound* 26.4 (1957), pp. 172–174, p. 172.

and thus neglect its own art-cinema. For France, this meant that cinema attendance in 1956 'was the highest record since 1947'.[21] For Louis Marcorelles, Paris correspondent for *Sight & Sound*, this French achievement, in addition to being 'undoubtedly bound up with an increase in prestige abroad' was 'insensible'.[22] This commercial success was attributed to the gradual technological development of the French cinema industry. In this respect Marcorelles noted that,

> Cinemas are now being modernised, slowly but surely, and in many cases equipped with CinemaScope. The French industry has staked heavily on the wide screen, on CinemaScope and the like, and of a total of 129 French films and co-productions made during 1956, 42 are in a wide screen process and 57 in colour[23]

A film's financial significance has often been seen as acting in direct opposition to artistic achievement. The suggestion here being that, by gearing a film towards maximising commercial gain one inherently sacrifices artistic credibility. According to this view, by aiming a film at maximum monetary reward one must aim to please a vast and enormously diverse audience. In so doing one cannot possibly employ artistic and personal expression within the film. Poetry then must give way to sensationalism and thus the commercially viable film is not an art-film. That is to say that the art of the film must be put first, before any other factor.

Similarly for Marcorelles, the greatest of the 'artistic consequences' of the French cinema's 'gradual assimilation of American methods' is that the French film industry runs 'the risk of sacrificing the modest success to the super-production'.[24] Here, as with Anderson's warnings, the suggestion is once again that in adhering to Hollywood film production methods the cin-

[21]Ibid., p. 172.
[22]Ibid., p. 172.
[23]Ibid., p. 172.
[24]Ibid., p. 172.

ema is sacrificing its artistic integrity. This emphasis on technological developments somehow manages to numb or neutralise the creative and artistic output of directors. In this way, art-cinema, it can be understood must resist these pitfalls in order to remain artistically free.

The idea that art-film is only 'art-film' when it is in direct opposition to 'modern' technological advancements is one that had been already well established immediately after World War Two. During the War, American studios had been unable to export films to Europe and so immediately following the War, continental Europe had experienced an influx of Hollywood films. In *Sequence*, Anderson had predicted that, 'when the producing companies begin to feel the pinch of the shrunken home market, they will inevitably 'play safe' and feel even less inclined to allow the artistic to weigh against commercial considerations'.[25] Marcorelles calls the American influence and involvement in the French cinema 'vandalism' and protests that in this Americanised France, 'to maintain their standing, directors like Clair or Renoir cannot now make pictures costing less than two or three hundred million francs'.[26] For him, this spread of CinemaScope and of colour films is likely to, 'rule out the kind of enterprising little pictures made before the war'.[27] As early as 1947 Lindsay Anderson had written the following about France:

> there were sufficient indications around of the future conditions to make it quite clear that the French cinema is entering a period of confusion and danger. It is true that Paris had a handsome selection of French films to offer: but everywhere were indications of the power and menace of the American invasion[28]

[25]Anderson, "Some French Films - And a Forcast", op. cit., p. 10.
[26]Marcorelles, "In the Picture: Paris Notes", op. cit., p. 172.
[27]Ibid., p. 172.
[28]Anderson, "Some French Films - And a Forcast", op. cit., p. 10.

The issue was seen as equally as dire in the British cinema of the 1950s. Karel Reisz, interviewed in 1977, said, regarding the 'Free Cinema' movement that:

> At that time there was a definite common ground, but really the strongest element of this common ground we had was a sense of revolt against the industry, a sense that we all needed to be in control of our films. The second-rate Hollywood system that operated in the British commercial industry here - we rejected that[29]

It is clear from critical attitudes such as these that art-cinema must be a cinema which maintains its creative and progressive impetus by moving in new directions and covering new territories whilst also avoiding and perhaps to a certain extent boycotting the modern technological advances made predominately in Britain and in Hollywood; to avoid, for art-film directors, the mainstream is to maintain artistic status. It is evident that the common aspects that both British and French cinema shared were, 'that the Free Cinema, or the films that followed Free Cinema, and the films of Chabrol and Truffaut in France represented an escape from 'papa's cinema".[30] This 'papa's cinema' stands to represent those archaic ideals of the past generations of the cinema; those ideals and sensibilities which these new, young and progressive film makers directly sought to overcome and extend beyond.

More recently it has been posited by writers such as András Báline Kovács that art-cinema, specifically within the 1960s, was a cinema that arose from, 'a new generation that wanted to manifest its opposition to classical bourgeois culture'.[31] This, by definition suggests that 'classical bourgeois cinema' is not

[29]Karel Reisz quoted in Eva Orbanz. "Interview Karel Reisz". In: *ourney to a Legend and Back: The British Realistic Film*. Berlin: Volker Speiss, 1977, pp. 53–63, p. 54.

[30]Walter Lassaly quoted in Peter Cowie. *Revolution!: The Explosion of World Cinema in the 60s*. London: Faber and Faber, 2004, p. 56.

[31]András Báline Kovács. *Screening modernism: European art cinema, 1950-1980*. London: University of Chicago Press, 2007, p. 1.

art-film, reinforcing earlier suggestions about cinema. The concept of railing against 'classical cinema' is certainly a recurring model throughout the 'art-cinemas' of the world.

European art-cinema is a cinema which, by my own definition, adheres to the structures put in place by Bordwell and Thompson's *The Classical Hollywood Cinema*, a cinema which employs a, 'looser, more tenuous linkage of events than we find in the classical film'.[32] What European art-cinema is then, is a cinema in reaction to the mainstream, in reaction to that which is already established, and in reaction to the common place; it is a cinema of progress and of creative advancement. For Anderson, significant cinema rails against technological, Hollywood founded, mainstream development. For him, films of merit must emanate from 'small countries [and from ...] artists who are still able to maintain a measure of independence'[33] and for Kovács, art-cinema rails against classical cinema. Thus, throughout the ages it has become an understanding that 'art-cinema' must be progressive and must advance the cinema; to a certain extent it must oppose and contravene; art-cinema must be one of contention. Thus it is by this definition that the art-cinema of the 1950s and 60s became synonymous with the concept of modernism and the avant-garde.

To pin down the impetus of this work, what must be primarily understood is that for this study I will be looking specifically at the British art-cinema. This will be viewed through the critical framework of British critical reactions to European cinema; critical reactions that functioned with a predilection for the foreign product. My study will hinge specifically on a comparative analysis of British cinema and the cinematic output of both France and Italy for the most part. European cinema was extremely popular, in terms of artistic worth, throughout the 1940s and 50s; it was during the post-

[32]Bordwell and Thompson, *The Classical Hollywood Cinema: film style and mode of production to 1960*, op. cit., p. 373.
[33]Anderson, "Panorama at Cannes", op. cit., p. 17.

war period that Italy experienced its neorealist explosion and furthermore, French cinema too, at this time, was often credited as having somewhat of an authoritatively artistic classical cinema. Consequently, in 1947 Lindsay Anderson wrote about French cinema that, 'The talent here is indisputable; so is the richness of the tradition from which it springs.'.[34]

Following this introductory exploration of broader and more specific definitions of art-cinema to be employed throughout this study, the question will be asked, what did the British cinema have to offer to the emerging art-cinema market of the early 1960s. The eminent and artistic cinematic output of Britain during this period was a greatly fruitful one, encompassing the Free Cinema and the British New Wave, Social Realist cinemas. The conclusion to be drawn here is that whilst the British cinema was producing such significant cinema, the attention of the British critical institution was held unwaveringly by the emergent cinemas of Europe. Thus it is prudent to ask the question, what was the European cinema producing during this period that it so pointedly and steadfastly attracted the attention of the British critical press? A rationalisation of this European dominance of that of Britain will come from an analysis of the French *nouvelle vague* and the new Italian cinemas of Michelangelo Antonioni and Federico Fellini.

In the mid-1960s it can be read that there was somewhat of a 'turn around' of attitudes towards the British cinema. During this period a large number of the significant directors of the European art-cinemas came to Britain to make their films. In an analysis of these films and their reception in the context of the British cinema I will determine the artistic worth of these films; films to be understood as no less than British films in themselves. These films by directors such as Roman Polanski, Michelangelo Antonioni, Franç Truffaut and Jean-Luc Godard, made in Britain with largely British money and dominantly British casts are to be seen as essentially British films

[34]Lindsay Anderson. "Angles of Approach". In: *Sequence* 2 (1947), pp. 5–8, p. 6.

and as great examples of the art-cinema output of Britain. These European masters working in Britain attests to the idea that the British cinema was operating in an air of significant artistic creativity. In the context of this suggestion, it would be significant to explore then, what was the British at-cinema output following this mid-1960s turn around? In an echo of the studies taken place during Chapter two, those which questioned the art-cinema output of Britain during the early 1960s, Chapter five will examine the art-film production of Britain during the latter half of the 1960s, in context of the blossoming period of the mid-1960s.

The key example of the fruitful art-film production of Britain during the mid-1960s comes as an examination of the symbiotic relationship between the rapid bloom of the popular music and the British cinema. Looking at films such as Richard Lester's *A Hard Day's Night* (1964) and *Help!*, Peter Watkins' *Privilege* (1967) amongst a number of others I will explore how the significance of the burgeoning popular music of this prolific decade acted to augment the art-film status of the British cinema.

In addition to the above work, beyond the perimeters of these chapters falls the films of a number of more problematic directors working within the British art-cinema of the 1960s. Namely Joseph Losey and Richard Lester, Americans working effectively as expatriates in Britain; and Ken Loach and Ken Russell, British directors producing significantly poetic art-cinema for the British camp during this period of study although paradoxically working predominantly within the television rather than the cinema. These works will be considered in the context of the British art-film production of the 1960s and taken as evidencing the strong links that British feature film had with the art-cinema during this period.

Before this work there have been studies concerning the reciprocal cinematic relationships between Britain and Europe and in addition, Britain and America. Text such as Tim Bergfelder and Christian Cargnelli's *Destina-*

tion London[35] and Andrew Higson and Richard Maltby's *"Film Europe" and "Film America"*[36] are texts which are key in any understanding of the interrelationships between European and British cinema before the 1960s. To understand that the reciprocal relationships between European and British cinemas are ongoing ties which are long established and that this relationship is not simply a phenomenon unique to the 1950s and 60s allows one to better understand the special relationships which arose throughout the 60s and their specific cultural significance. This thesis will not suggest that the borrowed influence of European cinema on the cinema of Britain was a phenomenon unique to the 1960s but understands it to have increased exponentially at this time. Other critical attention has been paid to this kind of concept such as the texts above and also Peter Lev's *The Euro-American Cinema.*[37] However, in addition to their attention towards American rather than British cinema, these texts extend the chronological boundaries of my study. Lev's text will be illuminating in reference to my work as he explores an effective blend of European and American cinemas, a phenomenon I am reading in the British and European cinemas of the 1960s. Higson and Maltby's edited volume on the other hand discusses the idea of Europe's divergence from American cinema and its struggle for independence and autonomy. Despite their focus on somewhat divergent themes, these texts will be of great import to this thesis.

For want of space and in order that I give suitably concise arguments with regards the French and Italian cinemas, other European film markets that were known for their fruitful and at times profound art-cinemas will not figure throughout the thesis. I recognise the artistic power and success of Sweden's Ingmar Bergman, who had released *Summer with Monika* in 1953

[35]Tim Bergfelder and Christian Cargnelli. *Destination London: German-speaking emigrés and British cinema, 1925-1950.* New York: Beghahn Books, 2008.

[36]Andrew Higson and Richard Maltby. *"Film Europe" and "Film America" : cinema, commerce and cultural exchange, 1920-1939.* Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1999.

[37]Peter Lev. *The Euro-American Cinema.* Austin: University of Texas Press, 1993.

and both *The Seventh Seal* and *Wild Strawberries* in 1957, although this work, unfortunately, will not be considered throughout this piece due simply to space and time restrictions. In addition, the art-cinema of Eastern Europe will not be considered, nor will that of Germany. Whilst the works of Werner Herzog, Rainer Werner Fassbinder, and Frtiz Lang, amongst others, are to be seen as some of the most significant works of European art-cinema of the 1960s, in order to retain consistency of argument and to most concisely face the question at hand, these works too will not be considered within the thesis.

What is interesting is that, during the 1960s in Britain, the boom which I see evident in the art-cinema was accompanied by a boom in the larger cultural world at hand. With literature, music, fashion and photography, in addition to the cinema, enjoying one of the highest periods of both popularity and accomplished proliferation, it can be read that the entire socio-cultural sphere had achieved an ideal status at which a wholly fruitful and flourishing art-cinema might emerge. This socio-cultural context for my work is one which could be explored extensively through a mapping and analysis of the progress of literature and culture in Britain and Europe leading up to the 1960s at which it reached a critical mass which resulted in the explosion of the art-culture of the British 1960s. However, whilst an analysis of the British art-cinema's reliance on the greater creative culture is extensively undertaken in chapter six' exploration of the relationship between popular music and the art-cinema, this is the only place it will be evidenced within the thesis. This is due primarily to the enormity of the cultural context for this artistic bloom during the 1960s. It is my feeling that this thesis and the evidence and analysis therein stands perfectly well without this context and that this undertaking would constitute the breadth of a PhD thesis in itself. Whilst this task of contextualisation would prove too extensive a preface, by highlighting its exclusion here I intend to foreground its significance in the

context of the British art-cinema.

In stating explicitly the methodology which I will employ throughout this work, my primary focus will encompass an attention on British critical attitudes towards British cinema. I have observed these reactions as manifesting, for the most part, as negative attitudes towards domestic production. What highlights, and in fact augments, this judgment of British negative critical attitudes is the enormous amount of positive attention afforded the cinematic output of France and Italy during the 1960s. In addition to an overview of French and Italian cinema during this decade, my intention is to argue and demonstrate, in reference to my predefined understanding of art-cinema, that whilst the British cinema of this period is generally disregarded, Britain in fact produced a great deal of significant and indeed artistically profound cinema. Drawing on the definitions outlined in this chapter I shall exemplify that the 1960s was a substantially fruitful period for British art-cinema.

2.0 Catching Up on a Trend?: British cinema in the emerging art-film market of the 1950s and early 1960s

It has been observed that, 'there has been no real tradition of making art-films in British cinema'.[1] Indeed, Brian Hoyle has claimed that:

> in the late 1970s and 1980s, filmmakers such as Derek Jarman, Peter Greenaway, Ken Loach, Mike Leigh, Chris Petit, Bill Douglas, Sally Potter and Neil Jordan, despite the differences between them, made up a fully fledged auteur-based art-cinema for the first time in the history of British cinema[2]

It is to be seen that, before the work of these directors, even those films and movements which are arguably 'artistic' in nature have often been denigrated. About the Free Cinema movement, Alan Lovell wrote in 1972 that, 'In talking about 'Free Cinema' we are talking about something partial, an activity which is best regarded as an episode in the development of a particular tendency within the British cinema'.[3] For Lovell, this movement in British cinema was 'hardly novel', arguing that:

> The demand for a cinema that does not impose restraints on the artist's self-expression has been a persistent plea throughout the

[1] Brian Hoyle. "British art cinema 1975-2000: context and practice". PhD thesis. Hull: University of Hull, 2006, p. 1.

[2] Ibid., p. 1.

[3] Alan Lovell. "Free Cinema". In: *Studies in Documentary*. Ed. by Alan Lovell and Jim Hiller. London: Secker and Warburg, 1972, pp. 133–159, p. 133.

> cinema's history. The call for a cinema to portray contemporary society has also been made several times before, notably by the British documentarists of the thirties and the Italian Neo-realists[4]

John Caughie too has suggested that the British New Wave, 'can be read as a backwash of a wave which had happened elsewhere';[5] and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith, writing in reference to Richard Lester's The Beatles' films and *The Knack...and How to Get it* (1965), has suggested that, 'what the British cinema was doing here was what it all too often does; catching up on a trend [...] and seeing what mileage could be got out of it'.[6] Many people so easily dismiss the artistic potential of the British cinema, as Brian Hoyle suggests, 'perhaps by virtue of its shared language [British cinema is often regarded as] a poor relation of Hollywood'.[7] However, one can see through the works of such British directors as Tony Richardson, Karel Reisz and Lindsay Anderson that, as this thesis will argue, there has long since been a tradition of art-film within the British Cinema.

If the terms 'art-film' and 'European cinema' are to be taken synonymously, so too could one posit that the terms 'Lindsay Anderson' and 'early British art-cinema' are as equally as inextricably linked. As a founding member of the Free Cinema movement, the British New Wave, proponent of Social Realist cinema, founding member of the illustrious *Sequence* film journal and a prolific contributor to the output of film criticism in Britain throughout the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s, Anderson is a useful yardstick by which to measure or indeed track the development and evolution of the British art-cinema. The importance and significance of Anderson's contribution to British art-cinema through film criticism and film production is widely recognised though not

[4]Ibid., p. 144.
[5]John Caughie. *Companion to British and Irish Cinema*. London: Cassell, 1996, p. 38.
[6]Geoffrey Nowell-Smith. *Making Waves: New Cinemas of the 1960s*. London: Continuum, 2008, p. 133.
[7]Hoyle, "British art cinema 1975-2000: context and practice", op. cit., p. 1.

widely commented upon. Regarding his criticism in particular, whilst he is recognised as a prolific writer, Anderson is often attributed the mantle of radical or aggressive. As a film-maker, Peter Wollen calls him, 'a bilious but authentic 'auteur",[8] whilst as a critic, Erik Hedling claims, 'Anderson's writings were heretical'.[9] As a critic, Anderson had built himself a reputation throughout the 1940s as being disdainful of the state of contemporary British cinema. In his article 'Angles of Approach' Anderson complained of British film audiences that 'most people still demand nothing more from the cinema than that it should provide them with light entertainment'.[10] Ever the cultural pessimist, Anderson too complained of a 'moronic mass audience', pointing out that it was 'impossible' for a film to please this kind of filmgoer 'and at the same time be good'.[11] Elizabeth Sussex questioned whether there was any doubt that 'Anderson hates, not just the entertainment, but the people - hates them for not fighting'.[12] With a consistently progressive insistence for change and revitalisation of the industry and the art form it encompasses, Anderson was integral in creating a progressive, captivating, 'poetic' art-cinema. Having written that, 'the big producers don't want young people with fresh ideas',[13] in a later essay Anderson questioned where the quality of British cinema actually lay. He suggested that 'Craftsmanship in British films today has come to be regarded as applying chiefly to set design, lighting and camera work, slightly to direction, and not at all to writing'.[14] This attitude, he wrote, was responsible for the 'generally low quality of contemporary output'.[15] Anderson, through his writings, highlighted the

[8]Peter Wollen. "The Last New Wave: Modernism in British films of the Thatcher Era". In: *Fires Were Started*. Ed. by Lester D. Friedman. London: Wallflower Press, 2006, pp. 30–44, p. 31.

[9]Erik Hedling. *Lindsay Anderson: maverick film maker*. London: Cassell, 1998, p. 9.

[10]Anderson, "Angles of Approach", op. cit., p. 5.

[11]Lindsay Anderson. "A Possible Solution". In: *Sequence* 3 (1948), pp. 7–10, p. 9.

[12]Elizabeth Sussex quoted in Erik Hedling. *Lindsay Anderson: maverick film maker*. London: Cassell, 1998, p. 43.

[13]Anderson, "A Possible Solution", op. cit., p. 10.

[14]Lindsay Anderson. "British Cinema: The Decending Spiral". In: *Sequence* 7 (1949), pp. 6–11, p. 10.

[15]Ibid., p. 10.

problems inherent within the British cinema and then championed their resolution. In 1949 he insisted that there was indeed a 'need for new directors, but a far greater one for new writers'.[16] As Hedling noted, Anderson insisted that 'film-makers with artistic ambitions must turn to independent production, as in France or Italy, and model themselves on film-makers like Vigo [...] and the Italian neo-realists'.[17]

Hedling paid particular attention to the impact Anderson had on the British film industry and indeed the entire 'intellectual film culture' of the 1950s as a whole.[18] Hedling recalls the words of Alan Lovell in order to cement his own suggestion that the *Sequence* and *Sight & Sound* culture, in addition to the Free Cinema output, started, 'an aesthetic revolution, of which Anderson [...] was an integral part'.[19] Alan Lovell observed:

> At the Present time, the Sequence / Free Cinema tradition only has meaning for the British cinema through the work of Lindsay Anderson. Throughout his career Anderson has held to the position that the film should be the personal experience of its creator [...] In talking about the Sequence / Free Cinema tradition, one is very much talking about Anderson's career... One of the weaknesses of the Sequence / Free Cinema tradition as an influence on British cinema was its dependence on the work of one man[20]

On the other hand, for Hedling, one of the key successes of Free Cinema was its establishing of Lindsay Anderson as an auteur:

> A 'vision' had been recognised, a future pattern of reception set out at a time when the question of cinematic authorship was at

[16]Ibid., p. 11.
[17]Hedling, *Lindsay Anderson: maverick film maker*, op. cit., p. 11.
[18]Ibid., p. 49.
[19]Ibid., p. 49.
[20]Alan Lovell quoted in Erik Hedling. *Lindsay Anderson: maverick film maker*. London: Cassell, 1998, p. 13.

> the very core of intellectual film culture. Anderson's criticism in Sequence and Sight & Sound, as well as 'Free Cinema', all contributed to a biographical legend well established when Anderson made his debut as a director of feature films a few years later[21]

In adhering to the critical framework and art-film definitions laid out in the introduction, evidently, art-cinema must be a cinema which maintains its creative and progressive impetus by moving in new directions and covering new territories; in an attempt to 'rail against', to avoid the mainstream is to maintain artistic status and Anderson's conception of the Free Cinema movement clearly sets out this ethic of artistic integrity.

Peter Wollen, like many others, finds the 'British New Wave' or 'Social Realist' films of the late 1950s and early 1960s difficult to take as art-films. In a similar vein to Hoyle's suggestion that there was no real sense of a British art-cinema, Wollen argued that:

> to call these films New Wave is both inappropriate and misleading. First, the idea of a New Wave was intimately linked to the project of directorial "authorship". A good case can be made for Lindsay Anderson as a bilious but authentic 'auteur' (something he himself might well deny in a fume of irascibility), but nobody has made a serious claim for the auteurist credentials of Reisz, Richardson, Schlesinger and others[22]

For Wollen, the biggest problem with the Free Cinema directors was their misguided priorities in making films. Wollen felt that, 'the idea of a New Wave involved putting film first and not subordinating it to literature or theatre', and for him, these directors, 'plainly put film second'.[23] Roy Armes

[21]Hedling, *Lindsay Anderson: maverick film maker*, op. cit., p. 49.
[22]Wollen, "The Last New Wave: Modernism in British films of the Thatcher Era", op. cit., p. 31.
[23]Ibid., p. 31.

too highlights the inadequacies of the Free Cinema movement, and the work of Tony Richardson in particular, through his perceived over reliance on literary sources. Armes wrote that, 'In the original plays and novels which he [Richardson] adapted between 1959 and 1962 the naturalistic tone is a reflection of the directness of this authorial statement'.[24] For Armes, the realistic and personal tone that made these films naturalistic and stylistic comes directly from the source material and not the director. For Armes:

> it is Osborne who speaks to us through the words of Jimmy Porter in *Look Back in Anger* and Sillitoe who sees the world in the same terms as Smith, the Borstal boy, in The *Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner*. Richardson's films, perhaps because of his own distance from such sentiments, in no way succeeds in finding a stylistic equivalent to this first person narration[25]

Similarly, in his famous polemic against adaptation, François Truffaut considers the nature of literary adaptation into film through an extensive analysis of the work of two of France's most prolific writers, Jean Aurenche and Pierre Bost. He wrote:

> They will tell me, "Let us admit that Aurenchee and Bost are unfaithful, but do you also deny the existence of their talent...?" Talent, to be sure, is not a function of fidelity, but I consider an adaptation of value only when written by a man of the cinema. Aurenche and Bost are essentially literary men and I reproach them here for being contemptuous of the cinema by underestimating it[26]

[24]Roy Armes. *A Critical History of the British Cinema*. London: Secker and Warburg, 1978, p. 269.

[25]Ibid., p. 269.

[26]François Truffaut. "A Certain Tendency in the French Cinema". In: *Movies and Methods: An Anthology*. Ed. by Bill Nichols. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976, pp. 224–237, p. 229.

A director such as Tony Richardson, with his great experience of the theatre and a history of making adaptations, could be thought of as one of these 'literary' men. Truffaut saw that this type of cinema, which he classified the 'tradition of quality', worked in direct opposition to notions of art in the cinema. He wrote, 'I do not believe in the peaceful coexistence of the "Tradition of Quality" and an "auteur's cinema"'.[27]

Wollen's argument was that films such as *Room at the Top* (1959), *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner* (1962), *The Entertainer* (1960), *A Taste of Honey* (1961), *Look Back in Anger* (1959) and *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* (1960), 'clearly depended on the pre-publicity and acclaim already generated by their literary sources for their initial impact'.[28] Of these six films, four were made by Tony Richardson. Clearly, Richardson is labelled here as particularly relying on literary sources for his cinematic success. However, for some critics, adaptation is far from detrimental to artistic credibility or to auteurship. Despite his strong statement against British film adaptation, Truffaut himself even went on to adapt Ray Bradbury's 1953 novel *Fahrenheit 451*[29] in Britain in 1966 starring the great British actress Julie Christie. James M. Welsh, who graces Tony Richardson with, 'a special talent for adaptation'[30] wrote that, 'Richardson's forte was adapting literary and dramatic works to the screen'.[31] For Welsh in fact, part of Richardson's auteurist identity is this thematic signature which, 'holds his early films together, emanating from his early concerns with the working class and the "anger" of the so-called Angry Generation transformed from theatre into film.'[32] It is this 'thematic signature', Richardson's auteur quality, which al-

[27]Ibid., p. 229.
[28]Wollen, "The Last New Wave: Modernism in British films of the Thatcher Era", op. cit., p. 32.
[29]Ray Bradbury. *Fahrenheit 451*. Vol. 7. 4. London: Harper Collins, 1953.
[30]James M. Welsh. "Introduction". In: *The Cinema of Tony Richardson: Essays and Interviews*. Ed. by James M. Welsh and John C. Tibbets. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999, pp. 1–22, p. 12.
[31]Ibid., p. 13.
[32]Ibid., p. 13.

lows his films to stand out from those before him, defining his work as a significant cinema. For William L. Horne too, adaptation provides a great deal of potential for creative interpretation and artistic creation, suggesting that 'truly creative adaptations, such as *A Taste of Honey* or *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner* are not mere interpretations of the original but new works in a new medium.'[33]

Free Cinema movement was, arguably, the most crucial element of the British art-cinema of the early 1960s; the key British feature film directors at the forefront of their craft at this time, Tony Richardson, Lindsay Anderson and Karel Reisz, all began their careers making documentary films in the Free Cinema fashion. In 1956 these three fundamental directors launched the first of six 'Free Cinema' documentary film programmes at the National Film Theatre, initiating this movement which has characterised the early work of these directors. The 'Free Cinema' was a British documentary movement created by these new film makers in order to provide themselves with an outlet for their work: as their 'manifesto' sets out, 'these films were not made together; nor with the idea of showing them together'.[34] Rather, these films were intended as personal, poetic and stylistic films in which 'The image speaks'.[35] The Free Cinema movement produced documentary films, not in the British Documentary Movement tradition, but in a modern, progressive and much more poetic fashion. Echoing the argument which this work aims to pursue, in being progressive and working in rejection of the established cinema, the Free Cinema indeed is to be read as an art-cinema in line with the definitions established in the Introduction.

In 1957, talking of the question, "wouldn't you like to make real films?",

[33] William L. Horne. "Greatest Pleasures". In: *The Cinema of Tony Richardson: Essays and Interviews*. Ed. by James M. Welsh and John C. Tibbets. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999, pp. 1–22, p. 89.

[34] *'Free Cinema Manifesto' Facsimile* [20/04/2010]. URL: `http://www.bfi.org.uk/features/freecinema`.

[35] "Free Cinema Manifesto".

Anderson criticised that, 'This sort of standard response is the measure of the failure of British Documentary'.[36] These film makers were critically aware of the British Documentary Movement and whilst they found it to be of poor artistic quality they worked towards a progressive and cutting edge documentary method. Anderson did however famously champion Humphrey Jennings, one of the key members of the British Documentary movement, as, 'the only real poet the British cinema has yet produced'.[37] In his view, the Griersonian tradition, 'into which Jennings only fitted uneasily - was always more preachy and sociological than it was either political or poetic'.[38] For Reisz too, in a further championing of the European cinema, the Free Cinema was as much an artistic cinema as any, writing that the documentary film-maker, 'has more to learn from de Sica and Zavattini, the Bunuel of Los Olvidados [...] than from factual film-makers'.[39] The failure of the British Documentary Movement for the Free Cinema directors was its inability to formulate expressions and individual attitudes towards subjects. Anderson wrote that:

> When John Grierson first defined the word "documentary", he called it "the creative interpretation of actuality". In other words the only vital difference between making a documentary and making a fiction film is that in documentary you are using "actual" material, not invented situations and actors playing parts. But this actual material still has to be interpreted, worked on creatively, or we are left with nothing but publicity[40]

[36]Lindsay Anderson. "Free Cinema". In: *Universities and Left Review* 5 (1957), pp. 51–52, p. 51.
[37]Idem, "Only Connect: Some Aspects of the Work of Humphrey Jennings", op. cit., p. 181.
[38]Ibid., p. 181.
[39]Karel Reisz. "A Use for Documentary". In: *Universities and Left Review* 3 (1958), pp. 24–66, p. 24.
[40]Anderson, "Free Cinema", op. cit., p. 52.

Anderson's Free Cinema then would not be seen to produce simple 'publicity', but would practice artistic and poetic interpretations of documentary subjects. Anderson later revealed that:

> Probably all my work, even when it has been very realistic, has struggled for a poetic quality - for larger implications that the surface realities may suggest. It is enjoyable to work naturalistically. In fact, its unusually easier to do. But I think that the most important challenge is to escape from or get beyond pure naturalism into poetry[41]

For these film makers, the belief was that, "'objectivity" is no part of the documentary method, [...] on the contrary the documentarist must formulate his attitude, express his values as firmly and forcefully as any artist'.[42] In questioning the documentary's capacity to be artistic, David Robinson considers Brecht's statement about realism that, 'Realism is not a matter of showing real things but of showing how things really are',[43] and he concludes of realism that, 'The special nature of cinema is, of course, to "show real things"; "to show how things really are" is an artistic challenge'.[44] For Karel Reisz, the film-maker must take his source material, and by interpreting and expressing it, allow himself to create poetic and artistic impressions, he must, 'allow the reality in front of him to modify and enrich the conception he started with'[45] and thus not produce mere 'publicity' but genuinely artistic cinema. In 1977, the German critic and documentary film-maker Klaus Wildenhahn, writing about the work of the British Documentary movement

[41]Klaus Wildenhahn. "Approaches to the Legend". In: *Journey to a Legend and Back: The British Realistic Film*. Berlin: Volker Speiss, 1977, pp. 11–23, p. 11.

[42]Anderson, "Free Cinema", op. cit., p. 51.

[43]Bertolt Brecht quoted in David Robinson. "United Kingdom". In: *Art of the Cinema in Ten European Countries*. Strasbourg: Council for Cultural Co-operation of the Council of Europe, 1967, pp. 197–228, p. 198.

[44]David Robinson. "United Kingdom". In: *Art of the Cinema in Ten European Countries*. Strasbourg: Council for Cultural Co-operation of the Council of Europe, 1967, pp. 197–228, p. 198.

[45]Reisz, "A Use for Documentary", op. cit., p. 65.

and yet more so the Free Cinema directors, championed them as creators of poetry in his appraisal of the documentary method. He contended that,

> One must counter the traffic in 'sweet sickly romances' (Dziga Vertov), the would be 'popular' travesties of the ruling class, with a different, popular, powerful kind of poetry. This is the job documentary film can do. The English have provided the evidence that this kind of film-making is possible[46]

In his notes to the National Film Theatre Free Cinema programme, writing about documentary film making, Lindsay Anderson insisted that, 'Independent, personal and poetic these may be [...] defined as the necessary characteristics of the genre'.[47] John Hill also concludes that, 'it was, thus, 'poetry' which completed the Free Cinema equation'.[48] As Anderson saw it, 'Probably all my work, even when it has been very realistic, has struggled for a poetic quality'.[49] He defines this poetic quality as those, 'larger implications than the surface realities may suggest'.[50] Taking a poetic ideal to the documentary genre was integral to the works of the Free Cinema directors. Anderson strongly insisted that these documentaries all offered insight and interpretation of their subject, claiming that, 'These films are not intended as picturesque films... nor as simple slices of life. Slices, if you will but cut with a bias. All of them say something about our society, today'.[51] Karel Reisz also found that interpretation was fundamental to these works arguing that, 'The artist must not be expected to spread honey on bread which someone else has provided. He must bake his own bread'.[52] In using the documentary method for artistic purposes Reisz's understanding is that the terrible joy-

[46]Wildenhahn, "Approaches to the Legend", op. cit., p. 12.
[47]*'Free Cinema Manifesto' Facsimile* [20/04/2010], op. cit.
[48]John Hill. *Sex Class and Realism.* London: BFI Publishing, 1986, p. 129.
[49]Lindsay Anderson. *The Diaries.* London: Methuen, 2004, p. 194.
[50]Ibid., p. 194.
[51]Idem, "Free Cinema", op. cit., p. 51.
[52]Reisz, "A Use for Documentary", op. cit., p. 66.

lessness of the traditional British documentary is directly the result of this sort of mistrust of the artist's insights.[53]

Karel Reisz and Lindsay Anderson's assertion that their Free Cinema movement was a poetic interpretation of the documentary method substantiates the movement's status as an art-cinema.

Nowell-Smith wrote about these films that:

> Alongside the Nouvelle Vague it was the first concerted attempt anywhere since the days of Italian neo-realism to create a new and different cinema, rather than just the occasional different or superior film[54]

Nowell-Smith aligns the Free Cinema with both the French New Wave cinema and also Italian neo-realism, both indisputable art-cinemas; perhaps the most universally recognised of which. For Erik Hedling,

> the 'Free Cinema' screenings, introducing future auteurs like Polanski, Tanner, Goretta, Truffaut and Chabrol, turned out to be a kind of prophetic manifestation of the European art-cinema of the 1960s and the '70s[55]

In the fullness of time, the Free Cinema film makers all moved into feature film production, taking their progressive, poetic and artistic treatment of the documentary mode with them, and consequently produced a number of extremely significant films. Whilst Lindsay Anderson was perhaps the most active of the Free Cinema directors, as a feature film maker he made only the one film within the British New Wave bracket. Richardson most prolifically produced some of the most iconic films of this period along side Karel Reisz' *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* (1960). These Free Cinema directors, moving into feature film, created amongst themselves one of the most

[53]Ibid., p. 66.
[54]Nowell-Smith, *Making Waves: New Cinemas of the 1960s*, op. cit., p. 132.
[55]Hedling, *Lindsay Anderson: maverick film maker*, op. cit., p. 85.

artistic movements seen in British cinema. Anderson, Richardson and Reisz, with their fellow film makers, in evolving their Free Cinema movement and the art-film ideals of Anderson's *Sequence* journal, created The British New Wave as it has been retrospectively labelled, known also as the 'working-class realist' film and 'Kitchen Sink realism'. In addition to many of these directors having been intimately involved with the theatre and with a respectful indebtedness towards the 'Angry Young Men' of the theatre these directors began an art-film culture in Britain built very much upon auteurist principles. These films were progressive in their cinematographic techniques, in their editing, and in the poetic treatment of their subject matter. One need only look to Richardson's *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner* and observe his jump-cuts, speeded up action and non-linear plot devices, and to Anderson's *This Sporting Life* and its convoluted use of flashbacks and its, 'psychologically ambivalent or confused characters'[56] to see this modern auteurist signature at work.

As early as 1959, on the reception of Jack Clayton's *Room at the Top* (1959), critics were predicting that,

> with *Look Back in Anger* soon to be seen, and the possibility of screen versions of *The Entertainer*, *Live Like Pigs* and *A Taste of Honey* to follow, *Room at the Top* may herald that revival of the British cinema from such unlikely sources as the stage and novel[57]

The Free Cinema directors began their film careers by making documentaries, not by choice or design, but through necessity. Interviewed, Anderson is recorded as pointing out, 'I would say that our interest in films was always very much more to do with the fictional and dramatic approach' and

[56]Bordwell and Thompson, *The Classical Hollywood Cinema: film style and mode of production to 1960*, op. cit., p. 373.

[57]Paddy Whannel. "Room at the Top". In: *Universities and Left Review* 7 (1959), pp. 21–24, p. 22.

went on to explain that, 'we weren't able to make them because at the time when we started making films it was impossible for new directors to work in British cinema'.[58] Geoffrey Nowell-Smith has noted that, 'The core group of Anderson, Richardson, and Reisz made documentaries in the 1950s because that's what they had the opportunity to do, not because of an ideological commitment to the documentary ideal'.[59] Tony Richardson concurred when he said that, 'Immediately after Oxford I went into television, doing various odd productions on the side, but I was always thinking of the cinema'.[60] For these directors, feature film was always the ultimate artistic goal. Despite the fact that documentary cinema was not what they intended to do, the Free Cinema directors' films still 'proved that a radical film culture existed in Britain'.[61] As James M. Welsh wrote in response to Caughie's contention that the British New Wave was simply the 'backwash of a wave that had happened elsewhere':

> Anderson, Richardson, and Reisz had completed their short films before the premier of Look Back in Anger at the Royal Court and had shaped their critical stance in Sequence and Sight & Sound. They were writing in Sequence before François Truffaut published his first criticism in Chaiers du Cinma in 1953. Moreover, Richardson and Reisz completed *Momma Don't Allow* a year before Truffaut made *Les Mistons* in 1957. Rather than a backwash, the Wave was already breaking in England before it crossed the Channel[62]

[58]Lindsay Anderson quoted in Eva Orbanz. "Interview Lindsay Anderson". In: *Journey to a Legend and Back: The British Realistic Film*. Ed. by Eva Orbanz. Berlin: Volker Speiss, 1977, pp. 11–23, p. 41.

[59]Nowell-Smith, *Making Waves: New Cinemas of the 1960s*, op. cit., p. 125.

[60]Tony Richardson quoted in William L. Horne. "Greatest Pleasures". In: *The Cinema of Tony Richardson: Essays and Interviews*. Ed. by James M. Wlesh and John C. Tibbets. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999, pp. 1–22, p. 82.

[61]Nowell-Smith, *Making Waves: New Cinemas of the 1960s*, op. cit., p. 125.

[62]Welsh, "Introduction", op. cit., p. 7.

Just as an exploration of Lindsay Anderson's presence within the contemporary critical institution, an appraisal of the work of Tony Richardson, the most prolific of these British New Wave directors, will be illuminating in a rationalisation of early 1960s British art-cinema. Though Anderson may have commanded a great deal more critical opinion and indeed critical attention, this breaking wave in Britain it seems was introduced thorough the works of Tony Richardson. If, as by Welsh's standard, Tony Richardson's and Karel Reisz's *Momma Don't Allow* (1955) started the Free Cinema movement as it did its first programme then Tony Richardson is to be considered as one of the British cinema's key art-film directors. Answering Peter Wollen's contentious claim, 'nobody has made a serious claim for the auteurist credentials of Reisz, Richardson, Schlesinger and others',[63] Richardson's work is key in considering the art-cinema potential of the British cinema through the late fifties and early sixties.

Richardson's contribution to the Free Cinema movement may have only consisted of one film, but his contribution to the social realist films of the early 1960s was integral to its strong artistic credentials. William L. Horne, with regards to *A Taste of Honey* and *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner*, claimed that, 'Richardson achieved a genuine synthesis of all the aesthetic concerns that he had brought to the Free Cinema group, to the Royal Court, and to Woodfall Films'.[64]

The artistic value of Richardson's work is best highlighted by the numerous comparisons by critics of his films to those of the great European art-directors. James M. Welsh has written of 'Cesare Zavattini and his cohorts who made "pictures of ordinary humanity" in post-war Italy, just as Richardson would later make his own "pictures of ordinary humanity" in postwar Britain'.[65] The more common observation of Richardson's work, in

[63]Wollen, "The Last New Wave: Modernism in British films of the Thatcher Era", op. cit., p. 31.
[64]Horne, "Greatest Pleasures", op. cit., p. 12.
[65]Welsh, "Introduction", op. cit., p. 9.

regards to *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner* in particular, is one which Welsh goes on to detail:

> In general, as was noticed at the time of its release, Richardson's film [*Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner*] resembles Truffaut's *Les Quatre Cents Coups* (1959), a benchmark of the French New Wave[66]

Reviewing the film in 1962 Peter John Dyer, warning that, 'Fashionableness can be a fickle, limiting thing for an artist',[67] complained that Richardson's film exhibited, 'a great deal of childishly unacceptable caricature'.[68] Most specifically complaining of its similarity to the *nouvelle vague* films, Dyer suggested that Richardson's use of flashbacks was, 'in no way justified by their content',[69] and detailed that:

> Just as fussy are the devices tagged on to some otherwise attractive running scenes - water-reflected shots, upside-down shots, whirling tree-top shots, and the self-indulgent barrage of "thought stream" cut-ins from previous flashbacks during the actual race, a sequence simply crying out for clarity'[70]

Dyer complained that, 'when these devices step outside the realm of British "new wave" film-making into what can only be described as cribs [...] from Truffaut's *Les Quatre Cents Coups*, one's doubts as to the course of Richardson's style is taking reach disquieting proportions'.[71] The critic here echoed the outcry heard throughout the press and as such, Dyer's reaction is to question, 'where *is* Richardson's own style?'.[72]

[66]Ibid., p. 11.
[67]Peter John Dyer. "LONELINESS OF THE LONG DISTANCE RUNNER, THE Great Britain, 1962". In: *Monthly Film Bulletin* 29.336/347 (1962), p. 148, p. 148.
[68]Ibid., p. 148.
[69]Ibid., p. 148.
[70]Ibid., p. 148.
[71]Ibid., p. 148.
[72]Ibid., p. 148.

For Roy Armes too, Richardson's film resembled Truffaut's work though not in any positive way. Armes complained in 1978:

> 'François Truffaut in *Les Quatre Cents Coups* makes similar material into extremely vital filmic experience because the work is deeply felt by the director and its style is shaped so as to convey from within the social vision of the protagonist. Richardson, on the other hand, views his material from the outside and in *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner*, for example, offers no more than a combination of the received wisdom of the film industry and a few superficial modish tricks[73]

On the release of the film, *The Guardian* film critic compared the British New Wave, and in particular Richardson's films *Look Back in Anger* and *A Taste of Honey* in addition to *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner*, as a 'rather slow-pulsed British counterpart to the French "new wave"', writing that it was:

> a good thing when it started. And it still is a good thing if only because it means that our film-makers—traditionally so imitative of Hollywood—are making a sustained effort to keep in touch with the realities of modern Britain as they affect large areas of the country and large, previously "submerged" sections of the population[74]

Many critics highlighted the similarities between Richardson's work and the French New Wave although most often as a detrimental comment upon what George Perry called 'fashionable borrowings from French prototypes'.[75]

[73]Armes, *A Critical History of the British Cinema*, op. cit., p. 269.

[74]N.A. "Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner". In: *The Guardian* September 25th (1962), p. 5, p. 5.

[75]George Perry. *The Great British Picture SHow*. Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1985, p. 219.

As Roy Armes complained of 'superficial modish tricks', Perry too complains of an over-use of art-cinema techniques such as sound bridges, jump cuts and speeded-up action, writing that these techniques were 'not used because they were relevant to the point of the film, but because they provided a veneer of trendiness', claiming that, 'Such irritations [...] have consistently marred Richardson's skill as a director'.[76] Evidently, many critics found that the similarities between Richardson's and Truffaut's work only served to highlight the inadequacies of the former. More recently however, William L. Horne has offered a more positive assessment. For him, 'one can argue legitimately that these two films [*A Taste of Honey* and *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner*] represent an authentic British equivalent to the French nouvelle vague'.[77] Horne also suggests that Richardson's work compares favourably to that of the Italian directors, writing that, 'there are also clear connections to Italian neorealism'.[78] Horne refers to the film reviewer who classified *A Taste of Honey* as an experiment in neorealism and observes that, 'five years ago this would have been unthinkable for a British film-maker, even if directors were doing it every day in Italy'.[79] Furthermore, Geoffrey Nowell-Smith wrote that, '*A Taste of Honey* is the most 'Free Cinema' and also the most 'new wave' (in the French sense) of the British Realist films'.[80]

It is apparent that, for the British film critic the biggest problem with the Free Cinema directors and their 'experiments' in social realism was simply their plainly domestic nature. Free Cinema was a British product and in so being therefore not an artistic one. In direct opposition to what Anderson called 'the fashionable cult of artistic patriotism',[81] British critical response

[76]Ibid., p. 219.
[77]Horne, "Greatest Pleasures", op. cit., p. 86.
[78]Ibid., p. 92.
[79]Times Film Critic quoted in William L. Horne. "Greatest Pleasures". In: *The Cinema of Tony Richardson: Essays and Interviews*. Ed. by James M. Wlesh and John C. Tibbets. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999, pp. 1–22, pp. 92-93.
[80]Nowell-Smith, *Making Waves: New Cinemas of the 1960s*, op. cit., p. 128.
[81]Anderson, "Angles of Approach", op. cit., p. 6.

to the work of the Free Cinema directors took on an inverted patriotism which lead to a 'Europhilia'; if it is not neorealism, if it is not *nouvelle vague*, if it is not European, it is not art-cinema. In his influential 1962 article denigrating the quality of the contemporary British, cinema V.F. Perkins complained that, despite an attempt by the British New Wave directors to offer a renaissance, 'all we can see is a change in attitude, which disguises the fact that the British cinema is as dead as before'.[82] He went on to suggest that 'we are still unable to find evidence of artistic sensibilities in working order'.[83] Once more in comparison to European art-cinema, Perkins complained of British film makers that, 'They have not produced pictures like *A Bout de Souffle*, *Wild Strawberries* and *L'Avventura*'.[84] For Perkins, like so many other critics of the British cinema, the crowning achievements of art-cinema have come from France, Sweden or Italy, certainly not Britain. Even the best of British films do not meet up to the expectations of Perkins' and others' Europhilia.

Suggesting that, 'one cannot help but feel that Richardson's major crime is not being European enough',[85] Horne highlights the issue in reference to a quote from Ken Russell, 'Ken Russell laments the fact that he would probably fare better with British critics if he were called Russellini: "They may forgive Fellini his excesses, but I am chastised for being too theatrical"'.[86] Nowell-Smith blames the emergence of the European art-cinema for a decline in critical attention towards the British cinema of the late 1950s and early 1960s. He claimed:

> Both the mass and the art-cinema audiences were shifting their allegiances, with criticism sometimes leading the way but some-

[82]V.F. Perkins. "The British Cinema". In: *Movie* 1.1 (1962), pp. 7–11, p. 7.
[83]Ibid., p. 7.
[84]Ibid., p. 8.
[85]Horne, "Greatest Pleasures", op. cit., p. 87.
[86]Ken Russell quoted in William L. Horne. "Greatest Pleasures". In: *The Cinema of Tony Richardson: Essays and Interviews*. Ed. by James M. Wlesh and John C. Tibbets. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999, pp. 1–22, p. 7.

> times following in their wake [...] In Sight and Sound's case it was an enthusiasm for the new art-cinema coming out of Europe - Truffaut, Resnais, Antonioni and Fellini - that prompted a turning away from the working-class realist school[87]

In his book, *Passport to Hollywood*, James Morrison considered the nature of 'art-cinema' and declared:

> What is presumed to certify the artistic superiority of European cinema in such models is its valuation of personal expression over popular demand. Yet that structure of feeling - apparently transcending institutional regulation in the first instance, enabling direct transactions between the artist's glorified subjectivity and the artistic product - is finally seen to depend on the medium of nationality[88]

Thus for Morrison too, it is clear that the 'superiority of European cinema' comes simply from its being European. As British cinema is inevitably associated with the mass audiences of Hollywood cinema, simply by virtue of its shared language, so too is it alienated from the art-cinema by virtue of its divergent language. The films of the British New Wave stand as exemplary specimens of art-cinema. If only by James Morrison's example, artistic superiority comes from a cinema's modelling of its 'valuation of personal expression over popular demand',[89] and as such the works of these British cinemas do just that. For Erik Hedling in fact, in his evaluation of the Free Cinema manifesto he associated these film makers' principles in direction as immediately recognisable from the earlier critical works of Anderson in particular. For Hedling, the ideology of the Free Cinema movement and of the work of Lindsay Anderson in particular was a display of, 'the emphasis

[87]Nowell-Smith, *Making Waves: New Cinemas of the 1960s*, op. cit., p. 131.
[88]Morrison, *Passport to Hollywood: Hollywood Films, European Directors*, op. cit., p. 12.
[89]Nowell-Smith, *Making Waves: New Cinemas of the 1960s*, op. cit., p. 131.

on personal expression, the demand for objective realism and the call for political commitment'.[90]

Despite the readily evincible artistic nature of this British cinema, these art-films were nonetheless often denigrated. Whilst in 1963 John Ardagh took *This Sporting Life* as his example in contending, 'Why aren't British films better?'.[91] In 1998, in a reappraisal of Lindsay Anderson's body of work Erik Hedling claimed, as this thesis too sets out to clearly demonstrate, talking specifically of Anderson's contribution to the British cinema of the 1960s:

> These films would all adhere to the modernistically inclined mode of narration, labelled by David Bordwell as European art-cinema narration and seen as a contrast to the dominant mode of Hollywood. Anderson was to be among the many European auteurs – Bergman, Fellini, Antonioni, Godard – who created a non-linear, self conscious and ambiguous cinema [...] Anderson became crucial for the development of this mode of narration in Britain in the 1960s and '70s[92]

[90]Hedling, *Lindsay Anderson: maverick film maker*, op. cit., p. 42.
[91]John Ardagh. "What's Wrong with British Films". In: *The Observer* Feb 3rd (1963), p. 13, p. 13.
[92]Hedling, *Lindsay Anderson: maverick film maker*, op. cit., p. 57.

3.0 Exploring a Rationalisation of European Cinema's Critical Dominance: French Cinema and British 'Europhilia'

If commercial film-making traditionally means Hollywood, quality film-making traditionally means France; if Hollywood's directors look longingly towards the greater freedoms of Europe, it is to France that they look first[1]

Although British cinema did clearly exhibit evidence of art-cinema sensibilities, it was overlooked by the British critical establishment due to its being too 'domestic' and 'too British', thus this chapter will explore in more depth why these discriminatory views were so trenchantly held.

Asking the question, 'Is there a British new wave, and if not, why not?',[2] the editor of *Sight & Sound* and once editor of the Free Cinema founding *Sequence* magazine, Penelope Houston, suggested that this question is best answered 'in terms of national attitudes of mind (the British have the wrong approach)'.[3] For Houston, the British cinema patently did not hold up artistically, least of all as contextualised in comparison to the French or Italian cinema:

> France and Italy have their defiantly young directors, as unafraid

[1] Penelope Houston. *The Contemporary Cinema*. Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1963, p. 81.
[2] Ibid., p. 111.
[3] Ibid., p. 111.

> of making mistakes as they are of making pictures; and Britain's cinema by contrast looks scared of cutting loose, of appearing immature or juvenile[4]

This chapter will encompass a survey and examination of the art-film production of both France and Italy and question, why was British critical attention turned so pointedly towards the European cinemas? In an attempt to contextualise the work produced by these British art-film directors within the more readily recognised and accepted cinemas, with a specific attention to the most significant element of the modern French cinema, the *nouvelle vague*, and to the new Italian cinema of the early 1960s, I will appraise the work of these countries and in considering the artistic worth of the films that were produced, surmise just how much more worthy of critical attention the European cinemas were than British domestic output.

In mind of the definitions set out in this thesis, such as the idea of the progressively, reinventing and experimentally revolutionising nature of art-cinema, weighing up the cinemas of France and Italy by my predefined measure of art-cinema, it is necessary to consider just how these European cinemas meet the standard of these definitions of art-film. For the means of this thesis, the idea of progressively redefining and creating modern and innovative cinemas is key in a definition of an artistically oriented cinema. Similar to the concurrent British social realist film movement, this term, the *nouvelle vague*, applied to the work of young directors making films using new actors, about middle-class youths and other complex and spontaneous young characters. These films were made in new ways, exploiting new modes of production. This chapter then will attempt to answer, with an eye towards the British New Wave, and by bringing in ideas about the Italian neorealist cinema, what was 'new' about the French *nouvelle vague*. This chapter understands the term *nouvelle vague* to hinge essentially upon the element of

[4]Ibid., p. 113.

youthfulness and the associations of this term with the concepts of modernity and progressive revitalisation as defining characteristics of art-cinema. In an examination of the French *nouvelle vague*, this chapter will explore those aspects which can be read as the youthful elements of this 'new' Wave. Both its origins and its destinations will be explored in considering what was established and founded by this '*nouvelle vague*'.

About the *nouvelle vague* it is often questioned whether the British or the French had developed their young cinema first. As the previous chapter has iterated, although chronologically preceding the *nouvelle vague*, the British New Wave is habitually labelled pejoratively as a back wash of the art-cinema emanating from Europe. Penelope Houston it seems also considered British national cinema as simply an echo of that of France, claiming that creative energies in France were focussed on the cinema much earlier than in Britain:

> In Britain, at about the same time, most of the creative drive and excitement was channelled into the theatre, with the Royal Court Playwrights leading the way. In France, the same kind of rebellious energy could be harnessed by the movies[5]

Houston's arguments are symptomatic of the attitudes of *Sight & Sound* and indeed the majority of British film criticism at the time in her devotion and attention to the work of the young European directors and her overlooking the British art-cinema. In the late fifties there was amongst critics a general feeling of disappointment with the contemporary British cinema. In 1957 *Film* published their 14th issue dedicated to the argument: 'What's wrong with British films?'. For this issue Louis Marcorelles, Paris correspondent for *Sight & Sound* contended that 'the English cinema is perishing of conformity'.[6] Although for him the foreign film market was flourishing, 'One would search in vain among recent productions for the equivalents of foreign

[5]James Monaco. *The New Wave: Truffaut, Godard, Chabrol, Rohmer, Rivette*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1976, p. 100.

[6]Louis Marcorelles. "Indictment". In: *Film* 14 (1957), pp. 4–5, p. 4.

films'.[7] Basil Wright in his article from the same issue looks towards France as an exemplar of the quality film, blaming the British Film Industry for failing to invest in new talent, 'If the French Film Industry, in the course of business, can finance Bresson to make *Un Condamné à Mort*, why shouldn't the Industry here be prepared to do the same?'.[8] Wright suggests however that there was not sufficient talent working in Britain but that a willingness to finance such a venture might 'encourage the appearance of new writers and directors of real talent'.[9] Bridget Boland too, writing in the same issue contended that, 'In France M. Marcorelles is lucky in having many writer-directors. Here, [...] we have practically none'.[10] For many, there were no quality artists working in the british film industry. Boland's suggestion for how to remedy this dire situation could easily be taken as a description of the work of the neo-realists or even that of the emerging *nouvelle vague* in France:

> [British film producers] must be taught to read - not just notices of best-selling novels or long running plays, but original material written for the screen. They must be prepared to employ directors and actors who are suitable for the subjects and roles, not try to drag the subject round to suit them and have the roles re-written for the fashionable star[11]

Like the British New Wave, the most significantly 'new' aspect of the *nouvelle vague* was its extensive list of young first time directors. Both these 'waves' were founded by a core group of three filmmakers coming from a background of film criticism. To consider the three directors widely acknowledged to be the founders of the *nouvelle vague*, Truffaut, Godard and Chabrol, these directors were young people with well founded critical opinions

[7] Ibid., p. 4.
[8] Basil Wright. "Which is the Way Ahead?" In: *Film* 14 (1957), pp. 6–7, p. 6.
[9] Ibid., p. 6.
[10] Bridget Boland. "What About the Script?" In: *Film* 14 (1957), pp. 13–14, p. 13.
[11] Ibid., p. 15.

of what makes good cinema. These directors, in their quest to create authentic films far removed from the polished Hollywood aesthetic also employed new and often unconventional actors creating a new generation of stars, from the rough Jean-Paul Belmondo and the young cheeky Jean-Pierre Léaud to Brigitte Bardot and Anna Karina. Fighting 1950s Hollywood's creation of the star system approach to filming with professionals such as Marilyn Monroe, James Dean, Marlon Brando and John Wayne the *nouvelle vague* directors were keen to use unknown and non-professional actors for their films. Jean-Paul Belmondo was a boxer whose only previous feature length screen role before *À Bout de Souffle* in *À Pied, À Cheval et en Voiture* (1957) saw his scenes cut before the film's release. Moreover, the production values to which these young directors adhered were to produce films on often self financed, low budgets. Godard's first feature for example had a budget which equated to, 'half the average budget for the period'.[12]

About the 'new' modes of cinematic style and technique that these young directors began to introduce Armes observed that, 'new film-makers escaped the cramping constrictions of conventionality and were able to develop a completely new conception of film structure'[13] and he called the contemporary French cinema, 'a cinema increasingly dominated by technique and intellectual complexity'.[14] A few years after these comments Armes went on to observe about Godard in a later work that his films represented, 'a breadth of invention that makes his work virtually unclassifiable'.[15]

These new directors were experimenting with and expanding the boundaries of the cinema. In their exploration of the filmic medium, just as they rejected the Hollywood star system these young directors were rejecting the

[12]Jean Luc Godard quoted in Michel Marie. "It really makes you sick! : Jean-Luc Godard's *A Bout de Souffle* (1959)". In: *French Film : Texts and Contexts*. Ed. by Susan Hayward and Ginette Vincendeau. Routledge, 1990, pp. 158–173, p. 158.

[13]Roy Armes. *French Cinema Since 1946*. 2nd. London: Zwemmer, 1970, p. 15.

[14]Ibid., p. 69.

[15]Roy Armes. "French Film". In: *French Film : Texts and Contexts*. Ed. by Susan Hayward and Ginette Vincendeau. 2nd. London: Routledge, 1990, pp111–111, p. 138.

polished aesthetics of 1950s cinema. In their rejection of the classical French cinema:

> It was against the Clouzots and Cléments that the young French critics, the future New Wave directors, railed so fiercely, making the word 'quality' a pejorative adjective and lashing out at fils which seemed to them over-weight, over-stretched and over-tired[16]

Considering the opinions of the critical British press at the time it is possible to conclude that the primary failure of the British new wave cinema was the fact that it simply was not European. Writing in 1963 Penelope Houston claimed of contemporary French cinema that in what she labelled a 'climate of chaotic excitement and opportunity', 'anyone can now make a film'.[17]

Feeding off of the media frenzy fuelled by the new French cinema it is true to say that 'anyone who did anything at all in the French cinema was liable to find himself labelled 'New Wave".[18] For John Russell Taylor, after Roger Vadim's *Et Dieu Créa la Femme* (1956), 'from then on producers were that much more willing to gamble a little on young directors, young stars, in the hope that youth itself would prove saleable'.[19] Taylor suggested that that French cinema had about it an air of the 'temporary readiness of some critics to accept anything new just because it was new'.[20] The great deal of British critical attention spent on the French directors demonstrates perfectly the effect that this climate of 'chaotic excitement' had upon the British film industry. French directors, it seemed, could do no wrong. For Taylor, directors such as François Truffaut and Jean-Luc Godard were infallible. About Truffaut he claimed that, 'even when he makes mistakes he is a born film-maker

[16]Houston, *The Contemporary Cinema*, op. cit., p. 90.
[17]Ibid., p. 81.
[18]Ibid., p. 100.
[19]John Russell Taylor. *Cinema Eye, Cinema Ear: some key film-makers of the sixties.* New York: Hill and Wang, 1964, p. 201.
[20]Ibid., p. 201.

expressing himself on film as naturally and inevitably as earlier generations did on paper or canvas'.[21] Taylor went so far as to generalise that Truffaut, amongst others, 'belongs to that group of artists whose failures are far more exciting than other men's successes'.[22] Considering statements such as these it is clear to see that British critical opinion favoured the work of European directors, especially those of the *nouvelle vague*, for Taylor says of Godard that, 'everything he touches comes at once to life'[23] and that, 'even when Godard does not consistently succeed in what he sets out to do [...] his work is still spectacularly worth watching; at least, whatever may be wrong with it, it is 100 per cent cinema all the way'.[24] By these standards, it is impossible to believe that anyone making films in Britain at this time would be able to command the mantle of auteur with all critical attention pointed resolutely at France and the rest of western continental Europe. Taylor's book went so far as to proclaim outright that British cinema (and that of America) was not a cinema of the auteur, differentiating it clearly from 'art' cinema:

> In America and even in Britain most films still tend to be made by committees, in which the director is only one of a number of technicians. But in the 'art' cinema, so far as this may be tentatively and unsatisfactorily distinguished from the commercial, the film as a one-man creation is almost university recognised as a practicable ideal towards which everybody strives[25]

In December 1962 the French film journal, *Cahiers du Cinéma*, released their '*nouvelle vague*' issue in which the first sixty pages were devoted to interviews with three young directors: Claude Chabrol, Jean-Luc Godard and François Truffaut. Previously, Chabrol, Truffaut, Godard and Alain Resnais had released the seminal films *Les Cousins* (1959), *Les Quatre Cents Coups*

[21]Ibid., p. 211.
[22]Ibid., p. 211.
[23]Ibid., p. 215.
[24]Ibid., p. 215.
[25]Ibid., p. 220.

(1959), *À Bout de Souffle* (1959) and *Hiroshima Mon Amour* (1959) respectively. Most film historians acknowledge these films and the contemporary French cinema of 1959 to be the beginning of what was labelled by *Cahiers du Cinéma* as the French '*nouvelle vague*'. As Houston observed, 'at the Cannes film festival of 1959, 'the world awoke to the realisation that a whole new generation of film-makers had declared itself'.[26] Roy Armes declared in 1970 that, 'With the debut of Claude Chabrol (b.1930) in 1958 the New Wave proper begins',[27] yet went on to clarify this statement, adding that Truffaut's first feature film was, 'made in 1959, the year of the real break-through for young film-makers'.[28] Monaco too, some years after, heralded 1959 as a milestone in cinema history, declaring, 'the annus mirabilis was 1959 (give or take six months) during which Chabrol, Truffaut, Godard, Rivette, Rohmer, Resnais, Lelouch, Hanoun and Demy all made their first films'.[29]

It has been posited that the concept of a 'new cinema' was itself established in France. The consequence of this suggestion however, is that, therefore all consequent new waves and new cinemas were inherently reactions to the artistic output of the French film industry. Houston suggested that:

> What the cinema of the middle fifties needed, to shake it up, was some artists prepared to have a go, to smash up a few conventions just to see what the pieces looked like. The fact that it found them, in France, spurred on other people[30]

Many of the British critics at the time were of a similar opinion that a British New Wave had only emerged in reaction to that in France. Writing about the technological advances in film practice of the late fifties and early sixties James Monaco suggested that:

[26]Houston, *The Contemporary Cinema*, op. cit., p. 100.
[27]Armes, "French Film", op. cit., p. 123.
[28]Ibid., p. 127.
[29]Monaco, *The New Wave: Truffaut, Godard, Chabrol, Rohmer, Rivette*, op. cit., p. 11.
[30]Houston, *The Contemporary Cinema*, op. cit., p. 100.

> Fast film stocks, lightweight cameras, new lighting equipment, and the liberation from the Hollywood set that all this implied, make the Caméra-Stylo a reality in the late fifties and early sixties not only in France but elsewhere as well. The movement towards a freer cinema was building in Sweden (Bergman), in Italy (Fellini and Antonioni), in England (where the Angry Young Men of the theatre were moving into film and the "Free Cinema" movement was bearing fruit)[31]

Monaco concluded here that although France certainly were not developing the cinema singlehandedly they were indeed at the forefront of the artistic development of the late fifties and early sixties. He claimed that, 'the French filmmakers were not alone but they led the way'.[32]

In 1959 the technical processes of film had been greatly advanced from the classic French cinema. Directors had at their disposal lightweight portable lighting, portable sound recording equipment, lightweight cameras and a number of editing techniques which were ready to be exploited. Godard's first feature for example was shot on what was traditionally photographic film stock which had to be spliced end to end in rolls of 17.5 meters.[33] This exploration of new technologies in order to create new and immediate films added greatly to the youthful and authentic quality which emanated from the French *nouvelle vague*. To consider a film such as Godard's *À Bout de Souffle* one can see a perfect example of these unconventional actors and cinematic techniques from cinematography to editing. For example, a disregard for continuity in mise-en-scène and the use of the jump-cut editing were previously unused techniques and breakthrough in their implementation by

[31]Monaco, *The New Wave: Truffaut, Godard, Chabrol, Rohmer, Rivette*, op. cit., pp. 10-11.
[32]Ibid., p. 11.
[33]Michel Marie, "It really makes you sick! : Jean-Luc Godard's *A Bout de Souffle* (1959)", op. cit., p. 162.

the filmmakers of the French *nouvelle vague*. The sequence in which Michel praises the 'breasts, voice and wrists' of the girl that he loves, is a perfect illustration of Godard's use of unconventional editing techniques. Here, of the six aspects of the body which Michel praises from neck to knees, there is a separate jump cut for each. It is clear too that Godard's post-synchronised dialogue aides the effect that this sequence creates.

Godard's technique for this film was to cut an overly long version of the film and then bring down the length by removing parts of footage. The effect is that with the post-synchronised dialogue filmed as a continuous narrative, juxtaposed against the disjointed visual sequence, the scene gives a great sense of discontinuity and fragmentation, suggesting the nature of Michel's living day-to-day yet, perhaps more so, it perfectly upholds the unremitting rhythm and pace of the film which exudes the very youthful freshness that epitomised the *nouvelle vague*. Marie commented on Godard's use of this type of what she termed, 'hyper-fragmentation'[34] that it serves to break down the conventions of the cinema of that past, she wrote, '[this sequence] violates the moribund codes of spatial and graphic continuity editing which were so scrupulously observed by professional editors of 1959'.[35] Writing in 1967 Ian Cameron praised Godard's technique, saying that, 'no director has in recent years managed to break down the critical consensus to the same extent as Godard'.[36] Ian Cameron went on to argue that, 'With *À Bout de Souffle*, it seemed that the nouvelle vague had gone just about as far as it could go with the hand-held, jump cut, elliptical style. It seemed to mark the complete rejection of the old grammar of film'.[37] Moreover, of the fresh and youthful aspects of the authentic cinema of the *nouvelle vague* the sequence

[34]Michel Marie. "It really makes you sick! : Jean-Luc Godard's *A Bout de Souffle* (1959)". In: *French Film : Texts and Contexts*. Ed. by Susan Hayward and Ginette Vincendeau. Routledge, 1990, pp. 158–173, p. 163.

[35]Ibid., p. 163.

[36]Ian Cameron. "Introduction". In: *The Films of Jean-Luc Godard*. London: Studio Vista Ltd, 1967, pp. 6–10, p. 6.

[37]Ibid., p. 6.

in which Michel and Patricia walk down the Champs Élysées is a perfect example. Just as Godard's cinematographer Raoul Coutard commented on its filming:

> no [tripod] for the camera, no light if possible, travelling without rails... little by little we discovered a need to escape from convention and even run counter to the rules of 'cinematographic grammar'. The shooting plan was devised as we went along, as was the dialogue[38]

The two characters walk towards a backwards tracking camera in a long take unaided by lighting equipment and camera tracks. This perfectly illustrates the advantages that came to the *nouvelle vague* directors in terms of technological advancements in the cinema, such as portable and lightweight cameras. In 1964, John Russell Taylor wrote about Godard that he, 'does not believe that there is anything one absolutely must or must not do until he has tried it himself'.[39] Writing that Godard's style is both abstract and at times obscure, Taylor went on to conclude, 'And for all its seeming inconsequence it proves on examination to be rigidly controlled.'[40]

In this way Godard exercised the *nouvelle vague*'s ability to create personal, stylised and immediate films inspired by a youthful freshness and creativity, the very aspect spirit that explicitly forwards an art-cinema. This idea draws on the concept established by Alexandre Astruc in his essay, 'The Birth of a New Avant-Garde: La Camra Stylo' in which he wrote that, 'the cinema is quite simply becoming a means of expression, just as all the other arts have before it, and in particular painting and the novel'.[41] Alexandre

[38]Raoul Coutard quoted in Richard Neupert. *A History of the French New Wave Cinema*. Madison: University of Wisconsis Press, 2002, p. 210.
[39]Taylor, *Cinema Eye, Cinema Ear: some key film-makers of the sixties*, op. cit., p. 211.
[40]Ibid., p. 213.
[41]Alexandre Astruc quoted in James Monaco. *The New Wave: Truffaut, Godard, Chabrol, Rohmer, Rivette*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1976, p. 5.

Astruc's suggestion subsequently laid the foundations for the central concept of the French *nouvelle vague* in that it taught cinema as art. An important influence in the origins of the *nouvelle vague* was the idea of the films of these young directors as based upon film theory. Like the British New Wave, the key filmmakers of the French film movement established their artistic sensibilities through film criticism. These directors, the 'Cahiers directors', so called for their involvement in the *Cahiers du Cinéma* journal, created their films from the perspective of film theory in practice. At the time, André Bazin, the film critic and revolutionary theoretician was the editor of the journal from which these budding directors emerged. Bazin's influence on these filmmakers was profound, though mostly so was his influence on Truffaut. It was claimed about Bazin's writings on the nature of the cinematic medium that they are, 'unmatched for their deep comprehension of the technology of the medium and the psychology which stems from it and, indeed, his work paved the way for the more acutely philosophical study of the phenomenon of film'.[42] Bazin commented on mise-en-scène and deep focus that they were a 'dialectical step forward in the history of film language'.[43] These elements of cinematic expression, such as the use of mise-en-scène to create meaning and an exploration of the technology of cinematography became key elements throughout the works of the *nouvelle vague* directors.

One of the chief concerns of these young directors was the concept of the *politique des auteurs*. As film critics, in addition to Bazin, these directors, notably Truffaut, Godard and Chabrol, made waves in the field of film theory. The *politique des auteurs* is a concept which was conceived and practiced by the Cahiers directors. For *Cahiers du Cinéma* Bazin wrote that:

> The *politique des auteurs* consists, in short, of choosing the personal factor in artistic creation as a standard reference, and then

[42]Monaco, *The New Wave: Truffaut, Godard, Chabrol, Rohmer, Rivette*, op. cit., p. 6.
[43]André Bazin quoted in James Monaco. *The New Wave: Truffaut, Godard, Chabrol, Rohmer, Rivette*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1976, p. 6.

> assuming that it continues and even progresses from one film to the next.[44]

That is to say that an auteur is an artist whose films consistently bear, 'the personal stamp of the auteur'.[45] The relationship between these critics' predisposition for the concept of the *politique des auteurs* and their subsequent films is that in their profound understanding of the nature of film these young directors made their films from a very specifically crafted perspective.

To consider Bazin's explanation of the *politique des auteurs* one can see that it insists on a personal relationship between director and audience and in this sense the films of the *nouvelle vague* became what Monaco called, 'intimate conversations between the people behind the camera and the people in front of the screen'.[46] These fundamental elements of art-cinema then were quite expertly exhibited here in the French cinema. Furthermore, Monaco suggests that the concept of the *politique des auteurs* inevitably leads to a dialectical view of the filmic process in that a movie becomes the sum of a whole set of oppositions between auteur and genre; between director and audience; between critic and film; between theory and practice; or as in Godard's words, between 'method and sentiment'.[47] One of the intrinsic factors contributing to the collective work of the *nouvelle vague* directors is their preoccupation with this concept of the *politique des auteurs* and more importantly their critical backgrounds which lead to their profound understanding of the nature of their chosen medium; these things come together to exemplify the concept of producing significantly poetic art-cinema in association with this definitions of such layer out in this thesis. Understanding

[44]André Bazin. "On the *politique des auteurs*, (April 1957)". In: *Cahiers Du Cinema Vol 1: The 1950s, Neo-Realism, Hollywood, New Wave*. Ed. by Jim Hiller. London: Routledge, 2001. Chap. 31, pp. 248–259, p. 255.

[45]Ibid., p. 255.

[46]Monaco, *The New Wave: Truffaut, Godard, Chabrol, Rohmer, Rivette*, op. cit., p. 8.

[47]Jean-Luc Godard quoted in James Monaco. *The New Wave: Truffaut, Godard, Chabrol, Rohmer, Rivette*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1976, p. 8.

film in this way allowed directors such as Truffaut, Godard and Chabrol to create their films in a way analogous to that which was considered 'authentic' by the *Cahiers du Cinéma* critics. The subsequent films then were new not only technologically but both critically and theoretically also. They explored new themes, in new ways from new and well informed perspectives using new techniques and new actors. As Monaco wrote, 'If any single characteristic unites these disparate artists it is their concern with making sense of the history of film by understanding how film (and other arts) relates to its "raw material," life'.[48] Interestingly, Monaco also suggested that in addition to their understanding of the filmic medium, these directors' involvement in the literary and philosophical culture of their time also unites their cinéfile approach to the cinema. He wrote that Truffaut's, 'impressionistic pleasure in the varieties of the light of the city's times and places [....] evince an assured command of the tropes of the visual arts'.[49]

[48]Monaco, *The New Wave: Truffaut, Godard, Chabrol, Rohmer, Rivette*, op. cit., p. 8.
[49]Ibid., p. 10.

3.1 *Les Quatre Cents Coups* (1959): A Case Study

As previously explored, Tony Richardson's *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner* (1960) is often compared to Truffaut's *Les Quatre Cents Coups* and falls invariably short of satiating critical appetites to the extent that Truffaut was able. Though Richardson's film was well received by many, for others it stands simply as a conscious yet failing attempt at a *nouvelle vague* emulation. Penelope Houston suggested that:

> *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner* makes what one assumes can only be conscious gestures in the direction of the nouvelle vague, with its bit of speeded-up action, its frozen final shot, its self-consciously 'cinematic' emphases. But the echoes of *Les Quatre Cents Coups* also point the contrasts: where Truffaut's style grew out of his theme, Richardson's looks the result of deliberate effort of will, so that the bits and pieces remain unassimilated[50]

It is interesting to consider the source of Truffaut's film's success in order to fathom its critical dominance over the works of its contemporary British film makers. Consideration of Truffaut's film will provide a revealing analysis of *Les Quatre Cents Coups*' perceived artistic superiority over domestic competitors. Through an analysis and a critical reading of François Truffaut's work, and in mind of this thesis' contention that, with the great deal of critical attention afforded the French and Italian cinemas the British cinema was overlooked, this case study will evidence what in fact makes *Les Quatre Cents Coups* a film which, 'offers such an abundantly warm and personal feeling that one would be reluctant to look for faults in it, even if there

[50]Houston, *The Contemporary Cinema*, op. cit., p. 121.

were any'.[51] Furthermore, this attention towards an examination of Truffaut will allow a reading of whether British cinema was not in fact an equally as artistic cinema as this one. Truffaut's involvement with the British cinema later in the 1960s, makes a study of his work of particular interest, as this is the film maker who, despite his questioning, 'isn't there a certain incompatibility between the terms 'cinema' and 'Britain'?',[52] made a film of the Ray Bradbury novel, *Fahrenheit 451* in the 1960s, and in Britain.

Les Quatre Cents Coups in many ways can be read as a story about journeys. This film marked the beginnings of the *nouvelle vague* journey, it marked the beginning of François Truffaut's journey through his eminent body of work and it was also the beginning of the working partnership between Truffaut and Jean-Pierre Léaud. However, more immediately, *Les Quatre Cents Coups* details the journey through life in Antoine Doinel's progression from childhood to adulthood at the mediating age of thirteen. The suggestion that this film hinges upon the concept of 'a journey' is immediately established over the opening credit sequence. Here, the camera quickly and restlessly moves through the streets of Paris at a childs-eye-view, glancing up at the Eiffel Tower. The camera gets closer to the Eiffel Tower with each cut, finally arriving at the base yet only fleetingly as it then moves on past and moves away, glancing back to watch the Tower shrink uncontrollably into the distance. This journey to and past the Eiffel Tower can be read as one of a number of microcosms to be seen throughout the film, which echo and foreshadow its events and themes. The quick-paced sequence of cuts between fast tracking shots through Parisian back-streets foreshadows a number of the film's concerns. Firstly, the low angle camera perspective allies the viewer with Antoine before they even see him. The pace of the film is effectively founded through the quick pans, restless tracking shots and

[51]Robert Vas. "QUATRE CENT COUPS, LES (The 400 Blows), France, 1959". In: *Monthly Film Bulletin* 27.312/323 (1960), pp. 48–49, p. 49.

[52]François Truffaut. *Hitchcock*. London: Secker and Warburg, 1968, p. 140.

abrupt cuts and furthermore, the soundtrack, one of the intrinsic elements in the film's success, is perfectly established here. The non-diegetic sound track mirrors perfectly the micro journey detailed in the opening shots of the film. The music begins lively and joyously, falters, slows, and peters out in a deliberate melancholia as the Eiffel Tower is removed from grasp. In addition to echoing the multitude of semantics, associated with the idea of 'the journey', the opening soundtrack also serves to initiate Truffaut's rhythmic use of emotional peaks and troughs. Here, the soundtrack builds up from a slow, happy pace to one of excitement, echoing the camera's approach to the Eiffel Tower. However, as the Tower is reached, the music changes in mood and pace, slowing down and petering out suggesting that what was desired was unattained, leaving the impression of unfulfilled desires, one of the film's key motifs. This sense of futility is prevalent from one aspect of Antoine's life to another, just as the tension is at its peak, just as something positive seems imminent, there is a release and deflation. Truffaut creates a definite air of the unattainable about Antoine's life. The idea of journeys coupled with the feeling of inevitable defeat act to create a sense of a limbo-esque nature to Antoine's existence. Antoine's life is somewhat dialectical in that he is trapped within a series of binary oppositions: between mother and father; between home and school; between education and work; between indoors and out and between confidence and uncertainty. As the final image of this film cements, trapped in this limbo, Antoine's futile journey in *Les Quatre Cents Coups* is never completed. Consistently trapped between oppositions, Antoine's journey throughout the film is one of self discovery; a journey to find his own place, his own space, his own life and his own identity; a self-affirmation. This self affirmation does not come; his journey proves futile.

Following the opening credit sequence, the action of *Les Quatre Cents Coups* begins in the classroom, immediately identifying the subject matter

of this film as that superlative signifier of youth, children. The first adult one encounters, the teacher, is a harsh and unforgiving one and consequently the audience's allegiances are further reinforced with the children. About *Les Quatre Cents Coups* Annette Insdorf concluded that, 'Truffauts's love for his subject - here children rather than cinema - results in the overwhelming authenticity of what is presented'.[53] Truffaut's awareness and use of children is the chief element of the 'youthfulness' that colours his work, and in fact the work of the *nouvelle vague* directors, most evident within *Les Quatre Cents Coups*. In an extention of the concept that an art-cinema must be consistently working against the established norms and against the contemporary mainstream cinema and that it must also be constantly re-inventing and reinvigorating itself and in addition must be progressive, what is to be inherently understood within the subtext of this definition is that indeed 'youthfulness' may be taken as encompassing all of these things.

Here the perspective given to the audience is that of the child Antoine. Insdorf went on to highlight that, 'his search for authenticity lead him, at least initially to present children from the inside'.[54] In the classroom the camera remains for the most part static, at the rear of the class, mirroring the child's perspective. However, on leaving the classroom the camera changes, not tracking but panning in order to follow and trace Antoine and his friend René's movements. However, almost immediately after assuming some freedom, the camera returns to its static position in Antoine's entry into his family home. Here, the camera remains planted, simply observing as Antoine navigates his home. An interesting sequence comes as Antoine enters his mother's room, sits at her dressing table, brushes his hair, smells her perfume and curls his eyelashes. Telling though is the presence of three mirrors and therefore the four onscreen representations of Antoine. This can be read as a physical representation of Antoine's intransigence. That is to

[53]Annette Insdorf. *François Truffaut*. Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1978, p. 146.
[54]Ibid., p. 146.

say that in the presence of four variations of Antoine's character, his lack of direction and inability to pin down his own identity is illustrated by allowing the viewer to experience his lack of confidence in their equal inability to label the 'real' Antoine. Insdorf observed that,

> we subsequently see him wiping a foggy mirror that reflects his face, while a voice over repeats the line he must conjugate as punishment for marking up the wall. His erasing action is another "defacing" in the service of better seeing / revealing his image, or a kind of self- affirmation'[55]

Extending Antoine's inability to define his own identity is his lack of a personal space. At school Antoine's personal space is removed as he is forced into a corner behind the blackboard, at home his space is removed in that he is forced between spaces in the hallway, and in prison his personal cell is invaded when the police bring in a group of women. Even the inherently open and relatively freeing space of the sports pitch where Antoine and others from the correction centre play football is not as open as it appears. There are a great number of people on the fenced in and heavily guarded field. This lack of space acts to augment the tension created through the oppressive nature of the indoor spaces which oppose the release brought on by the freedom of the outside world.

There are only two indoor spaces which offer Antoine any solace. First of all is René's house, which in itself echoes the outdoors in that it is home to a horse and the incessant mewing of a cat, and as Antoine says, 'What a huge place!'. Here, the children experience a subversion of roles in that they control when René's father leaves the house to the extent that they even control time. Furthermore, the two indulge in smoking cigars, playing backgammon and drinking; very much adult games. However, Antoine and

[55]Ibid., p. 146.

René are notwithstanding forced to hide each behind a curtain when his mother is home and behind the bed when his father returns at which point the roles assume their natural course and father is again in power, informing both them and the viewer that despite the freedom of this house, escape to the outside world invariably beckons.

The second of Antoine's happy spaces is the cinema. The first example of this is the sequence in which to see Jaques Rivette's *Paris Nous Appartient* (1960), a film by a fellow *nouvelle vague*, 'Cahiers' director. Here, Antoine and parents exit the theatre hand-in-hand and laughing, climb into the car accompanied by the free and exciting soundtrack which we expect to accompany Antoine's outdoor jaunts. Their happiness is punctuated by the freedom of the high angle long shot of busy, night-time Paris.

This leads well onto an analysis of the sequence in which Antoine and René play truant from school. It being said that the cinema is a safe place to which Antoine often returns, another safe place comes when he visits the fairground with René. The 'rotor' sequence of the truancy episode can be understood as a metaphor for cinema itself in its resemblance to the 'zoetrope', an early version of the moving image. This is strengthened in that directly before the audience sees the 'rotor' the camera pans upwards and frames the word 'Cine' above the theatre following which there is an immediate cut to Antoine entering the fair ride.

The soundtrack to the entire truancy episode is key in creating the sense of release which follows the evening in which Antoine's parents argue whilst he is entombed in the darkness of his sleeping quarters. The flamboyancy and lively tempo of the soundtrack perfectly mirror the happiness Antoine feels in this bid for freedom. The sequence preceding the truancy episode sees Antoine emptying the bins at the bottom of an enclosed stairwell surround by bars and their shadows, suggesting a great sense of confinement and incarceration and indeed a foreshadowing of his time spent in the cor-

rection centre. Diametrically opposed to this confining shot is the beginning of the preceding sequence in which Antoine runs towards a panning, tracking, restless camera. Insdorf proposed that what this rhythm of incarceration and release suggests here is that, 'children, like cameras, need to move, and that the kinds of treatment that Antoine receives under four roofs - home, school, jail, reform school - are not terribly different from one another'.[56] The one point at which the music deviates from the joyous and playful Jean Constantin film score is when the pair play pinball in the arcade. Here the soundtrack plays an American Rock 'n' Roll song. Following the American teen explosion of the 1950s, the popularity of such films as *Rebel Without a Cause* (1955) and the attention these *nouvelle vague* directors paid to Hollywood, this non-diegetic change signifies the current freedom and power of youth for Antoine and René.

Following this sequence is the pair's experience of the carnival. The carnival space can be read as another space which Antoine experiences as an in-between, limbo-esque space. That is to say that inside the carnival Antoine is outdoors in that he is removed from the oppression of home, jail and school yet is also indoors in that he is physically within the carnival space. About the 'rotor', Insdorf wrote that, 'inside the drum Antoine is both in and out, both still and in motion, both revolved from his surroundings and whirling with them'.[57]

Putting an end to the freedom, Truffaut effectively upholds the rhythm of tension and release ubiquitous throughout the film in Antoine's encounter with his mother. Within this sequence Truffaut demonstrates exquisitely the new art-cinema techniques of the French film makers. Here, the sequence is filmed in a series of short, sharp jump cuts, the antithesis of the previously freeing movements of the panning and tracking camera. First, the audience

[56]Ibid., p. 152.
[57]Ibid., p. 152.

see a long shot of a couple kissing, then a close up of an unidentifiable couple. Then we see a further close up of Antoine's mother and then a reaction shot of Antoine who recognises her, followed by a series of reaction shots in each of which Antoine's mother is facing a different direction, further disorientating and confusing the audience. This sequence acts as an antithesis to the freeing and blissful 'rotor' sequence in breaking down the emotional crescendo which Antoine gained from the carnival and his truancy; ultimately his rejection of authority in his refusal of both school and home is destroyed.

From his first days of truancy, his running away from home and staying with René, the rhythm of the events of the film seem to be building up to Antoine's stealing of the typewriter. Preceding Antoine's theft of the typewriter there is a sequence in which he and René stand on the roof of his building, with an almost omnipresent, omnipotent power over the people below, whom they pelt with paper balls. Taking the young girl, presumably René's sister, to the puppet show echoes Antoine's positive allegiance with the indoor space that is the cinema. These events come to an emotional crescendo for Antoine in that the entirety of the subsequent film following the unsuccessful return of the typewriter is a negative release and deflation of Antoine's happiness. Interestingly, when taken to the police station M. Doinel states to the commissioner, 'we left him free', to which is replied, 'perhaps too free!'. This can be read as a verbal signifier for the consequent stripping of Antoine's freedom. Following his arrest he is subjected to a number of more mediating spaces. Antoine's journey of self-affirmation has at this point, been finally thwarted and he has ultimately lost his capacity for personal freedom. Antoine is placed in a holding cell until the van arrives, in a van until he reaches prison, in prison until he is sent to the juvenile delinquency centre and it was intended that he be kept there until he could be processed and sent on to a trade school.

The act of permanent capture of having his photograph taken for police

records can be seen as being part of a further set of binary oppositions which run through the film in the permanence of photographs as in direct opposition to the freedom of the moving image. This comes from Antoine's allegiance with the camera and the 'rotor' ride as directly opposed to the power of the still image which signifies his entrapment and futility such as the final shot of the film in which Antoine is frozen, in essence without having escaped anything at all. Whereas the moving image on the other hand has only the capacity to bring Antoine joy.

The concept of 'a journey' is again invoked in the latter half of the film though injected with a certain sense of failure in its ineffectuality as a kind of subverted mirroring. Truffaut brings the film full circle in the the events of the latter half of the film can be read as echoes of those of the former. At the juvenile delinquency centre, the boys having some time on the field whilst the three little local girls are placed in a cage echoes Antoine's earlier incarceration in which three prostitutes are brought into his cell. Here, one can see that no longer is Antoine removed from the world but the world is now removed from him in an inverted yet more powerful statement of his solidarity. Moreover, this is a statement of the unredeemable nature to which his predicament has finally extended. There is no longer room for redemption as his mother says, 'we were ready to take you back home but now it it impossible'. Here, Gillain associates this sequence of the three little girls with the evening in which Mme. Doinel is driven home by her boss with whom her husband accuses her of having an affair, and also the sequence concerning the three prostitutes from the prison cell.

The taking out of the boys for their football game mirrors the earlier sequence in which the school children are taken out by their P.E teacher. This earlier sequence is filmed in a series of quick cuts and pans, complemented by a bird's-eye-view, giving this sequence a sense of freedom in the massive cinematographic space. Here the children joyfully run off and escape in their

individual bids for freedom. Conversely, the second sequence is filmed by a static camera and is composed of a single, slow-paced pan. The teacher's whistle is echoed in the soundtrack though this time it is infused with a military drumming. Interestingly, the first sequence begins as the children exit through an iron gate whereas the second ends with a similar shot of a high wall and an oppressive gate suggesting that earlier, Antoine was escaping incarceration though now he is being taken into it. The second sequence takes the freedom and joy offered to Antoine by the streets of Paris and subverts it, creating in the same movements a harsh and controlling space. Truffaut creates a distinct sense of futility throughout his film; a sense that Antoine's endeavours are inevitably and invariably to fail and that his desires are unattainable. This is perhaps best summed up by the concluding shot of the film.

About the famous last shot of *Les Quatre Cents Coups* it was said that it, 'remains one of the most directly haunting in contemporary cinema'.[58] The long tracking shot before the final shot in which Antoine's run is followed by a tracking camera is the start of a new 'journey' for him. He has left the last of his mediating spaces and is moving now, independently, towards a future of his own making, a self-affirming personal choice. However, Truffaut's final freeze frame leaves the audience discontented. In their allegiance to Antoine, the ambiguity and uncertainty of the ending fails to provide closure or perhaps more importantly refuses even any hint of conclusion which leaves the audience, like Antoine himself, stunned and lost. The ambiguity of this ending has been much commented upon, Insdorf wrote that, 'in his flight from la mère (mother) to la mer (sea) he remains on the periphery of things'.[59] Through his use of a rhythm of tension and release it can be read that in his consistent insistence of the motif of failed journeys and metaphors for the futility of Antoine's existence that, in his final image, Truffaut concludes his

[58]Houston, *The Contemporary Cinema*, op. cit., p. 106.
[59]Insdorf, *François Truffaut*, op. cit., p. 153.

film by saying that Antoine's was an incomplete journey that was condemned from the start. The film began with a still image of the pin-up which got him into trouble and ends with a still image of him lost and his journey of self discovery incomplete and unconfirmed.

Truffaut and Godard 'have become the New Wave's most dominant figures historically'.[60] For Taylor, he claimed of these two directors that, 'Truffaut and Godard being examples of the complete film creator, like Bunuel, Bresson, Fellini, Antonioni, Bergman and Hitchcock, and Resnais an interesting example of the pure metteur scène'. For both of these directors, often attributed with giving birth to the *nouvelle vague*, their careers evolved in very different ways. Godard's direction can be understood in considering Monaco's statement about the beginnings of the *nouvelle vague* that, '*Les Quatre Cents Coups* was fresh and new but it was also perceived to exist essentially within certain broad traditions. *À Bout de Souffle*, on the other hand, was clearly revolutionary'.[61] Writing that his feature film debut 'spoke out in the strident voice of arrogant, assured, and very considerable young talent' Houston labelled Godard as 'someone who really will look at film-making in a new way'.[62] Godard's cinema was one which seemed to always be pushing the boundaries of acceptability. For John Russell-Taylor, 'Godard has shown himself one of the most original and dynamic forces at work in the cinema today'.[63] This revolutionary style began to manifest itself in extremely polemic and politicized films such as *La Chinoise* (1967), and the disjointed, cannabalistic, terrorist narrative that is *Weekend* (1967). For Godard perhaps Monaco's suggestion rings truest, 'Colloquially, "New Wave" soon degenerated into a synonym for "Avant Garde," although it had

[60]Richard Neupert. *A History of the French New Wave Cinema*. Madison: University of Wisconsis Press, 2002, p. 207.
[61]Monaco, *The New Wave: Truffaut, Godard, Chabrol, Rohmer, Rivette*, op. cit., p. 98.
[62]Houston, *The Contemporary Cinema*, op. cit., p. 103.
[63]Taylor, *Cinema Eye, Cinema Ear: some key film-makers of the sixties*, op. cit., p. 220.

a connotation that was perhaps less stodgy'.[64]

Truffaut, on the other hand, had progressed in a more traditional vein, 'premiering a new film every other year, which ensured a high level of technical polish, narrative purpose, and consistent, auteurist results'.[65] Truffaut's work took him from *Les Quatre Cents Coups* to *Tirez sur le Pianiste* (1960), a film based on David Goodis' book *Down There*. This film, according to Monaco, 'established a mode of enquiry that he was to follow throughout the next decade and laid the foundations for the dialects of the phenomenon of genres as Truffaut saw them'.[66] Following *Tirez sur le Pianiste* Truffaut directed another adaptation, *Jules et Jim* (1961) about which Monaco claimed, '*Jules et Jim* is undoubtedly Truffaut's most popular film'.[67] Following these works which continued his cinematic technical prowess, he began a series of genre films, *La Peau Douce* (1964), *Fahrenheit 451* (1966), *La Mariée était en Noir* (1967) and *La Sirène du Mississippi* (1970). Truffaut is to be seen as one of the great European art-film making auteurs of the 1960s, if only for his key role in the birth of the French *nouvelle vague*. In the spirit of the definitions laid out in the Introduction, such as the journey of Antoine Doinel being tantamount to the idea of the exploration of psychologically ambivalent characters, this re-inventingly progressive approach to cinematic techniques, and of Truffaut's portrayal of the grittily challenging life of a disregarded youth struggling along the streets of Paris seen in the context of the Thompson and Bordwellian definitions of artistic cinema, 'the art-film defines itself as realistic, it will show us actual locations , 'realistic' eroticism, and genuine problems'.[68] As such it is invariably understood that Truffaut is undoubtedly an art-film maker. In a characterisation of Truffaut's work as indubitable art-cinema, Graham Petrie observed that:

[64]Monaco, *The New Wave: Truffaut, Godard, Chabrol, Rohmer, Rivette*, op. cit., p. vii.
[65]Neupert, *A History of the French New Wave Cinema*, op. cit., p. 245.
[66]Monaco, *The New Wave: Truffaut, Godard, Chabrol, Rohmer, Rivette*, op. cit., p. 38.
[67]Ibid., p. 47.
[68]Bordwell and Thompson, *The Classical Hollywood Cinema: film style and mode of production to 1960*, op. cit., p. 373.

> In contrast to the nineteenth century desire for works of art which present a coherent and stable interpretation of life and suggest that most problems are soluble, or at least explicable, the contemporary framework within which Truffaut works assumes that final resolutions and explanations are false and unrealistic, and a film that wraps up its loose ends too neatly becomes automatically suspect[69]

Thus it is that Truffaut's work is to be seen, as employing the 'looser, more tenuous linkage of events',[70] that we expect to find in significant art cinema. Reading Truffaut's crowning film, *Les Quatre Cents Coups*, in this way allows one to perceive that Truffaut was not, in fact, making film in any way that is exclusive of the methods and approaches of Tony Richardson and other British New Wave directors working at the time. As it stands, *Les Quatre Cents Coups* does not provide one with any more an artistic statement than did *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner*. One is left to assume that this film's perceived dominance over the works of the British counterpart to the *Nouvelle Vague* is not quantifiable in any technically cinematic way, and as such it is to be concluded that the works of these British directors were as equally as cinematically significant. Their evident critical dismissal is to be explained through the idea of inverted cinematic patriotism and by 'Europhilia'. This too can be taken as evidence that just as the terms 'European cinema' and 'art-cinema' are to be taken synonymously so too perhaps are the terms 'British Cinema' and 'insignificance'.

The command of the French *nouvelle vague* can be seen in its consequent influence on global cinemas over the years. Many writers and directors have been influenced by the works of these young directors searching for a 'new'

[69]Graham Petrie. *The Cinema of François Truffaut*. The International Film Guide Series. London: A. Zwemmer Limited, 1970, p. 225.

[70]Bordwell and Thompson, *The Classical Hollywood Cinema: film style and mode of production to 1960*, op. cit., p. 373.

cinema. Phillip Kaufman, director of *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* (1987), spoke of his excitement at Truffaut's enjoying his 1965 film *Goldstein* (1964). He detailed the influence that the French *nouvelle vague* had had on his work; 'when we saw *Les Quatre Cents Coups*, just the vitality, and the children, and the camera being out in the streets, blew us away. It was the combination of technique and content that was so impressive: that accessibility'.[71] Moreover, despite the concurrent British New Wave which, 'by the side of the big names of Europe and Hollywood, it was felt that British film had very little to offer'.[72] British cinema certainly had similarities with the French *nouvelle vague*. One can see similarities between the *nouvelle vague*'s quest for authenticity and Cowie's suggestion that British Free Cinema's aim was to make films, 'which share an attitude; a belief in freedom, in the importance of the individual'.[73] Moreover, Karel Reisz's memories of the new technologies of the era echo the sentiments of the *nouvelle vague*, 'Lassally with his hand-held Arriflex, and John Fletcher with his Nagra enabled us to shoot unrehearsed material. It was a sacrifice of technical perfection in favour of spontaneity'.[74] However, Walter Lassaly suggested that he and Raoul Coutard, cinematographer for *À Bout de Souffle* amongst many of the *nouvelle vague* films, concluded that, 'these things occur more or less simultaneously, without one necessarily being influenced by the other'.[75]

The French *nouvelle vague*, for all it offered is still questioned by some as not in fact 'new' but indeed as a logical extension of what was already occurring in cinema. Colin Crisp argued that the *nouvelle vague* could be seen, 'not as a displacement of the classic cinema but rather as a logical

[71]Phillip Kaufman quoted in Peter Cowie. *Revolution!: The Explosion of World Cinema in the 60s*. London: Faber and Faber, 2004, p. 114.
[72]Neil Sinyard. *Jack Clayton*. British Film Makers. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000, p. 11.
[73]Peter Cowie. *Revolution!: The Explosion of World Cinema in the 60s*. London: Faber and Faber, 2004, p. 52.
[74]Karel Reisz quoted in Peter Cowie. *Revolution!: The Explosion of World Cinema in the 60s*. London: Faber and Faber, 2004, pp. 57-58.
[75]Peter Cowie, *Revolution!: The Explosion of World Cinema in the 60s*, op. cit., p. 56.

outcome'.[76] Firstly, he wrote that despite the insistence of many that, in light of Astruc's concept of 'la camera stylo', the *nouvelle vague* brought about an art-cinema, 'the New Wave constituted little more than the emphatic foregrounding of the art-film end of existing production practices'.[77] He wrote that the *nouvelle vague* directors owed a debt to the mechanisms put in place during the classic period of French Cinema which allowed these young film makers to produce their works. He wrote that:

> This process had been complimented by that commercialisation of wartime technological breakthroughs which transformed work practices in the cinema [....] the material available was lighter, faster, more flexible, and cheaper, and these characteristics interacted with the decline of the studio system and of set design to permit more extensive location shooting and a more dynamic camera style[78]

The *nouvelle vague*, nonetheless, was the work of young directors making films using new actors about contemporary-middle-class youths and other complex spontaneous young characters. Youth played a large part in the beginnings of these young films in a number of ways. For Truffaut, his search for a youthful authenticity manifested itself in his predominant use of children throughout his films. The presence of children within Truffaut's films can be used to perfectly illustrate the new and youthful aspects of the Wave itself, definitively underlining its art-cinema status. Truffaut's comment about his treatment of children can be taken equally as powerfully if one were to substitute the term 'child' for the term '*nouvelle vague*', 'I never tire of filming with children. All that a child does on screen, he seems to do for the very first time'.[79]

[76]C. G. Crisp. *The Classic French Cinema: 1930-1960*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993, p. 416.
[77]Ibid., p. 416.
[78]Ibid., p. 418.
[79]Truffaut quoted in Annette Insdorf. *François Truffaut*. Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1978, p. 155.

Despite the assertion that for British critics the terms 'European Cinema' and 'art-cinema' were synonymous, it is clearly evidenced that the French Cinema of the 1960s held a kind of critical dominance in Britain. With the attention paid to the cinema of France it is not surprising that British directors producing art-cinema were reprimanded for simply trying, and failing, to reproduce French cinema. In this vein we can argue that, whilst an almost surreal contention, Tony Richardson's biggest failing is the fact that he is not François Truffaut. The importance, and high level of regard afforded the European cinema is clear when we consider that one of the highest forms of praise for British directors during the 1960s was their comparison to European masters. Lindsay Anderson, like Tony Richardson, was often praised for his works' likenesses to those of the European auteurs. The implication here is that if one directs like a European then one must be producing art-cinema. And vice versa, if one is to produce art-cinema then one is to necessarily emulate these European directors. In 1998, Erik Hedling retrospectively concluded about Anderson's body of work, and in particular Anderson's 'style', that:

> This style - to quote, deconstruct or allude to a constantly present tradition of cinema, theatre, literature, art, philosophy and history in order to create a distanced self-consciousness - is something that Anderson shares with other European auteurs of the 1960s[80]

In particular, Anderson's film *This Sporting Life* (1963) was not enormously well received in Britain. Hedling observed that, 'in general the film fared well with international critics. In Britain however, its reception was more problematic'.[81] Hedling recognised of Anderson's reception that:

> Critics at the time actually compared the film to the French new

[80]Hedling, *Lindsay Anderson: maverick film maker*, op. cit., p. 57.
[81]Ibid., p. 51.

> wave and its self-conscious strategies of foregrounding cinematic narration. In particular, Alain Resnais' manipulations of time in *Hiroshima Mon Amour* (1959) and *Last Year in Marienbad* (*L'anné dernier à Marienbad*, 1961) were used as comparisons[82]

For Erik Hedling Lindsay Anderson would always, 'be among the many European auteurs', comparing him to directors such as, 'Fellini, Antonioni, Godard - who created a non-linear, self-conscious and ambiguous cinema.'[83]

In 1963, on the release of Anderson's *This Sporting Life*, John Ardagh wrote the following for The Observer: 'It may be the highwater-mark of the "new wave" of British realism. But other waves, on foreign shores, have been reaching marks far higher. Why aren't British films better?'.[84] John Ardagh, like many British critics, both commends and condemns Anderson in a single sentiment. For Ardagh, Anderson's film is the 'highwater-mark' of British cinema yet is not good enough simply because European cinema is better. In this air of Euro-centricity it is hard to imagine how any British films were made at all. Even before the release of this film, following an interview with the director on the set, Tom Milne was quick to tar Lindsay Anderson with the 'not European' brush in his analysis of *This Sporting Life*. Milne wrote that, 'Lindsay Anderson has concentrated on the dark, destructive, almost inexplicable element in the relationship. "Antonioni?" I asked'.[85] Both this film and Richardson's *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner* are significant, British art-films, though unfortunately, owing to their being not European, they are dismissed as such. Despite the poetic nature of the extremely personal *This Sporting Life* and the progressively re-inventing of the cinematic technique displayed by Richardson's experimental and spontaneous *Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner*, these films were, in keeping with the dominant practice of the British critical institution, over-

[82]Ibid., p. 54.
[83]Ibid., p. 57.
[84]Ardagh, "What's Wrong with British Films", op. cit., p. 13.
[85]Tom Milne. "This Sporting Life". In: *Sight & Sound* 31.3 (1962), pp. 113–115, p. 115.

looked. Tom Milne in fact found that, after speaking with Anderson about his intentions with the film, 'he is determined that it should be a stylish film, more formalised than what is usually taken to be the *nouvelle vague* approach'.[86] Milne went on to report that, 'Anderson readily agrees that a "signature" is essential, that film is, or should be a language. Of all the directors in, round, behind, or stemming from the Free Cinema movement, he has by far the most recognisable, most personal style'.[87]

In the sense of the definitions layer out in this thesis' Introduction, Anderson and Richardson's British New Wave, Social Realist offerings are evidently art-films. Richardson's cinematic technique is exceptionally well constructed through his cinematographic approached to jump-cut sequences and speeded up action and Anderson's use of the flashback technique in his film is clearly demonstrative of an art-house film making sensibility.

These films were indeed art-films by the standard of any definition. The simple use of flashbacks in Lindsay Anderson's *This Sporting Life* stand as testament to the revolutionary influence these directors had on the cinema. This technique, whilst generally unused in this period of the British cinema, was one which stood to challenge accepted models of cinema and such exemplifies the spirit of 'railing against' the conventional cinema that preceded Anderson's work. Erik Hedling too observed of this art-film technique that:

> Anderson in *This Sporting Life* tried to challenge a standardised mode of presenting cinematic flashbacks in an attempt to pave the way for new aesthetic forms in the British cinema[88]

However, in exemplifying the general attitude towards this significant British cinema, John Ardagh suggested of the British new wave directors that:

[86]Ibid., p. 115.
[87]Ibid., p. 115.
[88]Hedling, *Lindsay Anderson: maverick film maker*, op. cit., p. 56.

> for all their qualities of realism and drama, their films - many critics feel - are still bogged down in a British humdrumness as if afraid or unable to match the poetry, experiment, spontaneity or personal vision of so much foreign work[89]

Like the 1957 special issue of the *Film* journal entitled 'What's wrong with British films?', Ardagh's statements highlight the national attitude towards the British cinema. The European cinemas were indeed prolific throughout this time and were certainly producing extremely well received films yet this fact does not require that British cinema were not doing the same. For Ardagh, 'the central issue, of course, is that the British just do not care about the cinema as the French, Italians or Poles do'.[90]

[89]Ardagh, "What's Wrong with British Films", op. cit., p. 13.
[90]Ibid., p. 13.

3.2 Early 1960s Italian Cinema and the films of Michelangelo Antonioni

It was not until towards the end of the 1960s that British Cinema and indeed Lindsay Anderson gained any strong critical acclaim from the British Press. Peter Cowie, another British critic who suggests that the world rely largely upon Europe for its art-cinema, as he claimed, 'no one could pretend that this country's [Britain's] studio's produce such a consistently high percentage of fine films as Italy, France, Russia, Poland or even Holland and Sweden'.[91] Cowie also suggested of British films that 'they are also highly regarded by continental critics'.[92] He noticed that 'Intellectual interest in France has been roused by the making of *Sparrows Cant Sing*, *This Sporting Life*, *Billy Liar* and others'.[93] For Cowie, the British social realist cinema was more akin to the work of the Italian auteurs than those of France. For him the British work was neo-realist and 'British 'neo-realism' may prove to be as influential as its Italian forebear'.[94] Peter Cowie's perception of the British new wave was certainly as one of artistic sensibilities, for him:

> 'The neo-realist work of our more talented directors has pointed to acute observation on their part, and the men who are going to be the 'faces of 1963' are those who shoot their films not necessarily in grimy streets but with a sense of what life is really like throughout Britain - whether it be the lower or the higher classes - and of the social and economic conditions out of which the neo-realist movement (as in Italy) arose'[95]

[91] Peter Cowie. "Face of '63". In: *Films and Filming* 9.5 (1963), pp. 19–20, p. 19.
[92] Ibid., p. 19.
[93] Ibid., p. 19.
[94] Ibid., p. 20.
[95] Ibid., p. 20.

War-time posterity and fascist oppression saw a post-war explosion of creativity and expression resulting in the Italian neorealist movement. Railing against the war-time inhibitions of the people and against the classical Italian cinema these directors set out to create an 'art-cinema' of their own.

In their edited volume, *Italian Neorealism and Global Cinema*, Ruberto and Wilson define the movement as, 'a new form of realism, something utterly different from anything produced during or before Fascism'.[96] They go on to point out that 'scholars and critics' saw the prominent post-war Italian directors as 'working against a dominant Hollywood studio film paradigm that had reached the continent well before the war, and had, in particular, already penetrated the Italian movie houses'.[97] Thus it can be seen that Italian neorealism was the staple of art-cinema throughout the 1950s. The problems this movement began to encounter in the late 50s was its failure to advance and progress its creative output.

In an observation of the mood of creativity sparked by the turn of the 1960s, French critic Pierre Leprohon wrote,

> The movement that was to revolutionise the cinema around 1960 was an international phenomenon. In most of the producing countries, the old formulas were becoming worn out, and new styles were emerging. A new generation of directors bore witness to a general need for breaking out of what had be come an archaic mould[98]

Echoing the idea of 'railing against' current trends, and in particular reference to the work of the Italian directors, Leprohon commented that,

[96]Laura E. Ruberto and Kristi M. Wilson. "Introduction". In: *Italian Neorealism and Global Cinemas*. Ed. by Laura E. Ruberto and Kristi M. Wilson. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2007, p. 6.

[97]Ibid., p. 6.

[98]Pierre Leprohon. *The Italian Cinema*. Translated from the French by Roger Greaves and Oliver Stallybrass. London: Secker and Warburg, 1972, p. 167.

> In Britain, the birth of Free Cinema raised hopes of a renaissance. In France, the *nouvelle vague* rushed in where the older generations feared to tread. In Italy, by a contrast, after the brief slump at the close of the 1950s, the invoking impetus came from the establishment: from Antonioni, Fellini, Visconti and Rosselini[99]

Whilst for many, the turn of the decade, and 1959 in particular, will be remembered as the year of the French *Nouvelle Vague*, for Leprohon, 'the year 1960 will always be remembered as that of *L'Avventura* and *La Dolce Vita*'.[100] Leprohon suggested that these two landmark films would prove the artistic credentials of these two directors. Suggesting the lasting impact of Fellini, Leprohon observed that, 'Fellini is more comprehensively, indeed uncompromisingly, satirical, and even his bitterest enemies are bound to recognise the sheer force of his satire'.[101] The crux of Leprohon's praise of these two films was, 'the fact that these two films shocked people out of their preconceptions about what a film was or ought to be. Indeed the impact of the themes was due largely to to this fundamental departure from convention and its effect on audiences'.[102]

Following the release of *L'Avventura* (1960), in an article praising the director, 'Antonioni is the kind of artist who is incapable of doing anything clumsily',[103] Richard Roud noted that Antonioni's achievements were still yet to be recognised in Britain. Roud suggested that,

> In France and Italy, Michelangelo Antonioni has always been a minority taste; in England, with the exception of *Le Amiche*, his films are unknown. But, [...] one hopes, the triumph of *L'Avventura* may lead to an interest in Antonioni's earlier films[104]

[99]Ibid., p. 167.
[100]Ibid., p. 167.
[101]Ibid., p. 168.
[102]Ibid., p. 170.
[103]Richard Roud. "Five Films". In: *Sight & Sound* 30.1 (1960/1961), pp. 8–11, p. 11.
[104]Ibid., p. 8.

By 1960, Michelangelo Antonioni had already crafted an outstanding catalogue of films. He had begun shooting short films in the 1940s the first of which, the 10 minute, *Gente Del Po* (1947), was a semi-documentary made with non-professional actors. Antonioni then made several other shorts concerning working-class subjects such as dustmen of *Netezza Urbana* (1948). Geoffrey Nowell-Smith declared in 1961, after the release of Antonioni's *La Notte* (1961) that,

> Neo-realism at its purest, in DeSica, Visconti or De Santis, set out not only to describe life but to interpret history. But history refused to be rewritten, the revolution did not materialise, and neo-realism petered out. Antonioni is the inheritor of this failure[105]

Whilst John Francis Lane reads Antonioni's work as, "'outside" of the social current of the realist Italian cinema',[106] Antonioni himself too saw his work as removed from the neo-realists. Antonioni's career in the cinema started with his working as assistant to Rossellini, Visconti and De Santis, and scriptwriting for Fellini. Antonioni has identified that, 'the first time I ever went behind a camera [...] was in a lunatic asylum. I was determined to shoot a real-life documentery'.[107] And furthermore, speaking about his first film, the documentary short, *Gente del Po* (1947), Antonioni claimed that, 'this short really did go some way towards anticipating the neo-realist films'.[108]

In his first feature length film *Cornaca di une Amore* (1950), he began to move away from his treatment of the working-classes by exploring middle-

[105]Geoffrey Nowell-Smith. "La Notte". In: *Sight & Sound* 31.1 (1961/1962), pp. 28–31, p. 28.
[106]John Francis Lane. "Exploring the World Inside: An analysis of Michelangelo Antonioni's work for the cinema". In: *Films and Filming* (1961), pp. 9 & 45, p. 9.
[107]Antonioni quoted in Michèle Manceaux. "An Interview with Antonioni". In: *Sight & Sound* 30.1 (1960/1961), pp. 4–8, p. 5.
[108]Ibid., p. 5.

class love affairs, mystery and death. His second feature film was *I Vinti* (1952), a three part social commentary on the problems of juvenile delinquency and misspent youth. It wasn't until *Le Amiche* (1955) however, that Antonioni began to develop what is widely recognised as the 'Antonioni Style'.[109] *Le Amiche* exhibited a somewhat radical use of long shots and slow takes, connecting the seemingly incongruent sequences of a very episodic film. This style of using slow paced, yet fruitful, highly detailed shots was to be the foundation for his first international success in his film *L'Avventura* (1960). The film however premiered at the Cannes International Film Festival in 1960 to a mixed, yet predominantly unfortunate response. A large portion of the audience found the film less than satisfactory, many of them booing, whilst the remainder found it to be a tour de force as evidenced by the nomination of the film for the Cannes Film Fesatival's *Palm d'Or* and its success in achieving the Jury Prize. The film pivots around the disappearance of Anna, one of a group of friends on a yacht trip, who goes missing whilst the group take a nap on the small volcanic island Lisca Bianca. Interestingly within this film, not only does Anna never again resurface but the importance of her disappearance slowly degrades as her friends are distracted by a love affair. According to Geoffrey Nowell-Smith, the 'scandal' of this film's reception was in response to the extremely popular Italian actress Lea Massari's disappearance from the screen and her replacement by the 'slightly horse-faced' Monica Vitti.[110] Nowell-Smith calls her disappearance, 'a negative, nagging suspense, an absence which is never filled'.[111] *L'Avventura* not only sparked international interest for the director but also sparked his affair with Monica Vitti. Vitti went on to join Antonioni again for his films, *La Notte* (1961), *L'Eclisse* (1962) and *Il Deserto Rosso* (1964), often grouped with *L'Avventura* as a stylistic and thematic tetralogy.

[109]Seymour Chatman. *Antonioni, or, the surface of the world*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985, p. 154.
[110]Geoffrey Nowell-Smith. *L'avventura*. London: British Film Institute, 1997, p. 13.
[111]Ibid., p. 13.

Exploring Michelangelo Antonioni's critical reception in Britain, in the Winter 1960/1961 issue of *Sight & Sound* Antonioni's *L'Avventura* was voted number two in the list of the 'Ten Best Films in Cinema History' where in the list of voting by director Antonioni came fifth.[112] Marsha Kinder suggested of his work that, 'Antonioni is primarily concerned with the influence of external conditions on the interior life of his characters',[113] and observed the development throughout Antonioni's first four major films that, 'there is a growing recognition of and emphasis on the values of the new world: they are almost absent from *L'Avventura*, clearly present in *La Notte* and *L'Eclisse*, and receive considerable attention in *Red Desert*.[114] Thus for Kinder, Antonioni is a strongly developing director who exhibits, 'the essence of artistic control'.[115] For Peter John Dyer, *L'Avventura* was an 'epoch-making' film which, 'is visually coherent and rewarding to a degree unmatched in the Italian cinema since *Ossessione* and *La Terre Trema*'.[116] In his praise of the film, Dyer went on to proclaim Antonioni, 'an inimitable, unique director - one of the handful who can claim to have extended the frontiers of the camera with a film of complete sincerity, maturity and creative intuition'.[117]

Over emphatic and somewhat unequalled praise for Antonioni continued continued into the reception of his next film, *La Notte*, which Geoffrey Nowell-Smith called, 'unpredictable genius equal to that of Welles',[118] and imbued his work with, 'the traditional Antonioni trademark'.[119] For Smith, *La Notte* is most certainly artistically significant cinema. Making a strong distinction of Antonioni as a discernibly artistic director, and in so doing, terming the

[112]N.A. "Top / Ten". In: *Sight & Sound* 31.1 (1962/1962), pp. 10–14, p. 10.
[113]Marsha Kinder. "Antonioni in Transit". In: *Sight & Sound* 36.3 (1967), pp. 132–137, p. 133.
[114]Ibid., p. 133.
[115]Ibid., p. 137.
[116]Peter John Dyer. "Avventura, L' The Adventure, Italy/France, 1959-1960". In: *Monthly Film Bulletin* 28.324/335 (1961), p. 2, p. 2.
[117]Ibid., p. 2.
[118]Nowell-Smith, "La Notte", op. cit., p. 29.
[119]Ibid., p. 29.

film one which stimulates the mind, he claimed:

> The absence of theme music; the sparing use of close-ups, and then only as part of a series of movements; Antonioni's autocratic direction of the actors; and above all the terrifying lucidity of the characters themselves, are all classical features whose effect is to stimulate the mind rather than play the emotions[120]

Antonioni's films are often built upon the idea of introspective, personal study, and contemplation of the individual condition. Whilst John Francis Lane observed that, 'In Antonioni's films, a barrier of "incommunicability" is deliberately set up',[121] Robin Bean complained of this as distracting from Antonioni's work. Bean warned that Antonioni's 'in-bred' thinking, 'was developing into a kind of non-art, turning people into almost inanimate objects drained of human emotion'.[122] Although revealingly, for Bean, 'The exception was *La Notte*'.[123] Peter John Dyer observed too that, 'More often than reviewers care or have space to admit, a film as individual and caustic as *La Notte* may leave them in a state of uncertainty'.[124] As well received as *La Notte* was, Dyer suggested that:

> One cannot lose oneself in the film as one could with the magic, mysterious, stumbling pilgrimage of *L'Avventura*. Such concentration as *La Notte* acquires and represents so unremittingly requires several viewings to make its full effect, unstrained; at one viewing it comes dangerously close to a parody of classical determinism'[125]

[120]Ibid., p. 31.
[121]Lane, "Exploring the World Inside: An analysis of Michelangelo Antonioni's work for the cinema", op. cit., p. 9.
[122]Robin Bean. "Blow Up". In: *Films and Filming* 13.8 (1967), p. 24, p. 24.
[123]Ibid., p. 24.
[124]Peter John Dyer. "Notte, La (The Night), Italy/France, 1960". In: *Monthly Film Bulletin* 29.336/347 (1962), p. 34, p. 34.
[125]Ibid., p. 34.

Dyer however went on to praise Antonioni in regard to this film, claiming, 'How splendid it is to find at least one established director who can commit himself to perpetual renewal of an obsessive theme [...] and rejecting all compromise'.[126]

Antonioni followed *La Notte* with *L'Eclisse*, a film about which John Russell Taylor claimed, 'Antonioni has constructed his most severe and rigorously disciplined film yet'.[127] Observing the general reaction by British critics to the film, Taylor contended that,

> Far from being the gloomy and depressing picture of emotional and spiritual aridity that a number of critics have chosen to regard it, *L'Eclisse* is a full length portrait of someone vibrantly alive[128]

L'Eclisse is the story of Vittoria's slow paced and noncommittal love affair with the shallow and materialistic stockbroker Piero; a relationship which was doomed from the beginning. Despite its 'gloomy and depressing' reception, for Taylor, 'what one comes away with is an impression of shimmering visual beauty'.[129] Marsha Kinder too suggests that, 'in *L'Eclisse*, the pace is essential to the meaning'.[130]

Penelope Houston went so far as to suggest that, in defence of the film, 'people are so obsessed with the idea of gloom hanging like a thundercloud over Antonioni's films'.[131] Houston points out one critic's reaction to the film who observed a building on the street corner as 'derelict' which was quite clearly under construction, a metaphor, Houston proposes, for Antonioni's screen world which is in the process of being established.[132] Houston praised Antonioni's use of juxtaposition and opposition in the film,

[126]Ibid., p. 34.
[127]John Russell Taylor. "Eclisse, L' (The Eclipse), Italy/France, 1962". In: *Monthly Film Bulletin* 30.348/359 (1963), pp. 30–31, p. 30.
[128]Ibid., p. 31.
[129]Ibid., p. 31.
[130]Kinder, "Antonioni in Transit", op. cit., p. 136.
[131]Penelope Houston. "The Eclipse". In: *Sight & Sound* 32.2 (1963), pp. 90–91, p. 91.
[132]Ibid., p. 91.

> Antonioni's style has always been founded on juxtaposition of people and places. In *The Eclipse*, however, juxtaposition has become fusion; the two landscapes are made one, the visual imagery and the mental imagery effortlessly interlock[133]

Peter Lennon observed that Michelangelo Antonioni's *L'Eclisse*, 'was greeted as his work generally is at festivals by a restless audience, shifting their feet, talking and letting off the odd impatient whistle'.[134] Antonioni's film was received in Britain as, 'difficult'[135] and that with this film, 'the patience of the ordinary cinema audience will be almost more tried than in his last three films',[136] whilst John Francis Lane reported that *L'Eclisse*:

> has been greeted in Cannes with whistles at its morning showing with ironic applause in the wrong places in the evening and with a real avalanche of boos and jeers on the last night of the Festival[137]

Lane however, goes on to celebrate the fact that, ' a lot of people still consider "The Eclipse" the most original and poetic work seen here in over two weeks of film going'.[138]

[133]Ibid., p. 91.
[134]Peter Lennon. "Judgement on the Cannes Film Festival". In: *The Guardian* May 25th (1962), p. 11, p. 11.
[135]N.A. "Antonioni uses Rome as One Large Studio". In: *The Times* October 18th.55215 (1961), p. 20, p. 20.
[136]Ibid., p. 20.
[137]John Francis Lane. "Controversy on the Croisette". In: *The Observer* May 27th (1962), p. 27, p. 27.
[138]Ibid., p. 27.

3.2.1 The Case of Federico Fellini

Just as for Leprohon, 'the year 1960 will always be remembered as that of *L'Avventura* and *La Dolce Vita*',[139] in 1960, *Sight & Sound* invited Italian film critic, Morando Morandini to write an article about the contemporary Italian cinema which he titled, 'The Year of *La Dolce Vita*'.[140] John Russell Taylor too associated both Fellini and Antonioni as being born from a similar situation and in turn giving birth to a new Italian cinema of the 1960s. Talyor, however, saw the distinction between these two powerful directors, suggesting their working, whilst contemporaneously, very divergently, claiming that, 'one could hardly imagine two more unlikely people to emerge at the same time from the same movement as Federico Fellini and Michelangelo Antonioni'.[141] Taylor claimed that these two directors were,

> as different in temperament from each other as they were different in their respective approaches to the cinema from the current orthodoxy of the Italian film at that time[142]

Fellini's arrival in the cinema, one which 'was very modest, and caused no sort of stir at all',[143] began in the early 1940s with his collaboration as a script writer and assistant director with a number of the great neo-realist directors, most notably with Roberto Rossellini on *Roma, Citta Apperta* (1945). Nonetheless Fellini is perhaps best know for his films, *La Strada* (1954), *La Dolce Vita* and *8½*. Whilst *La Strada*, 'was an enormous success commercially',[144] on the other hand, it was a film about which John Russell Taylor said, '[*La Strada*] is, more overtly than any other of Fellini's films, a parable, and for that reason perhaps more liable to provoke violent

[139]Leprohon, *The Italian Cinema*, op. cit., p. 167.
[140]Morando Morandini. "*The Year of* La Dolce Vita". In: *Sight & Sound* 29.3 (1960), pp. 123–127.
[141]Taylor, *Cinema Eye, Cinema Ear: some key film-makers of the sixties*, op. cit., p. 52.
[142]Ibid., p. 52.
[143]Ibid., p. 16.
[144]Ibid., p. 26.

partisanship or violent hostility'.[145] It is easy to see the artistic dominance afforded Fellini by Taylor as, in 1964, he proposed, 'I doubt whether anyone else, given the script of *La Strada*, could have made it seem anything but tiresome and pretentious'.[146] *La Dolce Vita*, however, was seen as Fellini's 'largest and in many ways his most controversial film to date'.[147] Morando Morandini too observed this sentiment, as he highlighted:

> With public debates everywhere, leading articles, questions in parliament, nine attacks from *Osservatore Romano*, the Vatican newspaper, *La Dolce Vita* has stirred up one of the most violent and far reaching of post-war Italian controversies[148]

Complaints and issues with the film had come from a myriad of directions, Eric Rhode suggested that, 'if *La Dolce Vita* had been less grandiose and more private and personal it might have worked'[149] and Taylor suggested that, 'the film has been so much misunderstood as a piece of savage social criticism'.[150] Moreover, whilst 'the Catholic Film Centre has classified it as "forbidden for all audiences"'[151] and 'Catholic Action has labelled it as blasphemous, pornographic, bestial and un-Italian',[152] Robert Vas, writing for *Monthly Film Bulletin* complained that *La Dolce Vita*, 'never succeeds in becoming a true *film d'auteur*. It bears a glittering visual design and surface brilliance, but this cannot in itself compensate for the lack of conviction and artistic depth'.[153] As *The Times* newspaper reported,

> at the Milan *premièr* the director was spat on by a neo-Fascist agitator and the cry of "Enough!" from some members of the

[145]Ibid., p. 27.
[146]Ibid., p. 27.
[147]Ibid., p. 37.
[148]Morandini, "*The Year of* La Dolce Vita", op. cit., p. 123.
[149]Eric Rhode. "LA DOLCE VITA". In: *Sight & Sound* 30.1 (1960/1961), pp. 34–35, p. 35.
[150]Taylor, *Cinema Eye, Cinema Ear: some key film-makers of the sixties*, op. cit., p. 43.
[151]Morandini, "*The Year of* La Dolce Vita", op. cit., p. 123.
[152]Ibid., p. 123.
[153]Robert Vas. "Dolce Vita, The (The Sweet Life), Italy/France, 1959-1960". In: *Monthly Film Bulletin* 28.324/335 (1961), pp. 4–5, p. 4.

> audience which punctuated the final scenes of orgy depicted in the film was taken up by the Vatican newspaper as the title for its preemptory demand to the Italian authorities to have the film withdrawn'[154]

Furthermore, and more incredibly so, 'After the Rome premièr, watched in glacial silence by the cream of Roman society, Fellini was challenged to a duel'.[155]

Despite the little bad press that this film had it was still enormously well received by critics in Britain, and elsewhere too. With the outrage that this film caused in its release it was still released with an admiration unmatched by any British film. Calling the film, 'an ironic final postscript to neo-realism'[156] Penelope Houston termed *La Dolce Vita* an, 'elaborate fresco of modern Rome, with its brilliance and its vulgarity, its assured sense of how to move people about on the screen and its facile symbolism'.[157] For Houston, the importance and impact of *La Dolce Vita* was such that the film, 'set its own fashions, as it added a new phrase to the international gossip columnists' vocabulary'.[158] Ninetta Jucker, critic for *The Guardian* noted that was, 'the biggest box-office success in Italy since "Bicycle Thieves"'.[159] Jucker appraised the film with the suggestion that, 'Some of the episodes are brilliantly told [...] Other scenes are tedious and over long and as an organic whole the film is less perfect than Fellini's other provincial poem, "I Vittelloni"'.[160]

Eric Rhode proposed that Fellini, was unable to save *La Dolce Vita* from being a *potage* of botched intentions, aimless in its plot and betraying a gossip column mawkishness in its approach to questions of morality, of sex

[154]N.A. "Vatican's Wrath Over New Film". In: *The Times* 54695 (1960), p. 7, p. 7.
[155]N.A. "Bitter taste of "La Dolce Vita": Furore over new Italian film". In: *The Guardian* February 25th (1960), p. 9, p. 9.
[156]Houston, *The Contemporary Cinema*, op. cit., p. 33.
[157]Ibid., pp. 32-33.
[158]Ibid., p. 33.
[159]Ninetta Jucker. "The Sweet Life". In: *The Guardian* March 31st (1960), p. 6, p. 6.
[160]Ibid., p. 6.

and religion'.[161]

Following *La Dolce Vita*, Fellini's next film was, *8½*. In an interview with *The Times*, when questioned what is to follow *La Dolce Vita* Fellini replied,

> it will probably seem even more arbitrary and disorganized than *La Dolce Vita*, and that it will try to explain and demonstrate the mysterious message the young girl of the beach at the end of *La Dolce Vita* signals to Marcello, and which he cannot, or will not, act on[162]

The result was a film which, 'placed Fellini alongside Antonioni, Bergman and Resnais in the pantheon of art-house cinema at its peak'.[163] This film, viewed by many in an attempt to rationalise the ambiguity of *La Dolce Vita* was better received. Peter John Dyer put forward, in reference to *8½*, 'if its mastery organisation of elusive and intricate detail doesn't argue intellect then once can only wonder what does'.[164] For Dyer, this was a film which, 'cannot fail to give all kinds of pleasure'.[165]

For Timothy Hyman, *8½* was an incredibly important film in the evolution of the new Italian cinema of the 1960s. He claimed, 'In 8½, Fellini renounced the political or social emphasis of neo-realism, and the new relation between the artist and the outer world that resulted has since become fundamental to much Italian cinema'.[166] He went so far as to praise the power of this significant art-film, suggesting that, 'watching 8½, one is peculiarly aware of film as a 'total art'.[167] For Hyman, *8½* is an key cultural marker in

[161]Eric Rhode. "8½". In: *Sight & Sound* 32.4 (1963), p. 193, p. 193.
[162]Federico Fellinin. "Fellini Films a Private World". In: *The Times* 54953 (1960), p. 15, p. 15.
[163]Raymond Durgnat. "Retrospective: 8½". In: *Monthly Film Bulletin* 57.672 (1990), pp. 26–27, p. 27.
[164]Peter John Dyer. "8½ (OTTO E MEZZO/EIGHT AND A HALF), Italy, 1962/3". In: *Monthly Film Bulletin* 30.348/359 (1963), p. 140, p. 14.
[165]Ibid., p. 14.
[166]Tomothy Hyman. "8½ As An Anatomy of Melancholy". In: *Sight & Sound* 43.3 (1974), pp. 172–175, p. 172.
[167]Ibid., p. 172.

the word of art-cinema in that it, 'defines the moment of perfect balance in Italian cinema'.[168]

Similarly remarkable and extraordinary praise for the film came from Suzanne Budgen, who heaped praise onto Fellini with her admiration for *8½*, a film which for her was:

> full of the most stunning images which even Fellini has ever produced, with, in short, an overwhelming physical presence, this is a film that assaults our senses, and demands to be seen a number of times if even a part of its treasure is to be explored[169]

Moreover, John Russell Taylor similarly received the film with enormous admiration, making the bold contention that, 'one has the feeling of instantaneous creation, an undivided and joyful process from the first conception to finished result. If that is not the mark of a great film-creator I don't know what is'.[170]

Without doubt, these film makers, François Truffaut, Jean-Luc Godard, Michelangelo Antonioni and Federico Fellini amongst many more of their national contemporaries, were fantastically well versed and expertly expressive art-cinema film makers. Patently, as evidenced by the power of these film makers and indeed it the reception of their films, it is not to be contended whether these powerfully dynamic and commanding directors were the producers of art-film or not. However, what is to be questioned is, as these films have been rationalised as art-films, and their receptions have been not tarnished nor undermined by discriminatory critical preference, whether these films were acting in any way different to that of Britain. Evidently, these films were nothing that British films were not. It has been seen that Tony Richardson's *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner* was as master-

[168]Ibid., p. 175.
[169]Suzanne Budgen. *Fellini*. London: BFI Education Department, 1966, p. 57.
[170]Taylor, *Cinema Eye, Cinema Ear: some key film-makers of the sixties*, op. cit., p. 51.

fully and artistically crafted in terms of mise-en-scène and cinematography as was Truffaut's *Les Quatre Cents Coups*, that Lindsay Anderson's *This Sporting Life* used revolutionary cinematic techniques which challenged the mainstream film making establishment and paved the new for new forms of British cinema as much as any element of the Italian cinema or the *nouvelle vague*. It remains to be seen that the preferential treatment by British critics of the European cinema was as result only of an exaggerated respect for the high social regard given to these films owing to their alienating foreign language and associated cultural elitism. An interesting angle on the powerfully artistic status of the British cinema will be explored throughout the next chapter. It shall be argued that the British cinema was clearly one of demonstrable artistic worth, as attested to by the migration of a large number of these European directors, unquestioningly afforded the mantel of art-film directors by the British press, to work here in Britain during the 1960s.

4.0 The Turn-Around: An exploration of the phenomenon of European Directors working in Britain

'Why don't British film-makers have strokes of genius like that?'[1]

Attributed with coining the term, in April 1966, *Time* magazine published an issue, the cover story for which was titled, 'London: The Swinging City'.[2] This article acutely observed that, 'This spring, film makers from all over the world have been attracted to London'.[3] Singling out Antonioni, the author remarked that, 'For the past several weeks, Michelangelo Antonioni has been prowling the streets of London, looking towards making a film on - of all things - the swinging London scene. His cryptic testimonial to what he has seen: "London offers the best and the worst in the world" '.[4] *Time* magazine went so far as to proclaim that, 'The London that has emerged is swinging, but in a far more profound way than the colourful and ebullient pop culture by itself would suggest'.[5] This sentiment became more and more accepted throughout the press and the idea of a Swinging London became somewhat magnetic for artists and filmmakers. Penelope Houston suggested:

French cinema swings; British cinema by French definition plods;

[1]Tom Milne. "Cul-de-Sac". In: *Sight & Sound* 35.3 (1966), pp. 146–147, p. 147.
[2]N.A. "Great Britain: You can walk across it on the grass". In: *Time: The Weekly News Magazine* 87.15 (1966), pp. 32–42.
[3]Ibid., 41B.
[4]Ibid., 41B.
[5]Ibid., p. 42.

> and years of disparaging references to the studios "*de sa Majesté*" have kept us firmly in our place. And now, suddenly, times have changed. Truffaut is at Pinewood; Kubrick at Elstree; Chaplin at Pinewood; Joe Losey and Dick Lester are in cutting-rooms with new pictures; Antonioni is scouting English locations. London looks disconcertingly like a world film-making capital[6]

What emerged from this European influence in British cinema is what can be termed, European driven British art-cinema. During this period, the films made by Roman Polanski, Michelangelo Antonioni, François Truffaut, Jean-Luc Godard and Jerzy Skolimowski, were British films by most definitions yet the engines in their production were the great auteur directors of the European cinemas. Whilst a number of European directors came to London to make films in the 1960s, the European influence in British film can be seen elsewhere within the cinema. European actors began to appear in the British cinema, such as Catherine Deneuve in *Repulsion* (1965) and Marcello Mastroianni in John Boorman's *Leo the Last* (1969). John Boorman, along with Ken Russell and Ken Loach is often remembered as one of the 'television men',[7] those who made a name for themselves in the British TV before breaking into feature film making. Boorman's feature film career began with *Catch Us If You Can* (1965), 'an intriguingly unusual teenage musical'[8] trying to cash in on the beatlemania craze which exploded the year before with Richard Lester's *A Hard Day's Night*. Boorman's life in film started with clear praise after a well received first film about which Elizabeth Sussex commented that, 'this is a director's picture from start to finish. Boorman's obvious feeling for the medium is rich in promise'.[9] Following this

[6]Penelope Houston. "England, Their England". In: *Sight & Sound* 35.2 (1966), pp. 54–56, p. 54.

[7]John Russell Taylor. "New Faces in British Cinema". In: *The Times* 57136 (1967), p. 17, p. 17.

[8]Elizabeth Sussex. "CATCH US IF YOU CAN, Great Britain, 1965". In: *Monthly Film Bulletin* 32.372/383 (1965), pp. 118–119, p. 118.

[9]Ibid., p. 119.

film Boorman headed to America with the two Lee Marvin vehicles, *Point Blank* (1967) and *Hell in the Pacific* (1968) followed closely by a triumphant return to Britain with *Leo the Last*.

It was observed, however, that Boorman retained his American sensibilities and these involuntarily manifest themselves within *Leo the Last*. Phillip Strick claimed of the film that, 'despite the Notting Hill accents, the film encapsulates the American nightmare, swallows it at a gulp, and tries valiantly to digest it'[10] and furthermore, Strick proposed that Boorman's film making, 'inspiration was again an American one'.[11] Despite these minor qualms, Strick still saw the film as significant cinema, putting forth that, '*Leo the Last* is certainly the boldest and most original British film in many a long month'.[12] Phillip Strick saw the film as similar to the work of that great Italian director, observing, 'Boorman, like Antonioni, is measuring a change in the wind and predicting that it will lay everything flat'.[13] Mike Wallington too saw Boorman as operating as, 'a distant cousin of Antonioni'.[14] Wallington saw Boorman's film as making a significant statement in the evolution of British cinema though for him, *Leo the Last* to some extent, imported a sense of the European cinema. Wallington evaluated the film, writing that it:

> corroborates his [Boorman's] undoubted talent and marks a significant event in British film-making: the grafting of a political realism (out of British documentary, Free Cinema, his own TV work, and the sociological dimension of his American films) to more European sensibilities (colour expressionism, some distinctly surreal imagery, and devices from the cinema of alien-

[10]Philip Strick. "LEO THE LAST". In: *Sight & Sound* 39.3 (1970), pp. 158–159, p. 158.
[11]Ibid., p. 159.
[12]Ibid., p. 159.
[13]Ibid., p. 158.
[14]Mike Wallington. "Leo the Last". In: *Monthly Film Bulletin* 37.432/443 (1970), p. 157, p. 157.

ation)[15]

This is a film which had been seen as making an enormous stride forward in British cinema, that stride being tantamount to a step towards Europe. The inclusion of Marcello Mastroianni in the lead role of this film stand simply to highlight the Europeanised edge to this film, imbued with a great deal of 'European sensibilities'.[16]

In 1965, Roman Polanski, the great Polish film director, came to Britain to direct three films, *Repulsion* (1965), *Cul-de-sac* (1966) and *Dance of the Vampires* (1969). These were films which along with François Truffaut's *Fahrenheit 451* (1966), Michelangelo Antonioni's *Blow-Up* (1966), Jean-Luc Godard's *Sympathy for the Devil* (1968) and, to an extent, Jerzy Skolimowski's *Deep End* (1970), mark a point in British cinema history which saw a previously unprecedented 'invasion' by European cinematic masters. These films marked a period of a new art-cinema for Britain, coinciding with the 1966 publication of the famed Time magazine cover story attributed with coining the term 'Swinging London'. As Raymond Durgnat called *Sympathy for the Devil*, 'Jean-Luc Godard meets Swinging London',[17] the same appellation is to be applied to the iconic milestone of the 'Swinging London' scene, *Blow-Up* (1966). During this period, in an air of artistic and creative climax in British cinema, a number of European 'masters' came to London to make films.[18]

[15]Ibid., p. 157.
[16]Ibid., p. 157.
[17]Raymond Durgnat. "One Plus One". In: *The Films of JEAN-LUC GODARD*. Ed. by Ian Cameron. London: Studio Vista Limited, 1969, pp. 178–183, p. 178.
[18]Whilst Jean-Luc Godard's *Sympathy for the Devil* and Jerzy Skolimowski's *Deep End* are analysed within a later chapter considering popular music in British art-cinema, Polanski's, Antonioni's, and Truffaut's contributions to this period of British art-cinema will be considered here.

4.1 The British Films of Roman Polanski

In reference to Roman Polanski's second English film, *Cul-de-Sac* (1966), Raymond Durgnat observed of British film production in the mid 1960s that:

> such are the ironies of our increasing cultural cosmopolitanism that this English film is a parody of a French adaptation of an American formula, yet is Polish to the core[19]

Polanski's film career began with a bang; following a number of short films made for the National Film Academy in Lodz, Polanski made his first feature film, the Polish, *Knife in the Water* (*Noz W Wodzie*) (1962). A film about a love triangle between a married couple and a young hitchhiker with whom they spend the day in their yatch out to sea, *Knife in the Water* was a largely well received film, about whose director Peter John Dyer lauded, 'Polanski is a holy terror of intelligent restraint - detached, ironic, playful as a cat with a mouse, encompassing with ease his alternations of the deathly serious and the dead-pan comic'.[20] Dyer went on to celebrate the film's imagery, saying that, achieves the kind of immobile chill which it usually needs a Bergman or an Antonioni to convey'.[21]

His first feature British film was, *Repulsion*, with Catherine Deneuve, who plays Carol, a young French woman who is obsessed with, though repulsed by men. The film follows Carol's descent into hallucinatory madness and murderous rage, surrounded by raw, rotting carcasses and hands reaching out of the walls to grab her whilst she is tortured by her nightly imaginigs of rape. Reading the 'repulsion' of this film as sexual, there is a suggestion here too of childhood sexual abuse at the climax of the film where Carol's deathlike

[19]Raymond Durgnat. "Cul De Sac". In: *Films and Filming* 12.10 (1966), p. 18, p. 18.
[20]Peter John Dyer. "London Festival". In: *Sight & Sound* 32.1 (1962/1963), pp. 20–23, p. 23.
[21]Ibid., p. 23.

trance gives way to a long, slow zoom into a family portrait with her standing behind the father figure, looking somewhat disturbed and disconcertingly his way.

In a particularly unfriendly review of *Repulsion* Peter John Dyer complained of the list of problems with the film, and the subject matter in particular, suggesting,'it hardly seems designed to cater for the taste of anyone other than a trained psychiatrist'.[22] For Dyer, 'the film remains an irresponsible fiction, compounded of chic reticence, sundry melodramatics [...] and an overall rhythm that is intolerably lethargic and portentous'.[23] Whilst complaining that the violent, cut throat razor murders of the film, 'have neither Hitchcock's chill deliberation nor Buñuel's compulsive savagery',[24] Dyer observed that the only praise to be given this film is that its director is suitably not British, 'Polanski has retained his quite un-English visual eloquence'.[25] Conversely, other critics found this film to be, 'Polanski at his best'.[26] Although Milne too questioned the nature of having a British film directed by a foreign director or suggesting that, 'Throughout this film, Polanski handles natural sounds with such exactness, and dialogue so clumsily, that one can only assume he has been thrown by having to direct in a foreign language'.[27] Polanski uses the natural sounds of this film to powerful effect, with telephones, doorbells and even church bells coming at specific moments to create the shocking tensions of the film. The dialogue however, it is to be understood, is delivered by both a French lead actress and supporting actress. Milne complained of the dialogue in the bar with Carol's boyfriend and his friends in particular, opposing, 'lewd dialogue [... which] sounds like music hall cross-talk'.[28]

[22]Peter John Dyer. "Repulsion". In: *Sight & Sound* 34.3 (1965), p. 146, p. 146.
[23]Ibid., p. 146.
[24]Ibid., p. 146.
[25]Ibid., p. 146.
[26]Tom Milne. "Repulsion, Great Britain, 1965". In: *Monthly Film Bulletin* 32.372/383 (1965), p. 107, p. 107.
[27]Ibid., p. 107.
[28]Ibid., p. 107.

Polanski's following film, *Cul-de-Sac* was received much better than his previous British art-film. Tom Milne's bold response to *Cul-de-Sac*, was the question, 'why don't British film-makers have strokes of genius like that?'.[29] Complementing his unfavourable review of the previous film, Milne observes of Polanski's newest film that his, 'command of the English language has matured rapidly since the hesitancies of *Repulsion*'.[30] For Milne, who felt that, 'the whole film is beautifully shot',[31] whilst observing that, 'the acting [...] is so uniformly good'[32] he goes on to praise one specific role, pointing out that, 'Donald Pleasance's performance is an astonishing tour de force'.[33] David Wilson, on the other hand, in a review of the converse attitude, suggested that, 'particularly irritating is the central performance of Donald Pleasance [...] it leaves only the impression of a sustained piece of self-indulgence, violently out of key with the more ordinary (and much more convincing) acting of Lionel Stander and the bored indifference of Françoise Dorléac'.[34] Both Milne and Wilson go on to compare the film with the work of British playwright and regular Joseph Losey writer, Harold Pinter. Wilson saw the dialogue of the film as, 'in the early scenes genuinely Pinteresque',[35] where Milne, more so, observed in reaction that, "Ah! Pinter' one cries',[36] questioning whether Polanski is to be seen as the, 'Pinter of Poland'.[37] For Colin McArthur too, one sees in *Cul-de-Sac* that, 'there is a stronger influence apparent [...] that of another dramatist of the absurd, Harold Pinter'.[38] For a critic who observed that, 'The weaknesses of *Repulsion* are few',[39] his impression of Polanski's second English film was that, 'Compared with the

[29]Idem, "Cul-de-Sac", op. cit., p. 147.
[30]Ibid., p. 146.
[31]Ibid., p. 146.
[32]Ibid., p. 146.
[33]Ibid., p. 146.
[34]David Wilson. "Cul-de-Sac, Great Britain, 1966". In: *Monthly Film Bulletin* 33.384/395 (1966), p. 103, p. 103.
[35]Ibid., p. 103.
[36]Milne, "Cul-de-Sac", op. cit., p. 146.
[37]Ibid., p. 146.
[38]Colin McArthur. "Polanski". In: *Sight & Sound* 38.1 (1968/1969), pp. 14–17, p. 15.
[39]Ibid., p. 15.

tightly constructed *Repulsion*, *Cul de Sac* seems sprawling and formless'.[40] McArthur's appraisal of Polanski's work, after the release of *Rosemary's Baby* (1968), the director's fifth feature film, was such that he felt that, '*Repulsion* remains Polanski's most interesting achievement'.[41]

Polanski's next film only figures here in brief as it was only part financed by British money (the rest being sourced from America) and was shot in Italy, that film being *Dance of the Vampires* (USA title, *The Fearless Vampire Killers: Pardon Me But Your Teeth Are In My Neck*). The film was not heavily commented upon in the British press and was received coldly as a mere spoof comedy. The America version was heavily cut and reduced by its producer to the point that Polanski had his name removed from this version.[42] *Monthly Film Bulletin* found the film to be unsuccessful on Polanski's part, observing that, 'Polanski is only semi-successful in this vampire send-up'.[43] For this reviewer, 'there is no horror in the film; therefore no suspense, and inevitably, some stretches of tedium'.[44] It was felt that this film was not a successful piece of significant cinema though indeed, it does stand as, 'an engaging oddity'.[45] Ivan Butler's 1970 book on Polanski's body of work on the other hand views the film quite conversely; Butler felt that, 'To dismiss *Dance of the Vampires* as no more than a parody of the horror film is to underrate it to an absurd degree'.[46]

Polanski is a European director Polanski whose art-film credentials are well understood and largely uncontested. What is of significance for the context of British art-cinema is that this director, whose films were 'beautifully shot' and were to be seen as 'strokes of genius', chose to work in Britain

[40]Ibid., p. 16.
[41]Ibid., p. 16.
[42]Ivan Butler. *The Cinema of Roman Polanski*. The International Film Guide Series. London: A. Zwemmer Limited, 1970, p. 117.
[43]Tom Milne. "Dance of the Vampires". In: *Monthly Film Bulletin* 36.420/431 (1969), pp. 4–5, p. 4.
[44]Ibid., p. 5.
[45]Ibid., p. 4.
[46]Butler, *The Cinema of Roman Polanski*, op. cit., p. 128.

with British subjects. For Polanski the connotations involved in producing a British film weren't such that necessitate a non-artistic production but can be seen as augmenting the reception of this astounding director's work.

Later within this burgeoning period for British film production, other great European film makers followed Polanski's example, one of the most noteworthy of which was the previously examined, outstandingly distinguished, Italian director, Michelangelo Antonioni.

4.2 The British Films of Michelangelo Antonioni

As it has been demonstrated, Michelangelo Antonioni was 'the kind of artist who is incapable of doing anything clumsily'.[47] Antonioni's work for the new Italian cinema of the early 1960s encompasses some of the most highly regarded art-films in the history of Italian cinema. Antonioni's art-house style and technique began with *Le Amiche* (1955), which exhibited a decided radical mixture of long shots and slow takes, connecting the seemingly incongruent sequences of an extraordinarily episodic film. This style of using slow paced, yet fruitful, highly detailed shots was to be the foundation for his first international success in his film *L'Avventura* (1960), a film which began the eminent series of *La Notte* (1961), *LEclisse* (1962) and *Il Deserto Rosso* (1964). Antonioni was seen as no less that, 'an inimitable, unique director - one of the handful who can claim to have extended the frontiers of the camera with a film of complete sincerity, maturity and creative intuition'.[48]

Antonioni's second feature length film making project, *I Vinti* (1952) was a trio of short films set in France, Italy and Britain respectively. These films, hinging on an exploration of juvenile delinquency experienced a great deal of censorship difficulty and were subsequently banned in each of the three countries. Roud criticised Antonioni in making this episodic film. For Roud, 'in spite of some remarkable and beautiful sequences, in the individual conflicts presented in the course of the three episodes seem to have struck no profound response from him [the director]'.[49] The English portion of the *I Vinti* trilogy however can be read as a fascinating foreshadowing of his only English feature film. This segment concerns a young artist's discovery of a

[47]Roud, "Five Films", op. cit., p. 11.
[48]Dyer, "Avventura, L' The Adventure, Italy/France, 1959-1960", op. cit., p. 2.
[49]Roud, "Five Films", op. cit., p. 9.

corpse in the bushes and ends, interestingly, on a shot of a game of tennis. Here, as in his most famous English language film, *Blow-Up* (1966), not all is as it seems though in this case a much more morbid tale of a homicidal, attention-craving poet with an overwhelming desire to be published ensues. Unfortunately, the film was not a success, as Roud observed, 'A generalised concern for social problems, however praiseworthy in the abstract, is not enough to make a convincing film'.[50]

Marsha Kinder, writing in 1967, observed that,

> After *Red Desert* many people claimed that Antonioni had reached a dead end, that he was obsessed with the same theme in all his films and probably would never be able to break from its confined path. Then came *Blow-Up*, which seems to be a radical departure both in theme and technique[51]

It is Antonioni's idiosyncratic treatment of film conventions which gives him his signature style and it is this disregard for the 'rules' which allowed his work to progress from *L'Avventura* to *La Notte*, *L'Eclisse*, *Il Deserto Rosso* and eventually to *Blow-Up*. In conversation with Charles Thomas Samuels, Antonioni said about his technique in photographing *Blow-Up* that, "I began taking liberties a long time ago: now its standard practice for most directors to ignore the rules".[52] Antonioni's breaking the rules and railing against the trappings of mainstream convention perfectly exemplify just how his works meet the definitions of art-cinema as determined within the Introduction. Antonioni's approach to the cinema and his inclusion of those indeterminate elements and characters are the aspects which specifically elevate his to the status of art-cinema. The convoluted and ambiguous ideas of distraction and abstraction throughout Antonioni's film, *Blow-Up* are those key elements in

[50]Ibid., p. 9.
[51]Kinder, "Antonioni in Transit", op. cit., p. 132.
[52]Michelangelo Antonioni. *Michelangelo Antonioni: Interviews*. Ed. by Bert Cardullo. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2008, p. 80.

identifying this film as significant and artistic. Distraction and abstraction, ideas that are commensurate with the concepts of the 'looser, more tenuous linkage of events than we find in the classical film'[53] used by Bordwell and Thompson as their intellectual yardstick by which one is to measure the achievements of art-cinema, and more so, Antonioni's *Blow-Up* can be seen to exhibit, perhaps more so than any other text mentioned here, 'psychologically ambivalent or confused characters'.[54] As such, throughout my analysis of *Blow-Up*, the elements of distraction and the ambiguous and ambivalent features of his cinematic landscape the are highlighted are explored in order to suggest the sheer artistic power of this seminal British art-film.

One of those 'liberties' which Antonioni takes in his films is his deployment of techniques of distraction, in terms of the narrative storyline, his characters, his audience and his filmic approaches. Thomas is distracted constantly throughout this film; he is distracted from talking to Ron by the nude romp with the teenage girls, distracted from sleeping with Jane by the arrival of the propeller, distracted from going to see Ron by the 'Yardbirds' sequence and distracted from going to photograph the body by Ron's drug orgy. The multitude of distractions and disruptions both thematic and cinematographic distract not only Thomas from his discovery but equally distract the viewer from comprehension. These distractions so evident within every aspect of the film create a sense of restlessness and irresolution which inform the narrative and prevent any kind of cohesion. This maintains a sense of mystery and ambiguity for the viewer. Following the drug induced episode in which Ron asks, "What did you see in that park?" and Thomas replies "Nothing", Chatman wrote that 'profoundly, it represents the inability of the mod individual, indeed of the entire subculture, to get anything of consequence done'.[55]

[53]Bordwell and Thompson, *The Classical Hollywood Cinema: film style and mode of production to 1960*, op. cit., p. 373.
[54]Ibid., p. 373.
[55]Chatman, *Antonioni, or, the surface of the world*, op. cit., p. 140.

Antonioni's method of echoing the protagonist's inability to maintain focus and drive through filmic technique inspires the audience themselves to mirror this distraction and deviation from a linear and focussed narrative. Just as Thomas cannot seem to get anything done, the audience cannot piece together the film's semantics. Equally for both the film and the audience, 'distraction is no longer simply a bad habit: it has become a way of life'.[56]

Antonioni's photographer leads a transient life in many senses of the word, to the extent of never even being named in the film. It seems that Thomas is heading perpetually in an unknown direction controlled by an intricate web of distractions and tangents. Thomas's focus lies at one moment on one point and then following some catalyst another point of interest seems to immediately preoccupy all attention.

The importance of the theme of distraction within this film is such that it occupies a great deal of the causality of the plot. For example, it is Thomas's 'distractable' nature which first leads him to the park in which his troubles begin and which will of course become his eventual cinematic demise. Whilst visiting the Antiques shop he wishes to purchase, Thomas steps outside to photograph it and whilst setting up his camera, notices the park over his shoulder. He then immediately abandons all preoccupation with the shop and ventures into the park. Returning from the park, the Antiques shop once again becomes paramount. Whilst talking figures (and Nepal) with the shop owner Thomas is distracted once more, mid-conversation, by a propeller he 'must have!'. It is this intricate web of distractions which propels the narrative. Though more importantly it appears that the ever-transient Thomas is himself propelled only by distraction.

[56]Ibid., p. 140.

Discussing Thomas's book Ron notices someone looking through the café window at them and Thomas watches the unidentified man try to open his car. He leaves the café in indignation as the man flees the scene. Thomas then get in his car, in complete disregard to the fact that he is in a meeting with his publisher and had ordered a meal and goes home. Here he not only abandons Ron but also the inquisitive gentleman in failing to follow through on his search for him. This element of distraction, moves the plot forward littering the narrative with convoluted loose ends. Entering his house he is interrupted by Jane who has come to collect the film from the park photos; this now is of foremost importance. The conversation that ensues provides further broken semantics. She insists that he give her the film whilst he distractedly asks whether she has done any modelling. He then, disregarding her desire for the film, deliberately distracts her with drugs and jazz. They chat, dance and smoke amicably, somewhat distracted from the matter at hand of the presumably condemning evidence caught on film. Antonioni's use of distracting techniques is absorbing. Dazed by Herbie Hancock and marijuana Jane becomes just another of the multitude of women at home in Thomas's studios. The music-filled, amicable atmosphere and Thomas's instructions to Jane "not like that, against the beat", echo the earlier photo shoot with Anushka. This relationship is no longer the heated, suspense-thriller norm but is just another part of Thomas's day-to-day schedule. The audience too have been distracted not only from the camera film but the entire grizzly matter of the corpse.

In the middle of the festivities the phone rings and Thomas's focus remains pointed at Vanessa until the ringing becomes so imperative that he must dive across the floor and bash his head in order to answer this vital call. Thomas's soliloquy is brilliantly employed in maintaining the mystery and uncertainty of the film. Withheld information, incongruency, indetermination and contradiction all combine in this tangental distraction in order

to utterly perplex the audience. Moreover it augments Thomas's already unreliable nature. He lies, he contradicts, he insults and if we are to believe that this woman is the person he spoke to from the phone box then he also connives in what planning the wife-on-the-telephone misdirection. Thomas, here and throughout the film, is unsure what the truth is himself. If Thomas, a man for whom his observational prowess is his livelyhood, cannot himself define reality then what is left for the audience but to struggle with the concept themselves. Antonioni, by creating a wealth of uncertainty throughout the film and withholding any resolution leaves the audience, like Thomas, hanging irresolutely in a limbo of incomprehension. We are barraged with questions and are given no opportunity to consider or digest. The audience are left to ponder having taken away a great sense of something having been exposed.

Thomas gives Jane her film, distracting her with a false one, at which point, achieving her essential goal, she simply discards it amongst her hand bag and proceeds to seduce the photographer. The two, now topless, and utterly distracted from wherever it was they began, are once more preoccupied when Thomas's 'must have' propeller arrives, to which he attributes the smallest amount of interest and dumps it in the studio.

On discovering the corpse in the extended 'blow up' sequence Thomas calls Ron and boasts he has saved someone's life, at which point in the phone call two girls arrive at the studio for their first session. Thomas is thoroughly distracted from his call to Ron and leaves him on the line occupying himself completely with the two girls whom he asks to make coffee (which, suitably, never materialises). Distracted by a nude sex romp Thomas once more removes himself entirely from the apparent - with the overtones of uncertainty and possible delusion - murder. Following his romp with the two young girls Thomas comes to realise (correctly or not) that there is a corpse in the photos and he has not in fact saved someone's life but simply witnessed a

murder. Having realised this he goes to the park in order to confirm for himself that there is a corpse. On discovery of the corpse he returns home and is distracted from deep thought by the sight of Bill and his partner having sex. Sarah Miles' character comes through to talk to Thomas in one of the most concise examples of distraction in the film. Here the conversation, like Thomas's soliloquy about his wife, is littered with contradiction, distraction and disregard. He informs her that he 'saw a man killed today, shot in some kind of park' to which she asks 'what happened?' Perplexing here is Thomas's answer of, 'I don't know, I didn't see', in direct contradiction to his prior, more confident statement. Thomas's account of events then is unreliable. Given that the audience experiences events from the perspective of this unreliable guide then it remains to be deduced that our own impressions are indeed also to be questioned. Thomas asks Patricia about the problem she is having to which she muses, 'I wonder why they shot him' and absent-mindedly wanders off.

On his way to find Ron he sees Jane's mysterious woman on the street and pulls over to find her. In complete distraction he hears music coming from the 'Ricky Tick' club and despite the corpse lying in the bushes, decides to enter. In the club, the Yardbirds' guitarist breaks his guitar and throws it into the crowd. Thomas decides, like the propeller, he must have it, and once he has, like the propeller, he no longer wants it and so discards it upon the street. Once again it seems that distraction leads only to its next instance. Like Godard's iconic Michel Poiccard using his last Gauloise only to light the next, it is not the cigarette but the smoking he desires. Similarly, the propeller and the guitar are indeterminate objects of no consequence; they simply allow Thomas to progress to the next distraction.

He makes it to the house at which Ron is enjoying a party. Here he insists that Ron (who is intoxicated) come to the park to witness the body. Interestingly, under interrogation, Thomas's reply to Ron's question of, 'What

did you see in the park?' is 'Nothing'. Once more Thomas's observations are revealed as temperamental and as always unreliable throwing immediately into question the audience's own conclusions.

Antonioni and his cinematographer Carlo di Palmer use the micro elements of film to great effect within *Blow-Up*. The cinematography, mise-en-scène and editing are used in the same way that Antonioni subverts the possibility of meaning to perpetuate the mystery of the film through disorientation and distraction. Immediately at the outset of the film Antonioni's radical editing techniques begin to confuse the cinematic semantics. The film opens with the credits displayed over grass; an interesting precursor to the film's ending immediately suggesting a temporal dislocation. One is able to ask whether this film begins or ends with the disappearance of Thomas. Moreover, within the lettering of the credits we can see Antonioni's use of bizarre and almost surreal situations in a curious scene in which a model stands on a roof top whilst a crowd and a photographer look on. Beyond this extraordinary visual technique, the sequence is unusual in itself; the photographer is not taking pictures and neither model nor photographer feature later within the film. Furthermore, it is true to say that here, like elsewhere in the film, the actions are indefinable; this could be a model on a photo shoot though could quite as easily be a woman threatening to jump from a roof.

Directly after the credits, the film has an abrupt change in pace at which the RAG Week mimes hastily enter and explore the screen. The editing rapidly cuts to a juxtaposed, still and quiet shot of the doss-house. This sequence of homeless people exiting the doss-house acts as a counter rhythm to the fast-paced Mimes and immediately seems out of place. In an act of disruption this sequence breaks up the viewing experience and gives the film its inharmonious feeling which creates the sense of dislocation which in turn maintains the themes of both mystery and uncertainty within *Blow-Up*.

Antonioni also uses cinematography in a disruptive manner in order to

further the idea of an inharmonious impression given by the film. The footage is often shot through a complex usage of internal framing, the first example of which is the intricate opening credit sequence. From the sequence under the bridge outside the doss-house where the frame appears disconcertingly rounded, to the homely portion of Thomas's studio where low beams constantly disrupt, dissect and undermine the frame, *Blow-Up* relentlessly deconstructs our accepted perceptions of filmic appearance.

Thomas's studio invites a detailed analysis of Antonioni's disruptive cinematography. Thomas and the woman from the park are shot from a multitude of obscure angles, above, below and in between isometric frames. At one point there is a shot of the two in which the frame is interrupted from their waists upward giving us only half a screen. This internal framing and disruptive cinematography creates frames within frames, building layers of images upon each other just as meaning is layered within the film. In its multiplicity of images this internal framing technique suggests a multiplicity of meaning, which in turn permits the audience to perceive that, with numerous possible interpretations, what one sees in this film is not necessarily what it seems. Comparably, the heavy presence of mirrors and reflection within the film provokes a similar reaction. An example of this is the sequence in which Thomas photographs the large group of models through the reflective dividers. Here the audience is presented with an extremely disorientating multitude of images reflecting upon one another, distorting scale and perspective. This causes the audience, in prefiguring Thomas's struggle with the corpse, to consider which image is real and which is a reflection, which is at the correct scale and which image is in the correct place. Interestingly, as the protagonist questions his perceived reality so does the audience question theirs. Patently, Thomas must question what he sees as it is his wavering confidence in his own visual judgement which provides the film's central narrative but it is the constant visual destabilisation which the

audience experiences that gives the film its powerful ambiguity.

Antonioni's technique is to offer up a number of fragments for possible meanings and interpretations and not to offer resolution. That is to say that Antonioni, by opening up the film to such a wide spectrum of interpretation, clouds individual judgements to the point of equivocacy. The audience are shrouded in indecision, all the while augmenting the sense of uncertainty the film sustains.

This technique is a question of sight ironically and appropriately for a film about a photographer who can't see what's going on. Blow-Up is an ontological exploration of what one man does or does not see and beyond the narrative detail Antonioni explores the individual's ability to observe and indeed to comprehend. Antonioni's cinematographic techniques serve to tamper with what we see. An obtrusive mise-en-scène disrupts our line of sight, mirrors and reflections question the veracity of the images we see and indeterminate objects question our ability really observe. He uses this technique also to disorientate the audience to the same effect. For example, when Thomas is driving out to the Antiques shop the cinematography, shot from the back of the car, is unnerving. The camera zooms in, pans, circles the frame and then zooms out again all in an instant. Shot from the back of a moving car this technique is unsettling to the point of being almost surreal. This, coupled with the seemingly over saturated, intensely red buildings, serves to create somewhat of a visual hyper-reality. The sequence has an air of the fantastic and in addition, echoes the intoxication which so inhibits and distracts both Ron and Thomas later in the film.

Just as the shots behind the credits of the film's opening are indefinable, so the landscape into which the mimes drive is also an indeterminate one. Grey, isometric and diametrically opposed to the colourful and restless mimes, the buildings could be London office blocks or derelict foreign homes. In further

undermining our confidence in our own sight Antonioni has the audience questioning what it is that they are looking at. By leaving visuals undefined (as he does his semantics) Antonioni once more abandons his audience in a sea of ambiguity; left to ponder.

The CND campaigners are also indeterminate. Most are petitioning 'NO NO' and 'NOT THIS!' but one individual, in classic Antonionian misdirection, is carrying a sign saying 'ON ON',an upside down 'NO NO'. These incongruent images and objects are encumbering to the point of perplexity. This clear lack of distinctions is instrumental in creating the ambiguity inherent in the film.

Thomas's studio is another example of an indeterminate space. His studio is labyrinthine and perplexing. It is made of walkways, rooms that all lead to the front door and a layout that seems invariably different each time he returns home. All this and from the outside it appears as simply number 39 in a terrace. The best example of indeterminacy within the film is of course the body which Thomas may or may not have seen in the park. Thomas's blow-ups are clearly indeterminate. Interestingly, as Patricia says about Thomas's picture of the corpse, 'it looks just like one of Bill's paintings'. In fact, a visual signifier of the painter's influence on Thomas's art comes as his triple blow-up showing the supposed corpse, almost completely lacking in detail, perfectly resembles Bill's latest work, the one to which he has yet to apply meaning and 'find something to hang on to'. Interestingly, the most recent thing which Bill finds to hang onto in one of his paintings is a limb: 'like that leg'. Bill goes on to say that he discovers elements within his paintings 'like finding a clue in a detective story'. A parallel which further blurs distinctions within Blow-Up is Thomas's actions as directly echoing those of his painter friend. Once more the audience ask a question to which there is no answer: is it Thomas who finds a body in an indistinguishable image or is it Bill? Mirroring the tennis court sequence, this can be read

as a further unsettling example of Thomas's readiness to alter his subjective reality in absorbing elements from elsewhere. The parallels here permit one to question whether Thomas saw a corpse at all, leaving them instilled with the film's ubiquitous ambiguity.

4.3 François Truffaut and the Adaptation of Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* (1966)

"Is it because we're having so much fun at home that we've forgotten the world?"[57]

As with Roman Polanski and Michelangelo Antonioni discussed in the previous chapters, in 1996 François Truffaut, a giant in the field of European art-cinema and a leading proponent of the French *nouvelle vague*, came to Britain to make *Fahrenheit 451*. This British film whilst directed by such European pedigree, stands to be received extremely well by British press. the very fact that Truffaut, and indeed Polanski, Antonioni, Godard and Skolimowski, came to Britain to make films carries a great deal of weight, primarily as it attests to the air of artistic creativity alive in the country at this time.

One of the more powerful, consequential and indeed predominant themes throughout Ray Bradbury's narrative it the idea that television is used by the state as a means of thought control and tranquilliser. As Faber so acutely observed of society in the novel, "Who has ever torn himself from the claw that encloses you when you drop a seed in a TV parlour? It grows you any shape it wishes! It is an environment as real as the world. It becomes and is the truth.[58]

Whilst it is an important aspect of Bradbury's narrative, Truffaut's film builds its impact upon the suggestion that television has an enormous negative impact upon society. It was indeed a bold move for a film to propose that a visual, mass media information delivery system should be subordinate

[57]Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, op. cit., p. 81.
[58]Ibid., p. 92.

to the more intellectual text; the book, the word. In fact Ray Bradbury himself commented that, 'a man falling in love with books. That's a fantastic theme for a film! How dare they be so intellectual!'.[59] In a mocking nod towards both the interdiction of the written word and the over-proliferation of television in modern society, after credits that are spoken and not printed, Truffaut's film opens with a montage of television aerials atop houses. In his 1964 book 'Understanding Media', Marshall McLuhan suggested that, 'as a cool medium TV has, some feel, introduced a kind of *rigor mortis* into the body politic'.[60] As Penelope Houston acutely observed, 'In the future posited by Fahrenheit 451 (Rank) television is the master'.[61]

Bradbury's novel is an anti-popular culture piece of satire attacking, in parable fashion, a futuristic society which is so anti-intellectual as to ban the reading of books; as Montag thoughtlessly regurgitates the political dictum, "Books disturb people, they make them anti-social". Building upon McLuhan's statement, Montag's brainwashed statement is just as easily applied to the effect of television, initiating this sense of the damaging influence of television is an integral motif to Bradbury's narrative. Mrs. Montag's friends Mrs. Bowles and Mrs. Phelps discuss, in cold, utilitarian fashion, the impact of having children, two of which the former has had by Caesarian section, "no use going through all that agony for a baby".[62] This element of Bradbury's narrative is crucial in highlighting the anti-social mindset this community holds. Mrs Bowles talks prophetically of pacifying her children by use of the television, "you heave them into the "parlour" and turn the switch. Its like washing clothes".[63] This enormously impersonal approach to parenting, the classification of parental duty as tantamount to menial household chores akin to the emotional investment required in turning on the washing

[59]Ray Bradbury quoted in Thomas Atkins. "The Illustrated Man". In: *Sight & Sound* 43.2 (1974), pp. 96–100, p. 99.
[60]Marshall McLuhan. *Understanding Media*. London: Routledge, 1964, p. 330.
[61]Houston, *The Contemporary Cinema*, op. cit., p. 42.
[62]Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, op. cit., p. 104.
[63]Ibid., p. 104.

machine is symptomatic of a society in which mass media 'entertainment' no longer entertains but simply narcotises.

As within the novel, television plays a large and important role within Truffaut's film. Another of Bradbury's seething attacks upon television, beautifully treated by Truffaut's film, comes in the form of the TV coverage of Montag's 'death'. In Truffaut's film the authorities, having lost the genuine Montag, stage his capture using a doppleganger of sorts, filming his faux demise as a thrilling capture. On screen 'Montag' leaps over railings, evades the helicopter, dodges bullets and hurtles down steps and through the streets in an exciting and suspense-filled performance. He is of course outsmarted by the authorities who capture and eliminate him at the door of the fire station, that vivid red icon of the enormity of the stranglehold of power over the people. This sensationalised sequence functions as gladiatorial entertainment for the digital age. Granger, known in the film only as 'The Journal of Henri Brulard' indicates that, "anybody will do to provide them with their climax", and so it is that innocent people are bodily sacrificed for the good of television and mass entertainment. What is most chillingly indicative of the importance afforded sufficiently exciting television for this society is the announcement made by the television voice-over declaring that, "a crime against society has been avenged". It is evidently more important that the masses are adequately satiated by their media sources than that allegedly 'dangerous' criminals be punished and brought to justice.

Besides the comic-strip newspapers, television is the only form of media seen to present the populace with information. Thus by association these comic-strips too act similarly as a biting commentary upon the devastating impact that the TV had. McLuhan suggests that TV hit the comic-book world extremely hard. He posited that comics:

> 'being low in definition, are a highly participational form of expression, perfectly adapted to the mosaic form of the newspaper.

> They provide, also, a sense of continuity from one day to the next. The individual news item is very low in information, and requires completion or fill-in by the reader, as exactly does the TV image, or the wirephoto'[64]

McLuhan championed this idea that the TV, in its moving-image mastery, so akin to that world of the comic-book, in its verisimilitude, yet more encompassing form, damaged the comic book industry. McLuhan suggested that:

> 'From the three million dots per second on the TV, the viewer is able to accept, in an iconic grasp, only a few dozen, seventy or so, from which to shape an image. The image thus made is as crude as that of the comics'[65]

Thus one reads Truffaut's inclusion of the comic-strip as the only form of print media within his *Fahrenheit 451* as an analogue for television, and its grossly damaging influence.

Truffaut's bleak film reads also as a quest for identity as it is Montag's quest for self discovery that punctuates this narrative. However, it is the influence, once again, of television and the parasitic media society that have caused these identity anxieties by 'normalising' society and by stripping the populace of individualism and therefore removing Montag's sense of identity; a wrong he strives to right through subversive intellectualism, "Intellectualism, of course, became the swear word it deserved to be".[66] Most interestingly, it is not until his perceived identity is entirely destroyed and consumed by his 'becoming' The Works of Edgar Allen Poe, that his journey can find peace and closure. This *Monthly Film Bulletin* critic too noted that, 'Truffaut's

[64]McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, op. cit., p. 177.
[65]Ibid., p. 176.
[66]Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, op. cit., p. 65.

Fireman is on a hunt for a real self, a hunt of which he only gradually becomes aware through his encounters with other people making similar, if sometimes less successful, journeys'.[67]

One of Truffaut's more stand-out decisions about the film is his use of Julie Christie to play both roles of Linda and of Clarisse. Speaking with Truffaut on the set of the film, David Robinson observed, regarding this casting choice that, 'Truffaut jokes that this was the idea of the producer (Lewis Allen); but in fact he is rather fascinated by the exercise of using the actress in a split Jekyll-and-Hyde role'.[68] Because these characters function as binary opposites within the story it is interesting that Robinson makes the Jekyll-and-Hyde connection. Linda, Mildred in the novel, functions as the locus of Truffaut's attack on the negative impact of mass media in the form of television. Television, throughout the film, directly and quite literally consumes Montag's wife Linda and, as Montag points out, 'all 200,000 Lindas in the whole country'. Television incapacitates Linda, and the entire TV viewing populous, by feeding her ego, integrating her into the 'family' and proclaiming, "Linda, you're absolutely fantastic!". Penelope Houston observed of Montag's wife, calling her, 'Linda the innocent conformist, drugged by life with her TV family and her boxes of pills'.[69]

Clarisse on the other hand acts as the free thinking rebel, in league with the owner of a secret library, about which Beatty astonishingly says, "only once before have I seen so many books in one place". It is Clarisse who introduces the idea of intellectual thought and indeed the radical idealism that fuels Montag's enlightening journey. Through the simple act of questioning in order to provoke thought, Clarisse asks why, and implants ideas in Montag's head by asking whether Montag reads the books he burns, questions

[67]P.J.S. "Fahrenheit 451, Great Britain, 1966". In: *Monthly Film Bulletin* 34.396/407 (1967), p. 3, p. 3.
[68]David Robinson. "Two for the Sci-Fi". In: *Sight & Sound* 35.2 (1966), pp. 57–61, p. 61.
[69]Houston, *The Contemporary Cinema*, op. cit., p. 42.

his inherent belief in what he does and poses, "are you happy?". By questioning the foundations of his beliefs she provokes within Montag the system of self-discovery and intellectual expansion that ignites his subsequent insurgent acts against propriety. Interestingly, Clarisse's home was the only house on the street that did not have a TV aerial and therefore the only home impervious to the penetrating influence of the mass media, thus Clarisse, who's attention is turned only towards literature and intellectual expansion, is a dangerous subversive. The semantic association is made here, between those individuals who refuse to conform by not giving themselves over to television and with those independent thinking revolutionaries.

By portraying both characters through a single actress one can read that whilst on the one hand the very difference between the two characters is magnified, on the other hand this method also acts to signify how easily associated these two different states of being are, supposing that in the future posited by Truffaut's *Fahrenheit 451*, there is a very fine line between dissident and conformist. Interestingly, Penelope Houston noted that, 'Truffaut's film views the future not as some alien machine world, but as the present subjected to a slight case of dislocation'.[70] In this sense, Truffaut's warning that there is very little distinction between the hardiest recusant and the most placid conformist can be read as a parable, strengthening the idea that the contemporary world of mass media, and television in particular, is in danger of turning the intellectual free thinker into nothing more than a media drugged conservative who longs only for more saturation and yet another TV wall-screen. Linda's captivation by these wall-screens is astounding. At the news of Montag's upcoming promotion and the prospect of a bigger house and a better standard of living, Linda replies, "I would rather have a second wall-screen. They say that when you have your second wall-screen it's like having your family grow out all around you". This attitude of familial devo-

[70]Ibid., p. 42.

tion to television, to the 'family', and to one's 'cousins', extends throughout the film, demonstrating television and its damaging effect to be Truffaut's pervading motif. Even when Montag breaks through his own inhibitions, under the influence of Clarisse, to bring himself to read a book, 'ironically, he reads by the light from the blank TV screen'.[71]

In addition to the use of Julie Christie for two roles, another of the more divergent elements of Truffaut's film adaptation is his ending. It is interesting here to draw comparisons of Truffaut's work to that of Tony Richardson. As explored within Chapter Two of this work, James M. Welsh, who approvingly titled Tony Richardson with, 'a special talent for adaptation'[72] went on to suggest that, 'Richardson's forte was adapting literary and dramatic works to the screen'.[73] As can be seen in defenes of the art-film credentials of Tony Richardson, often denigrated for his reliance on literary sources, Truffaut himself declared in regard to film adaptation, 'I consider an adaptation of value only when written by a man of the cinema'.[74]

Truffaut's adaptation, somewhere between the mode of transposition and commentary, follows Bradbury's narrative closely for the most part though takes the element of the pervading media influence on the populous and expands upon it for the cinema. On the question of fidelity Robinson commented that this film is, 'adapted faithfully in spirit if not altogether to the letter'.[75]

Truffaut's ending moves away from the book in a number of subtle ways, including the appearance of a young boy who's sobriquet for the book people's commune is 'Ray Bradbury's The Martian Chronicles'. The ending however, controverts the book's message in two more distinctly significant ways. The first of these relies on the film's abstaining from the mention

[71]Ibid., p. 42.
[72]Welsh, "Introduction", op. cit., p. 12.
[73]Ibid., p. 13.
[74]Truffaut, "A Certain Tendency in the French Cinema", op. cit., p. 229.
[75]Robinson, "Two for the Sci-Fi", op. cit., p. 609.

of 'war'. Bradbury's novel is set in a world which has, "Started and won two atomic wars since 1960"[76] and one in which war is once more declared. The impact of this decision to forego the theme of war is of consequence, firstly, as Truffaut's film is set in a future that is only marginally dislocated from the present. By eliminating this alien principle of a world torn apart by war, Truffaut's parable hits harder and indeed rings truer. The absence of war manifests itself most significantly within the film in that the city is not destroyed as it is within the novel. This altered ending performs an extremely gracious act in that it presents the audience with an element of hope. Despite assertions by some that, 'Truffaut's films are about loneliness, and Fahrenheit is, thematically the bleakest yet',[77] this film pivots upon a conflict of binary oppositions, primarily between those of cultural desolation and hope of salvation. Just as the commune of book people function within the novel, these literary men and women make up the last hope for a culturally and intellectually informed future. That the city is not eliminated is a tool through which Truffaut provides encouraging hope of salvation for the rest of the community.

Contrary to the novel's impetus, for the film's ending Clarisse reappears, having escaped persecution by the authorities. We see Clarisse evading capture by hiding in her uncle's attic and reappearing as 'The Memoirs of Saint-Simon', once Montag too has found the book people. Observing this element of the adaptation process, David Robinson similarly observed that:

> The ending in Truffaut's adaptation will be more cheerful, if not actually more optimistic than Bradbury's. Bradbury has Clarisse vanish for good within the first fifty pages of the book, and ends with Montag witnessing the atomic annihilation of the city from across the river. Truffaut it appears, will spare both Clarisse and

[76]Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, op. cit., p. 81.
[77]P.J.S, "Fahrenheit 451, Great Britain, 1966", op. cit., p. 3.

the city[78]

Robinson contends here that, 'Truffaut's adaptation will be more cheerful, if not actually more optimistic'.[79] However, quite conversely, Truffaut himself pointed out that due to the fact that the film, 'takes place in the world as we know it', it is to be seen as, 'a fable set in the digital age'.[80] This choice then does not manifest itself less optimistically but indeed more so. The diversion here comes across not as more cheerful but simply as suggestively redemptive.

In a 1974 interview about his film career Ray Bradbury lauded Truffaut's film, pronouncing, 'It's haunting, it's touching, it's beautiful, and it does a remarkable thing'.[81] The remarkable element of Truffaut's film for Bradbury is this updated ending; Bradbury sees what Truffaut has done as an injection of hope into the narrative. For Bradbury, 'The great thing about Fahrenheit 451 as a film is that it allows you choices; it allows you imagination. That ending is commensurate with the ending of Citizen Kane'.[82]

The moral lesson to be digested from Truffaut's film is that salvation is to be found by those who heed warning. Bradbury's novel provides no deliverance from the evils of modern media; for his city there will be no redemption, but simply, execution. This cinematic vision, whose cinematography and score 'are constant splendours',[83] of a future without destruction, where treasured acquaintances do not vanish but reappear, tells a much more optimistic story, but what is a parable without offer of redemption? Truffaut not only highlights society's road to destruction but in fact sheds light on a better path and offers direction. Whilst the film was largely celebrated, it was

[78]Robinson, "Two for the Sci-Fi", op. cit., p. 60.
[79]Ibid., p. 60.
[80]François Truffaut quoted in Robinson. "Two for the Sci-Fi". In: *Sight & Sound* 35.2 (1966), pp. 57–61, p. 60.
[81]Thomas Atkins, "The Illustrated Man", op. cit., p. 99.
[82]François Truffaut quoted in Robinson, "Two for the Sci-Fi", op. cit., p. 60.
[83]P.J.S, "Fahrenheit 451, Great Britain, 1966", op. cit., p. 3.

however, ill received by a small number of critics. Writing for *The Guardian*, Ian Wright's article, suggestively titled 'Too Hot for Truffaut?', questions the choice of Truffaut as director, suggesting that, 'it is because it bears Truffaut's mark that it is disastrous as an entity'.[84] Wright proposed that in the treatment of Bradbury's narrative, this 'most delicate and sympathetic director'[85] possessed ill suited sensibilities and as such, 'both Godard and Hitchcock would have been more at home'.[86] Wright was largely displeased with Truffaut's ending, which for him was indeed too hopeful, because it too largely contravened Bradbury's, 'in a characteristically kindly way'.[87]

Far from, 'his bleakest film yet', *Fahrenheit 451* was received as one of Truffaut's best, as is attested by Philip French commenting on, 'the commercial success of this remarkable film'.[88] Clearly this unassailable and unequivocal master of cinema has, 'drawn on everything he knows about cinema to express unshakable loyalty to the written word'.[89] As *Monthly Film Bulletin* celebrated of the film at the time, 'There may be other ways of putting Bradbury on film, but there can be none better than this'.[90]

Whilst the fact that these films were made by these doyens of European art-cinema, and in Britain, attests to the fact that the cinema in Britain was evidently significant enough to draw these film makers to work here, on the other hand, these films are indeed to be seen as no less than British films themselves. As such, the praise that these directors and their films were given by the British press, attest also to the significance of the art-cinema of Britain during the 1960s.

[84]Wright, "Which is the Way Ahead?", op. cit., p. 8.
[85]Ibid., p. 8.
[86]Ibid., p. 8.
[87]Ibid., p. 8.
[88]Philip French. "Book People Up In Flames". In: *The Observer* (1966), p. 25, p. 25.
[89]Houston, *The Contemporary Cinema*, op. cit., p. 42.
[90]P.J.S, "Fahrenheit 451, Great Britain, 1966", op. cit., p. 3.

Evidently, British art-cinema during the 1960s was alive and flourishing, if only readily accepted when under direction by the great, classical European auteurs. Nonetheless, these films seen, *Repulsion*, *Cul-De-Sac*, *Blow-Up*, *Fahrenheit 451*, and also Jean-Luc Godard's *Sympathy for the Devil* (1968) and Jerzy Skolimowski's *Deep End* (both analysed elsewhere) are to be taken as nothing less than British films. These films were produced and directed in Britain, with largely British actors and British money. As such it is to be understood that, even if only the European driven British films of this chapter were considered, contrary to popular belief, the British film industry, during the 1960s, was producing a significant and powerful art-cinema. Beyond this, as I have evidenced in preceding chapters, the fact that these European driven films were made in Britain corroborates with, and substantiates, the idea that the British New Wave directors were producing important and powerful art-films of consequence enough that those directors unquestionably associated with the art-cinema felt that the making of art-films could be augmented and reinforced by its being made in Britain. Whether, a 'remarkable film',[91] one that is 'beautifully shot'[92] or one that displays 'visual eloquence'[93] or one that displays a director 'at his best',[94] these films are British and this praise is in favour of domestic art-cinema.

This is evidence that the British cinema was clearly functioning as equally as was the European cinemas during the 1960s, and if the emigration of European directors to British shores is worthy of note it is easily concluded that British cinema was functioning as the superior. What is logically to be questioned then is, beyond this European driven British cinema, what was Britain producing at the hands of its domestic directors and what was its artistic worth?

[91]French, "Book People Up In Flames", op. cit., p. 25.
[92]Milne, "Cul-de-Sac", op. cit., p. 146.
[93]Dyer, "Repulsion", op. cit., p. 146.
[94]Milne, "Repulsion, Great Britain, 1965", op. cit., p. 107.

5.0 "Typical Really": Persisting Attitudes Towards the British Art-Cinema of the Late 1960s

In an exploration of the persistently negative attitude towards British cinema, this chapter observes that, despite the wealth of significant art-cinema evidenced throughout previous chapters, British cinematic output was still underestimated, underrated and essentially diminished by dismissive and fatalistic attitudes. Therefore, in echoing Chapter Two, this chapter once more asks, what was the British art-cinema out put of the late 1960s?

I have attested to the fact that in the early 1960s Britain did indeed have a number of directors making significant art-cinema, although, the conclusion to be made is that with the British critical press turned pointedly towards the large amount of attention afforded the European filmmakers in Italy and France, the impact made by the genuine cinematic output in Britain was overlooked.

Tracing the work of a number of the directors analysed in Chapter Two, this chapter will take, as evidence of a British art-cinema, the films, *The Bed Sitting Room* (1969), *If....* (1968) and *Morgan, a Suitable Case for Treatment* (1966).

Furthermore, inverting the consideration of Chapter Four, which observes the films made by European cinematic 'masters' in Britain, this chapter will also consider the inverse; British directors working within European art-

cinemas. As such I will look at films such as, Tony Richardson's *Mademoiselle* (1966) and the earlier example which is that of Peter Brook's *Moderato Cantabile* (1960). The implication of this trans-European trend is that on the one hand, one can extrapolate the suggestion that directors too embodied the same Europhilia which manifested itself in critical preference for the cinemas of Europe and on the other hand, one might equally conclude that these directors, knowing of the European preferential treatment, attempted to exploit it in carving out for themselves, art-film careers.

Following from the discussion of Lindsay Anderson in Chapter One, I will consider his 1968 film *If....* as evidence of a British art-cinema.

As part of what was eventually a failed attempt to make a three part episodic film, *Red, White and Zero*, Tony Richardson and Peter Brook, in 1967 Anderson made *The White Bus* (1967). This film built upon the film career of playwright Shelagh Delaney; a career established by British New Wave stalwart Tony Richardson, and the same year as Anderson by Albert Finney with *Charlie Bubbles* (1967), a film about which David Robinson said, 'reviews of unmixed enthusiasm from both sides of the Atlantic have not saved the film from at best moderate results at the box-office'.[1] On the other hand, *Charlie Bubbles* was seen by John Russell Taylor as uniquely unlike anything else, qualifying this by stating that, 'if the film is like nothing else it is because it gives one a real new experience in the cinema: that of an original talent flexing its creative muscles'.[2] Whilst considering his own claim in the light of questioning how to, 'be sure how much of this comes from the original screenplay by Shelagh Delaney and how much from the way it is realised by Albert Finney',[3] Taylor considered that, 'even the film's few mistakes are big,

[1]David Robinson. "Case Histories of the Next Renascence". In: *Sight & Sound* 38.1 (1968/1969), pp. 36–40, p. 40.

[2]John Russell Taylor. "Charlie Bubbles and Interlude". In: *Sight & Sound* 37.4 (1968), pp. 207–208, p. 207.

[3]Ibid., p. 207.

honest, endearing ones'.[4] Similarly, Anderson's *The White Bus* was largely unsuccessful, earning ambiguous reviews such as Daniel Millar calling it, 'a fascinating experiment if not exactly an interesting, still less a successful, film'.[5] This bus ride around Salford is an interesting, 'experiment' in cinema. Anderson here first employs his use of interchanging colour and monochrome, a device which was much commented upon in his next film, *If.....* The device here was referred to as one of Anderson's 'consious inconsistecies',[6]

> the interspersed colour shots, the first few of which were so unstressed and casually documentary as to undermine deliberately the latter and almost acdemic use of colour for 'Quotations' related to paintings and to the *idea* of art and artifice[7]

Whilst Millar considers *The White Bus* to have made, 'no unified impact',[8] he hails its technical bravura, indeed highlighting Czechoslavakian Miroslav Ondricek as the source of this inspiration, he goes on at least to praise one element of the production. Namely that 'an ambitious and experimental failure by Lindsay Anderson is better worth watching than a boring 'success' by most other British directors'.[9]

Despite British cinema's fruitful passage through the Swinging London period of the mid 1960s, the pervading issue with the unspoken competition from European cinema with that of Britain still seemed perfectly rife during the latter part of the decade. Writing in 1994 in comment upon his working with Miroslav Ondricek on shooting *If....* Anderson celebrated the Czechoslovakian influence, explaining that Ondricek's input, 'also added enormously to the interest of the film, helping to make it not typically British'.[10] Anderson

[4]Ibid., p. 208.
[5]Daniel Millar. "The White Bus". In: *Sight & Sound* 37.4 (1968), pp. 205–206, p. 205.
[6]Ibid., p. 206.
[7]Ibid., p. 206.
[8]Ibid., p. 206.
[9]Ibid., p. 206.
[10]Lindsay Anderson. "School to Screen". In: *The Observer* Dec. 15th (1968), p. 23, p. 23.

was evidently aware that indeed non-British art-cinema was better received by British critics and audiences. He went on to suggest that, 'just as the British were not interested in financing the film, they were not interested in acknowledging it [...] typical really'.[11] Anderson's film however, was seen as a particularly important milestone for the British cinema. Complaining that it wasn't until Anderson's film *If....* (1968) that he produced any kind of notable work, Richard Roud wrote for the Guardian that:

> Thirteen years is a long time, but it was worth the wait. If only we don't have to wait that long again! somehow, I don't think we will, for I feel absolutely convinced the film is going to have the success it deserves. If it doesn't, then there's no hope for the British cinema[12]

Anderson's work is often compared to that of European directors and *If....* is no exception. Many have drawn the comparison between *If....* an Jean Vigo's short masterpiece of youth in rebellion, *Zero de Conduite* (1933). Anderson indeed had previously been quoted as saying that 'film-makers with artistic ambitions must turn to independent production, as in France or Italy, and model themselves on film-makers like Vigo [...] and the Italian neo-realists'.[13] Writing for *Monthly Film Bulletin*, David Wilson commented that,

> Vigo said it over thirty years ago in *Zero de Conduite*. But the important thing is that no one in the British cinema has said it since in so uncompromisingly honest a way which makes Anderson's homage to Vigo in this final scene entirely appropriate[14]

As Anderson himself, amongst a number of others, observed, 'when we shot it, in April and May 1968, it seemed like prophecy'.[15]

[11]Ibid., p. 23.
[12]Richard Roud. "If with no buts". In: *The Guardian* Dec 19th (1968), p. 6, p. 6.
[13]Hedling, *Lindsay Anderson: maverick film maker*, op. cit., p. 11.
[14]David Wilson. "If...." In: *Monthly Film Bulletin* 36.420/431 (1969), pp. 25–26, p. 26.
[15]Anderson, "School to Screen", op. cit., p. 23.

Largely, this art-film is to be seen as about the oppressive and repressive state of affairs in the public school system, and on a larger scale Britain on the whole. The school in the film is to be read as a microcosm of the British state of affairs at the time. As Wilson called the film, 'a disturbingly accurate analysis of a society'.[16] Hedling too made this observation. He wrote of, 'the very first image of the school, a still, indicates the frozen state of things, that the school is a bastion of the *status quo*'.[17] Lindsay Anderson himself designated the school, 'as paradigm of an obstinately hierarchic Britain; of the western world; of authority and anarchism'.[18] The suggestion that this school may be an icon of the stagnant current condition of the state falls well within the reading of the film as an exploration of repression; a depiction of, 'beurocratic concerns rigid hierarchies and petty bourgoise ideology'.[19] The power and impact of the film comes as this analogous idea is not the only thread running through. As Jeffrey Richards observed, 'just as people misunderstand anarchy, according to Anderson, so also they misunderstood *If....*'.[20] Richards highlighted that, 'many critics, particularly in the popular press, saw the film exclusively in terms of a critique of public schools'.[21]

Throughout the film the strongest sense of repression, comes in the form of sexual repression, the most illustrative example of which is the beautiful sequence at the roadside cafe when Mick and the girl are embroiled in an animalistic, sexual outburst of repressed passion. The sequence details what is to be read as the culmination of a great deal of sexual repression coming to a head with such vehemence and force that it becomes aggressive. This idea of lion and lioness stands as an extremely well placed metaphor for the situation Mick finds himself in. Heding reads this release as, 'the ultimate

[16]Wilson, "If....", op. cit., p. 26.
[17]Hedling, *Lindsay Anderson: maverick film maker*, op. cit., p. 83.
[18]Anderson, "School to Screen", op. cit., p. 23.
[19]Hedling, *Lindsay Anderson: maverick film maker*, op. cit., p. 85.
[20]Jeffrey Richards. "The Revolt of the Young: *If...*" In: *Best of British: cinema and society, 1930-1970*. Ed. by J. Richards and A. Aldgate. Oxford: Blackwell, 1983. Chap. 11, pp. 147–161, p. 151.
[21]Ibid., p. 151.

metaphor for the physical satisfaction Mick is denied by the rigidities of life at school'.[22] Jeffrey Richards commented that, 'the rebels are sexual freedom incarnate'.[23] Hedling too similarly critiqued the film, suggesting that:

> The sexual adventures of the boys are contrasted with the characterisation of the Kemps, the housemaster and his wife (Mary Macleod), whose sexuality is reduced to symbolic gestures[24]

For Erik Hedling, 'the most striking image of repressed sexuality however is the human embryo, preserved in a medical jar [...] a metaphor both for the conservatism and the inability of the school to breed something alive'.[25] Whilst this is indeed a biting and succinct metaphor for the failings of this school to 'produce', the episode of animalistic passion at the roadside café says more. Whilst this embryonic skelton in the cupboard is just that, Anderson's ravishing sex sequence has more impact. Indeed this too is a great sequence in which Anderson's colour / monochrome usage is best considered. Erik Hedling reads from David Bordwell that this interchanging use of colour and black and white, taking Anderson's *If....* as an example, is 'characteristic as a sign of authorial presence in European art films'.[26]

In contextualising the film within the air of the British art-cinema of the 1960, Jeffrey Richards proposed that *If....*:

> appealed dramatically to the self-image of the 'Swinging Sixties', an image that combined youth, sex and rebellion, individual self-expression as opposed to authority, tradition, hierarchy and age[27]

Richards observed of the film that it was,

[22]Hedling, *Lindsay Anderson: maverick film maker*, op. cit., p. 87.
[23]Richards, "The Revolt of the Young: *If...*", op. cit., p. 149.
[24]Hedling, *Lindsay Anderson: maverick film maker*, op. cit., p. 87.
[25]Ibid., p. 88.
[26]Ibid., p. 99.
[27]Richards, "The Revolt of the Young: *If...*", op. cit., p. 158.

> A magnificent piece of film-making, savagely funny, gripping, richly textured and extremely well acted by a then unknown, young cast[28]

Whilst analysed and deconstructed largely elsewhere throughout the thesis, amongst other offerings to the British art-cinema of the late 1960s worthy of strong consideration, is the work of emigré director Richard Lester. After a film with the Goons of 'The Goon Show', *The Running, Jumping, Standing Still Film*, and two more films, (*It's Trad, Dad!* (1962) and *The Mouse on the Moon* (1963)), Lester directed one of the highlights of the Swinging London cinema, *The Knack... and How to Get It* (1965). The British press were still largely over concerned with the European cinema, expressing almost a distaste for anything non-European, comparing and contrasting the British and European cinemas as a form of pejorative. Such as this review suggested that *The Knack...* was a film which, 'really only works on the level of an adolescent fantasy, as a kind of collective British suburban 8½'.[29] Harcourt it seems feels that this film is not universally accepted as significant cinema due simply to its failing comparison to Fellini's masterpiece of Italian cinema.

As intimated already, this overriding sense of Europe's significant dominance over the British cinema continued and manifested itself in many ways and notably so in Tony Richardson, and others' use of Europe within their films. Just as Joseph Losey made his *Eva* (1962) in Italy with French and Italian money and Peter Brook made his *Moderato Cantabile* (1960) in France with French and Italian financial backing, similarly too did Tony Richardson produce two of his films in the late 1960s.

Peter Brook's film career, like many of the British New Wave tradition, began in the theatre. His feature film career began in a faltering start with *The Beggar's Opera* (1953), a film adaptation of the comic operetta described

[28]Ibid., p. 157.
[29]Peter Harcourt. "Help!" In: *Sight & Sound* 34.4 (1965), pp. 199–200, p. 99.

by his contemporary, Gavin Lambert, and a man with whom Brook made his first amateur film, as exhibiting:

> the failure to convey any feeling of a Hogarthian London, or any acceptable formalisation of it; the lack of robustness, of breadth, in the whole thing; and its faltering, confused development as a piece of narrative[30]

The film's failing was Brook's, its director described as demonstrating a, 'lack of grasp'[31] and, 'surprisingly little aptitude for the cinema'.[32] Unfortunately this, 'most gifted stage director of his generation'[33] it appeared had become a director, the flaw of whose filmic approach, 'lies in the handling itself'.[34]

However, with a second attempt at film making following by some time practicing his trade, by way of directing for the television, Brook came back to the screen with, *Moderato Cantabile*. His second film too was unevenly received, which, whilst it did receive some praise, in Britain it was evidently misunderstood. John Russell Taylor, despite calling him, 'Brook, most articulate of British directors',[35] felt that with *Moderato Cantabile*, Brook had once again, 'missed the boat cinematically'.[36] *Monthly Film Bulletin* too labelled the film as, 'of a quite ordinary flavour'[37] and moreover, proclaimed, 'more profoundly dissatisfying are elements in the film's content. Why, one asks, should one have such a final scene of anti-climax'.[38]

What is most revealing is an interview with Peter Brook in *Films and*

[30]Gavin Lambert. "BEGGAR'S OPERA, THE, Great Britain, 1952". In: *Monthly Film Bulletin* 20.228/239 (1952), p. 100, p. 100.
[31]Ibid., p. 100.
[32]Ibid., p. 100.
[33]Ibid., p. 100.
[34]Ibid., p. 100.
[35]John Russell Taylor. "Pete Brook, or the limitations of intelligence". In: *Sight & Sound* 36.2 (1967), pp. 80–84, p. 83.
[36]Ibid., p. 82.
[37]P.J.R. "MODERATO CANTABILE (Seven Days... Seven Nights), France/Italy, 1960". In: *Monthly Film Bulletin* 28.324/335 (1961), pp. 108–109, p. 109.
[38]Ibid., p. 109.

Filming, titled with a quote from Brook exclaiming, 'The French Gave Me My Freedom'.[39] Brook sets out his project by describing the European experience; for Brook, 'the appeal of the Cinema, particularly the Cinema in France, is that the director is ultimately responsible'.[40] Brook rationalises this continental choice as a financial one, 'I wanted to make this film in France because in France you can make films cheaper than elsewhere, therefore you are more free',[41] suggesting that on the budget for this film, 'you couldn't make a picture in England under the best conditions with the best technicians for that!'.[42] Peter Brook has stated that he was well aware that the reception of this film would be controversial at best. He suggested that, 'there are people who hate it passionately; there are people who love it passionately. Few people who are indifferent. It causes the most violent reactions',[43] suggesting the reason for this being that he knowingly, 'took a subject which has absolutely no apparent and no sensational audience appeal'.[44] He suggests that this film is one which demands investment from a committed audience, proposing that, 'the person who goes to see this film (and there are many) [...] to woo the picture, will find a great deal [...] the audience has to go and woo it, but this was the nature of this experiment'.[45]

This interestingly powerful French film, one which, as Jeanne Moreau's character seduces that of her husband's workman, Jean Paul Belmondo, is a scene which has been credited as one of the cinema's most powerful delineations of what that sort of love is about'.[46] Reviewing Belmondo's career, David Shipman observed that, 'he Moreau and Brook made what is to me a small masterpiece'.[47]

[39]Peter Brook. "The French Gave Me My Freedom". In: *Films and Filming* 7.1 (1960), pp. 7–8, p. 7.
[40]Ibid., p. 7.
[41]Ibid., p. 8.
[42]Ibid., p. 8.
[43]Ibid., p. 8.
[44]Ibid., p. 8.
[45]Ibid., p. 8.
[46]David Shipman. "Belmondo". In: *Films and Filming* 10.12 (1964), pp. 7–11, p. 10.
[47]Ibid., p. 10.

Coincidentally, like *Eva* and *Moderato Cantabile*, with Jeanne Moreau as their leading actress, Tony Richardson made two of his films with an overwhelmingly European influence. George Lellis observed of Richardson's body of work that a number of his 'short comings' were due to one thing, namely that, 'at times he tries too hard to be a French director: perhaps he would get away with more of what he does if he were'.[48] Richardson's *Mademoiselle* (1966) was made in France with Jeanne Moreau playing the film's lead. Set in a French village with Manou and his son, an Italian logger family. Here Moreau's 'Mademoiselle' is the school mistress who's passion for Manou borders on the psychopathic as she extorts his kindness for her own gain at the expense of his son. The film was however not well received by critics at the time, Kenneth Tynan confirming that it was, 'understandably booed'.[49] For many, Tynan included, one of the overriding issues with Richardson's film was its distinct lack of a musical score. Tynan suggested that, 'The slothful portentiousness of the film is increased by Mr. Richardson's brave decision to do without music'.[50] Tynan goes on to conclude that this simple act of foregoing music managed to single handedly ruin the film, 'an atmospheric score might well have saved "Mademoiselle" from disaster'.[51] This disaster of a film however is not without its merits. David Adams praised the film, writing that, 'visually Tony Richardson has created some lovely scenes with David Watkin. They have used the black and white screen well'.[52] Writing for *Monthly Film Bulletin* John Gillet praised Richardson, writing that his, 'direction at the beginning is visually precise and atmospheric in its feeling for the village milieu'.[53] However, Gillet too found the film's short comings overrode what little merits were to be found. Writing in reference to the

[48]George Lellis. "Recent Richardson - Cashing the Blank Cheque". In: *Sight & Sound* 38.3 (1969), pp. 130–133, p. 133.
[49]Keneth Tynan. "The Cannes Circus". In: *The Guardian* May. 15th (1966), p. 24, p. 24.
[50]Ibid., p. 24.
[51]Ibid., p. 24.
[52]David Adams. "Mademoiselle". In: *Films and Filming* 13.6 (1967), pp. 29–30, p. 29.
[53]John Gillet. "Mademoiselle, Great Britain/France, 1966". In: *Monthly Film Bulletin* 34.396/407 (1967), pp. 23–24, p. 24.

sequence in which Moreau's 'Mademoiselle' and Manou make love in the woods, Gillet complained that, 'Richardson has not quite realised how this kind of material can suddenly appear quite ludicrous and, in the last resort, meaningless'.[54] Also writing about this episode, Adams criticised, claiming that, 'one finds oneself in a cinema seat watching two people involved in something which is private. One has become an involuntary voyeur, and is aware of it. The film is ruined'.[55] One of the biggest issues with the film was, not at the fault of Richardson per se, the poor quality of the dubbing of the English language version of the film. As Gillet observed, 'The English dubbing of the sparse peasant dialogue is a little unfortunate'.[56] Also complaining of the poor reception of the film Penelope Gilliat observed that, 'The trouble is that the dubbing of the English language version is so humping aweful'.[57] Like Tynan, Gilliat also complained of the film that, 'There is no music on this dense and audacious film, and no camera movement'.[58] In appraising Richardson's work, George Lellis considered that, '*Mademoiselle* seems strangely oblivious to its audience's presence'.[59] He goes on to qualify that, 'the *mise en scène* of *Mademoiselle* is mannered to the point of stiltedness, and, appropriately, inhibition'.[60] Suggesting that this type of film is just not in the emotional range of Richardson, Lellis suggested that the failings of the film may have be rectified with the right tone of direction, 'Indeed, *Mademoiselle* might have been saved had it had, at all, a sense of humour to fall back on'.[61]

Perhaps due, understandably in part, to its being French, Richardson's *Mademoiselle* like much of his previous work, is plagued by constant com-

[54]Ibid., p. 24.
[55]Adams, "Mademoiselle", op. cit., p. 30.
[56]Gillet, "Mademoiselle, Great Britain/France, 1966", op. cit., p. 24.
[57]Penelope Gilliat. "The reveries of revenge". In: *The Observer* Jan. 15th (1967), p. 24, p. 24.
[58]Ibid., p. 24.
[59]Lellis, "Recent Richardson - Cashing the Blank Cheque", op. cit., p. 131.
[60]Ibid., p. 131.
[61]Ibid., p. 132.

parisons and associations to other European cinemas. In her consideration of Richardson's 'French' films, Rebecca M. Pauly draws a number of comparisons between Richardson's work and others'. Pauly observed that Richardson had been following the explosive energy and innovations of the French *nouvelle vague* for several years'[62] and noted that, for the film, Richardson's cinematographer, David Watkin, hired, 'Alain Resnais' *opérateur* on *L'Année dernière à Marienbad*, for a voyeuristic fixed-frame effect',[63] whilst vaguely suggesting that, 'some of the wide-angle shots of the open landscape also recall the work of Jean Renoir'.[64] Importantly for Pauly, the film also, 'includes allusions to to other classic films of the era: De Sica's 1948 *Bicycle Thieves*, with father and son characters named Antonio and Bruno, and Pagnol's 1953 *Manon of the Spring*, whose feral heroine is reflected inverted in Manou'.[65] Richardson does not manage to escape the obligatory failing comparison to Truffaut, and indeed to his *Les Quatre Cents Coups*, as Pauly observes:

> This criminal adolescent rejecting the father and loving the mother figure recalls directly the figure of Antoine Doinel of Truffaut's 1959 autobiographical *400 Blows*, as do the scenes of anger and humiliation in the classroom[66]

Unfortunately it seems that Tony Richardson, once tarred with the brush of vainly trying and failing to emulate the work of François Truffaut, with the large amount of evidence for his art-cinema credentials presented here, has still not managed to overcome the British prejudicial treatment of European art-film. Even later 1960s British cinema then, cannot escape the constant

[62]Rebecca M. Pauly. "Impossible Dreams: *Mademoiselle* (1966) and *The Sailor from Gibraltar* (1967)". In: *The Cinema of Tony Richardson: Essays and Interviews*. Ed. by James M. Welsh and John C. Tibbetts. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999. Chap. six, pp. 141–160, p. 143.
[63]Ibid., p. 145.
[64]Ibid., p. 145.
[65]Ibid., p. 146.
[66]Ibid., p. 147.

failing comparisons to the works of European masters. Whilst *Mademoiselle* was seen however, 'as an integral artistic achievement a failure',[67] the great deal of comparison to other European cinemas is unwarranted. Despite the enormously prevalent European sensibilities evident throughout Richardson's French film and his already evidenced radical technical prowess, for the press, the British element is present and thus cannot be overlooked as doing anything but holding back this otherwise distinguished art-film.

After his largely unsuccessful attempt to demonstrate his artistic prowess to the critics with *Mademoiselle*, Tony Richardson made another ill received film, *Sailor from Gibraltar* (1967), an 'incredible farago of philosophico-romantic tosh',[68] 'a failed film'.[69] *Sailor from Gibraltar* too was tarred with the European masters' brush, being called, 'something of an anaemic cross between kitchen sink realism and *Last Year at Marienbad*'.[70] The Francophile in Richardson again chose *nouvelle vague* personnel, notably in his working here with Raoul Coutard as his cinematographer. Pauly observes that here, Richardson's film fails 'in spite' of his working with such a heritage of talented crew:

> In spite of the fact that Richardson had two major figures of the French New Wave on his crew, Raoul Coutard and Truffaut's script girl Suzanne Schiffman, his film never achieves the violent energy of Godard's work or the auteur voice of Truffaut's lyric autocinography. It is ambiguous in its uncertainty and cynical in its purpose[71]

Interestingly, Pauly suggests that the presence of Raol Coutard in particular functioned to hinder the film's success. She contested that, '[Coutard's]

[67]Adams, "Mademoiselle", op. cit., p. 30.
[68]Tom Milne. "Sailor From Gibralta, The, Great Britain, 1966". In: *Monthly Film Bulletin* 43.397/407 (1967), p. 136, p. 136.
[69]Pauly, "Impossible Dreams: *Mademoiselle* (1966) and *The Sailor from Gibraltar* (1967)", op. cit., p. 159.
[70]Lellis, "Recent Richardson - Cashing the Blank Cheque", op. cit., p. 131.
[71]Pauly, "Impossible Dreams: *Mademoiselle* (1966) and *The Sailor from Gibraltar* (1967)", op. cit., p. 157.

framing and pacing give the film a surrealistic and anguished quality that paralyse the acting and the script'.[72] However, rather than suggesting that this master of French New Wave cinematography is at fault for hindering Richardson's work and vision, the suggestion is that Richardson in fact was unable to utilise the talents of Coutard as effectively as did Godard. For Pauly, this film was a resounding failure, which, 'with the opening shot of the film, the travesty begins'.[73]

After making these two French films, Tony Richardson became involved in a project, alongside Lindsay Anderson and Peter Brook, concerned with the production of a portmanteau film in three parts, of Shelagh Delaney films. Anderson's film, *The White Bus* (1967) was the only one to really get off the ground with any steam at all and receive any notable reaction. His film, often seen as the precursor in style to his most remarkable film of the decade, *If....* The film was described highly by Richardson as, 'a funny poetic fantasy which I sometimes think may be the best movie he ever made'.[74] In a pointedly resolute statement about Peter Brook's contribution to what ought to have been a spectacular resurgence, redolent of the earlier British art-cinema movements, Tony Richardson observed that:

> Instead of a Delaney story he wanted to do a little farce he'd written about a Wagnerian diva trying to get to the theatre for a performance. Zero Mostel starred, and I think he was the reason Peter decided to do it. It was unshowable[75]

Richardson made his segment, *Red and Blue*, in 1966 with Vanessa Redgrave, Michael York and Douglas Fairbanks Jr., 'and a circusful of elephants'.[76] Richardson felt his film was well made although largely ill fitted,

[72]Ibid., p. 150.
[73]Ibid., p. 155.
[74]Tony Richardson. *Long Distance Runner: A memoir*. London: Faber and Faber, 1993, p. 187.
[75]Ibid., p. 187.
[76]Ibid., p. 187.

describing it as, 'an oddity, and the music – extraordinarily personal [*music by Cyrus Bassiak*] – doesn't really fit into any category'.[77]

Unfortunately, as Richardson rightly predicted in 1993, these films are very difficult to see owing to their essentially non-existent production, 'by now I think they have disappeared'.[78]

Richardson's next film was *The Charge of the Light Brigade* (1968). *The Charge of the Light Brigade*'s reception was much more mixed than Richardson's previous works, whilst it received a great deal of bad press, it was favoured with some praise. *Monthly Film Bulletin* called the film a, 'well-night intolerable mess, meandering, fidgety and indeterminate'[79] and, 'nothing too profound'.[80] Whilst on the other hand, more vaguely, George Lellis observed that the film, 'As art, it contains, back to back, the very best and very worst of this aesthetically ambiguous director'.[81] For Lellis, *The Charge of the Light Brigade*, 'is both good art and good history'.[82] He does qualify this praise however by pointing out that this film succeeds only, 'for about forty minutes'.[83] Richardson is somewhat infamous for, with this film, refusing to have a press screening, and excluding the critics from advanced screenings, suggesting that they pay to see it with the rest of the public. Defending this decision, in a letter to the editor of 'The Times' newspaper, Richardson claimed that, 'English film critics are the most personal, the most superficial and with the least good will in the world and are internationally regarded as such'.[84] In response this letter to the editor, film critic John Russell Taylor considered the British press reception to Richardson two latest

[77]Ibid., p. 187.
[78]Ibid., p. 187.
[79]P.J.S. "Charge of the Light Brigade, The, Great Britain, 1968". In: *Monthly Film Bulletin* 35.408/419 (1968), pp. 98–99, p. 98.
[80]Ibid., p. 98.
[81]Lellis, "Recent Richardson - Cashing the Blank Cheque", op. cit., p. 130.
[82]Ibid., p. 133.
[83]Ibid., p. 133.
[84]Tony Richardson. "Charge of the Light Brigade: Why Critics Are Not Asked". In: *The Times* April. 9th.57222 (1968), p. 11, p. 11.

films, observing:

> *The Loved One* was an American film, Hollywood-made, and got if anything worse notices in the United States than here; *Mademoiselle* was a French co-production, and I do not remember the French critics cancelling out British incomprehension with any widespread enthusiasm[85]

Taylor attempts to fathom Richardson's trepidation with critics though fails to reach some reasoning. Richardson suggest that, whilst critics view the films in, 'a cold, half empty cinema',[86] as the cinema is a, 'collective experience',[87] Richardson suggests that films are not only best viewed, but should indeed be exclusively viewed, 'with a mass of people who are responding to and enjoying the film itself'.[88] Despite all of this effort on Richardson's part to have the film viewed in the best possible conditions in order that it be superlatively received, whilst conceeding that, 'visually it is nearly always striking',[89] Taylor reported of the film that, 'It is, be it said at once, neither so good as one might have hoped nor so bad as one might have feared from Mr. Richardson's shyness about showing it to the critics'.[90] For Taylor, 'The film is beautiful to look at, but any hopes that it would prove much more than a pretty face are doomed to quick dissapointment'.[91]

Of the third member of the British New Wave royalty, Karel Reisz, there is little to say. Within the 1960s, after *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* (1960), Reisz made only three more films, *Night Must Fall* (1964), *Morgan, a Suitable Case for Treatment* (1966) and *Isadora* (1968). His, *Night Must*

[85]John Russell Taylor. "The Charge and the Film". In: *The Times* April 13th.57225 (1968), p. 21, p. 21.
[86]Richardson, "Charge of the Light Brigade: Why Critics Are Not Asked", op. cit., p. 11.
[87]Ibid., p. 11.
[88]Ibid., p. 11.
[89]Taylor, "The Charge and the Film", op. cit., p. 21.
[90]Ibid., p. 21.
[91]Ibid., p. 21.

Fall, made only one year after Lindsay Anderson's *This Sporting Life*, was the first of the British New Wave directors' films to move outside of the common Kitchen Sink drama, as Tom Milne so acutely observed.

> One can only applaud Reisz' courage in making such a complete breakaway - more so than anyone else - from the brand of social realism which has ended by strangling the British cinema[92]

Unfortunately, despite Reisz' noble efforts to move away from the stranglehold on British cinema, *Night Must Fall* fell short of appeasing critics' desires for significant cinema. This is a thriller which explores Albert Finney's serial killer, Danny, who carries his victim's heads around in a hat box, who is finally approached and defeated by the daughter of his latest victim, falling prey to his difficult relationship with women. Unfortunately, as Milne succinctly reported, '*Night Must Fall* (M-G-M) is a mess, no doubt about that'.[93] Elizabeth Sussex despaired of the film that,

> perhaps the most depressing thing about the film, however, is that nowhere can one spot the director's reason for making it. Sad to reflect that Karel Reisz has taken over three years to follow up the success of *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* with something as flawed as this[94]

A much more notable film, in fact, was Reisz' next, *Morgan, a Suitable Case for Treatment*. Or at least if not more notable, a more fittingly Swinging Sixties film, indeed habitually associated to the cinema of Richard Lester. This film and its ambiguously motivated Morgan encompasses a mad-cap, wild spirited and convoluted narrative; an art-film very much in keeping with the definitions founded by the Introduction chapter. Very much in *The*

[92]Tom Milne. "Night Must Fall". In: *Sight & Sound* 33.3 (1964), p. 144, p. 144.
[93]Ibid., p. 144.
[94]Elizabeth Sussex. "Night Must Fall, Great Britain, 1964". In: *Monthly Film Bulletin* 31.360/372 (1964), p. 103, p. 103.

Knack... And How to Get It style, this film of Morgan's life of fantasy in which he struggles with his wife's desire for a divorce, appears very much a, 'light, but aimless, and soulless, arabesque'.[95] This film was better shot and, perhaps by virtue of its conformism to the artistic mood of the Swinging time it was made, was better received than *Night Must Fall* though indeed still had its critics. Raymond Durgnat interestingly contextualises the film as a follow up to Reisz' previous film, writing,

> Reisz has excused *Night Must Fall* as being an artistic failure because he had to choose the subject so quickly. The circumstances of this film I don't know, but it repeats that failure, even more markedly[96]

Whilst Penelope Houston found of Reisz' technique here that, 'when Karel Reisz uses the frozen shots and jump cuts, one feels that he at least knows why he is using this technical device'.[97] Although, for Houston, Reisz' improved technical direction does not pay off, leaving the film, 'a hit or miss succession of impressions, funniest when there is least dramatic weight behind them'.[98] Reisz' *Morgan, a Suitable Case for Treatment* falls well within the Swingin London cinema, often compared to Richard Lester's *The Knack... And How to Get It*. Durgnat notes the comparrison though dismisses it, hailing Lester's as the superior film, 'These attempts to make like Lester have less knack than knick-knackery'.[99] Durgnat felt that Reisz' film failed to succeed in that, in keeping with the air of Swinging London, Reisz was,

> hoping we'll be dazzled by quick cutting, zooming, tracking and panning galore, actors and actresses hurtling themselves around

[95]Raymond Durgnat. "Morgan, a Suitable Case for Treatment". In: *Films and Filming* 12.9 (1966), pp. 6–10, p. 10.
[96]Ibid., p. 6.
[97]Penelope Houston. "Morgan, a Suitable Case for Treatment, Great Britain, 1966". In: *Monthly Film Bulletin* 33.384/395 (1966), pp. 71–72, p. 72.
[98]Ibid., p. 72.
[99]Durgnat, "Morgan, a Suitable Case for Treatment", op. cit., p. 6.

> the screen image, and innumerable changes of location and subject[100]

Morgan, a Suitable Case for Treatment unfortunately did not manage to compete in the field of the significant cinema to be found of the time. Despite the film's successes in direction, the artful use of art-film techniques reminiscent of the French New Wave, the jump cuts and the fast pans and lense zooms, this art-film, 'fails to marry serious and comedy: as Lester did throughout long passages of *The Knack*, or Fellini throughout *8½*'.[101]

Karel Reisz then made *Isadora* (1968). Whilst again Reisz' film was aesthetically prepossessing, '*Isadora* is a staggeringly beautiful film to look at',[102] it was nonetheless, ill received. David Wilson observed of this poetically personal film that, whilst, 'Tom Priestley's eloquently fluid editing carries the film along at an appropriately breathtaking pace',[103] 'the film's precarious balance between the ghastly cliché and one's acceptance of it becomes increasingly difficult to sustain'.[104] Comparable to the attention given to Reisz' previous film, the response to *Isadora* was one which recognised the authentically artistic and significant principle in his method and approach though the end result once more failed to encompass these elements into a compellingly significant cinema. Wilson criticised that, 'As with *Morgan*, in fact, one feels that Reisz is at least confident about the rightness of his approach even if he doesn't always communicate this confidence to his audience'.[105] James Prices viewed the film in similar terms, observing,

> In *Morgan* one felt a tension between the waywardness and the irrationality of the central figure and the precision and lucidity of the direction. With *Isadora* there is a similar impression[106]

[100]Ibid., p. 6.
[101]Ibid., p. 10.
[102]James Price. "Isaodora". In: *Sight & Sound* 38.2 (1969), p. 94, p. 94.
[103]David Wilson. "Isadora". In: *Monthly Film Bulletin* 36.420/431 (1969), pp. 71–71, p. 72.
[104]Ibid., p. 72.
[105]Ibid., p. 72.
[106]Price, "Isaodora", op. cit., p. 94.

Vanessa Redgrave's performance came under some criticism, not least for the English portrayal of an American icon, as Price complained, 'casting an English actress in the role, however well-suited she is in other respects, futher obscures the point'.[107] For Price in fact, Redgrave's performance was one of the film's crowning dissapointments, as he suggested that, 'The framing story [...] is perhaps less satisfactory, simply because Vanessa Redgrave's ruined old witch is too obviously an impersonation'.[108] Wilson too criticised Redgrave's performance as, 'impassioned, sustained, but like the film as a whole one an intelligent impersonation of a woman whose appeal still remains elusive'.[109] Conversely, for 'The Guardian' Richard Roud praised Redgrave's performance in the film, suggesting of the story that, 'Vanessa Redgrave has made something gloriously radiant and glowingly memorable of it'.[110] Roud goes so far as to say that, whilst a number of the performances in the film are very good (despite a 'not very satisfactory Yugoslav, Ivan Tchenko as Essenine'[111]), 'over them all towers Vanessa Redgrave who manages both to be triumphant as the young Californian who conquered Europe and infinitely touching as the burnt-out-case who still had beautiful arms'.[112] Ultimately however, as surmised by Gordon Gow, 'Since Karel Reisz is an extremely good director, I had hoped for something fresher'.[113]

Not able to avoid the necessary Europhilia portrayed by critics of British cinema, it can be seen that only through comparison to the works of European cinematic masters is it that any grand praise can be found for films such as Reisz' *Isadora*. Commenting on Reisz' technical proficiency, Roud suggested that, 'Like Renoir and Resnais, the sound track of the film is as important to Reisz as the visuals, and he does some remarkable things with

[107]Ibid., p. 94.
[108]Ibid., p. 94.
[109]Wilson, "Isadora", op. cit., p. 72.
[110]RichardRoud. "Isadora". In: *The Guardian* March 4th (1969), p. 8, p. 8.
[111]Ibid., p. 8.
[112]Ibid., p. 8.
[113]Gordon Gow. "Isadora". In: *Films and Filming* 15.8 (1969), pp. 52–53, p. 53.

sound'.[114] This is indeed a complementary reference, and the comparison within it is meant as such. Though quite clearly, it is perhaps unthinkable that a British director might be held accountable for his own dominance over the artistic implementation of sound within his film without his work being viewed through a European cinema framework. Interestingly, this kind of observation builds upon the suggestion of Britain's earlier British New Wave movement functioning simply as a 'backwash of a wave which had happened elsewhere'.[115]

Karel Reisz' film, whilst not fresh or groundbreaking in any way, was well directed. Reisz makes a fascinating film from both Isadora Duncan's own autobiography and Sewell Stokes', 'Isadora, an Intimate Portrait'. Seen in regard to Ken Russell's earlier TV special on Isadora Duncan for the BBC's Monitor programme, 'longwindedness, not withstanding, the film has graces that were missing in Ken Russell's trimmer TV version'.[116]

One can rather easily make a case for *If....* as the only significant piece of art-film produced by this group of directors in the second half of the 1960s. There is a case for viewing Richardson's *Mademoiselle* as powerful art-cinema although it is unfortunately, firstly, not British, and secondly, much disregarded by critics. Whilst the film was part financed by Woodfall, and as such British Money, the film's French / Italian cast, part-French crew and French language lend the film much more to continental classification. Whilst this film was beautifully shot and wonderfully adapted from the Duras novel, it is not, as such, a national product and fits extremely loosely, if at all, within the British cinema.

Once again these film makers are undeservedly viewed through a European framework, their films denigrated purely owing to the fact that they

[114]RichardRoud, "Isadora", op. cit., p. 8.
[115]Caughie, *Companion to British and Irish Cinema*, op. cit., p. 38.
[116]Gow, "Isadora", op. cit., p. 53.

were British. As this chapter, and indeed the previous chapters of this thesis, have attested to, the British cinema was producing a significant, fervent, and at times radical art-cinema. Unfortunately these films were not received as their artistic status suggests they should have been and indeed their failings were invariably measured up against the European yardstick and came up unjustifiably short. Of the British art-film movements and collectives explored in evidencing its prolific art-cinema, there was none more powerful than a specific faction of films which exhibit a unique and district correlation, that being the relationship between art-cinema and popular music. This was a British phenomenon with close links to the 'Swinging London' cinema that will be investigated thoroughly in the following chapter.

British film makers did in fact produce a number of important art-films and significant cinema during the latter part of the decade. An extremely important connection is to be made between this art-cinema and the explosion, in the Swinging Sixties, of British popular music, a phenomena to be studied in depth throughout the following chapter.

6.0 A Culmination of Talents: The Symbiotic Relationship Between Popular Music and the British Art-Cinema

"They're gonna put me in the movies / They're gonna make a big star out of me / We'll make a film about a man that's sad and lonely / And all I gotta do is act naturally"[1]

With press attention given over to the recent reissue of The Beatles' film, *Magical Mystery Tour* (1967), a reappraisal of the relationship between pop-music and cinema of the 1960s seems fitting. Many have argued that the explosion of popular music's influence within the cinema of the 1960s comes purely from, 'ignorance, bad taste, and crass commercialism'.[2] There are however, a number of reasons why popular music was such an integral component of 1960s British cinema. Critics (Raksin and Bernstein) have lamented the 'degeneration' of British film scoring into popular music though few have considered popular music's impact upon, allegiance to and most importantly, augmentation of, the British art-film culture.

For K.J Donnelly, and so many others, the explosion of Rock 'n' Roll music in the mid- 1950s 'totally reconfigured the popular music landscape'.[3] With the cultural impact of Rock 'n' Roll and the consequent emergence

[1]Song lyrics from 'Act Naturally' by The Beatles, *Help!*, 1965.
[2]James Wierzbiki. *Film Music, A History.* London: Routledge, 2009, p. 190.
[3]K.J. Donnelly. *Pop Music in British Cinema.* London: BFI Publishing, 2001, p. 1.

of a teen market and a new 'youth culture' coupled with the fact that the mid-1950s to late 1960s was an 'era in which music enjoys its greatest popularity as an art",[4] its subsequent association with art-cinema was perhaps inevitable. There has been a long standing tradition of the marriage between popular music and cinema, culminating in a number of tawdry pop-musicals and high concept, performance mode, pop-culture infused films. The films of Cliff Richard and Tommy Steele stand out as the most popular and readily accepted of these models. It was the 1960s however which saw in the transformation of the pop-musical, heralded arguably by Richard Lester's cinematic artistry and his 'Beatles' films: 'the comparable cinematic efforts of Elvis Presley, Cliff Richard, Tommy Steele and others seemed soggy indeed'.[5]

When one thinks of sixties popular music and its association with the cinema it is The Beatles who invariably leap to mind. Their films, *A Hard Day's Night* (1964), *Help!* (1965), and to a lesser extent *Magical Mystery Tour*, were enormously successful. This success was due largely to the cultural impact of The Beatles group itself and of course the Beatlemania phenomenon; Indeed 'Beatlemania' was *A Hard Day's Night*'s original working title.[6] Richard Lester's musical association however began much earlier. After his extensive work in television advertising, Lester himself an amateur pianist, composed and orchestrated the score for *The Running Jumping Standing Still Film* (1960). Lester's second feature film was *It's Trad Dad* (1962), a performance mode, jazz and Rock 'n' Roll cornucopia. Most interestingly, in his book about the films of Richard Lester, Neil Sinyard wrote about *Its Trad Dad* that, 'Lester is to be commended for the way in which the musical virtuosity of some of the performers is allied to a corresponding

[4]Elmer Bernstein. "Whatever Happened to Great Movie Music?" In: *High Fidelity* (1972), pp. 55–58, p. 58.

[5]Neil Sinyard. "The English Army Had Just Won the War". In: *The Lennon Companion: Twenty-five years of comment*. Ed. by Elizabeth Thomson & David Gutman. London: Papermac, 1987, pp. 126–131, p. 127.

[6]Donnelly, *Pop Music in British Cinema*, op. cit., p. 14.

technical virtuosity of direction, photography and editing'.[7] This is the key concept I will pursue throughout this chapter; the question of whether there is any kind of correlation between musical and cinematic artistry. For Sinyard, musical virtuosity is allied to artistic cinematic prowess; is this true for any other musically oriented films of the 1960s?

A number of critics have argued that by the 1970s film scoring had 'degenerated into a bleakness of various electronic noises and generally futile attempts to "make the pop Top 40 charts"'.[8] It is clear to see the origin of these concerns as it is true to say that using pop-music scores could prove a lucrative practice. The box office profits for *A Hard Day's Night* for example, 'were renowned'.[9] The film had recouped its production costs and was in profit before the film was even on general release. Writing for the New York Times in 1966, Vincent Canby observed that, "A Hard Day's Night' the soundtrack album for the film has so far made a profit estimated at 2 million [...] more than three times the cost of the film itself'.[10] The studio had secured the rights to the soundtrack and had made a profit on album pre-sales alone. This kind of profit excited producers and brought about a number of pop-music vehicles in which the film is simply an excuse to exhibit the act on screen. For example, films such as Jeremy Summers' *Dateline Diamonds* (1965) and *Ferry Cross the Mersey* (1964) tried to capitalise on the wake of Beatlemania with the Gerry and the Pacemakers group, involving The Beatles' producer George Martin and using iconic Beatles venue The Cavern Club in Liverpool.

A Hard Day's Night, however, can be read as a serious art-film, semantically much richer than the performance mode, tasteless and almost vulgar

[7]Neil Sinyard. "Intimate Stranger: the early British films of Joseph Losey". In: *British Cinema of the 1950s: a celebration*. Ed. by Ian Mackillop and Neil Sinyard. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003, pp. 111–124, p. 6.

[8]Bernstein, "Whatever Happened to Great Movie Music?", op. cit., p. 55.

[9]Stephen Glynn. *A Hard Day's Night*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2005, p. 87.

[10]Vincent Canby quoted in James Wierzbiki. *Film Music, A History*. London: Routledge, 2009, p. 192.

pop-musicals which John Lennon satirically sends up in the film: "Let's do the song right here!". Lester's cinéma vérité style, deliberate use of black and white and his stylised use of chiaroscuro, coupled with his cinematic prowess and adept use of mise-èn-scène as a means for establishing meaning, allows one to read an art-cinema aesthetic within this film. It is true to say however, that from a commercial point of view the film was initially intended to augment and capitalise on The Beatles' fame. Alexander Walker noted that, 'it was deliberately intended to extend the Beatles' popularity - and hence their longevity'.[11] In an interview with the critic Joseph Gelmis, Richard Lester revealed that he was asked, 'to make a quick film with the Beatles before their popularity declined [...] United Artists advised us to get the picture out as quickly as possible because they felt that by June 1964 nobody would have heard of the Beatles'.[12]

In fact, the knowledge that his film was purely to be a piece of commercialised pop-merchandise became Lester's most effective weapon as a filmmaker. The film's strongest element by far is its self-reflexivity. Just as Lennon sends up the pop-musical cinematic mode, Lester's film sends up the over-commercialisation of the pop-music industry. Most telling is George Harrison's sequence in which he encountered the teen 'trend-setter' Susan. Stephen Glynn wrote of this sequence that, 'A Hard Day's Night knows itself to be a commodification of the Fab Four, but the film is not afraid to attack that cynically programmed process'.[13] Moreover, Lester's cinematographic approach strengthens the oppositions between the musical and non-musical episodes of the film, and the interior and exterior sequences echoing the rhythm of incarceration and release which creates the film's sense of inevitability.

In the same way that the film's self-reflexive nature highlights its unre-

[11]Alexander Walker. *Hollywood England*. London: Joseph, 1974, p. 236.
[12]Richard Lester quoted in Joseph Gelmis. *The Film Director as Superstar*. [n.p]: Pelican Books, 1974, p. 238.
[13]Glynn, *A Hard Day's Night*, op. cit., p. 38.

liable representations of reality, Lester's treatment of the processes involved in film production similarly breaks down the cinematic illusion. In exposing the trickery of the make-up room as soldiers apply 'ketchup' to their false wounds, *A Hard Day's Night* breaks down audiences' perceptions of the media, causing them to question what they see on screen, thus the required suspension of disbelief is removed.

Despite the commercial 'pop-musical' presentation of the film, it can be read as a profound echo of the work of the French New Wave school. Here, however, the pop-musical element serves as a device through which Lester creates a great deal of the class-commentary, social satire and cinematic poetry. Rather than 'degenerating' the art of the cinema, it can be read that pop-music not only augments, but to a greater extent enables, the artistry of this film. This is in no way a phenomenon exclusive to Lester but was in fact a rising trend within the art-cinema of the 1960s. The use of pop-groups within the cinematic process became indicative of art-cinema simply by association. Films of undoubtedly artistic credentials began more and more to involve themselves with contemporary pop-musicians. In Jean-Luc Godard's *Sympathy for the Devil* (1968) for example, Godard chose The Rolling Stones for the focal point of this revolutionary commentary. The presence of the pop group can be seen again as augmenting, through their cultural prominence, the film's artistic comment. Raymond Durgnat suggested of the film that it is about, 'revolution as paralysis' and described the film further as 'an audiovisual meditation on the remoteness of radical action, on the curious ethereality, betrayed by vehemence, in radical thought'.[14] Durgnat concludes that the film, despite its employment of a number of references to modes and devices of communication, 'isn't about communication at all, but about conviction, and about repetition as a means thereto'.[15] Within this film we

[14]Durgnat, "One Plus One", op. cit., p. 180.
[15]Ibid., p. 181.

see sequences involving Black Panthers reading political works, a book seller reading from Adolph Hitler's 'Mein Kampf' and a television interview with a social revolutionary most aptly named Eve Democracy, all interspersed with Rolling Stones rehearsal footage, in which they impassively practice their song, 'Sympathy for the Devil', a number of times over. This mechanical repetition of the song, by a group with a reputation for high energy on-stage performances, desensitises the impact of the music and effectively subverts the group's notoriously radical reputation. By way of subverting or deflating the Rolling Stones' fame, Godard suggests that radical thought and protest are fragile when placed under scrutiny. If the group in question were less culturally prominent, or rather less radical, Godard's message would not hold as much impact. It is interesting to note, regarding the powerful artistic impact of a popular group, that Godard's film, known internationally as *One Plus One*, had its UK title changed to *Sympathy for the Devil* against his wishes in order that the film be more obviously associated with The Rolling Stones.

The Rolling Stones and many other groups had an extraordinary cultural impact upon the youth culture of the 1960s. Just as The Beatles influenced their followers to the point of Beatlemania, so too were there a number of other accounts in which fans went to incredible lengths to show their devotion and support of the pop group of their choice. In February 1966 it was reported that a boy had committed suicide by throwing himself under a train when his uncle forced him to cut his hair which he was wearing long in homage to Mick Jagger of The Rolling Stones.[16]

The Rolling Stones had a much more notorious and more esoteric reputation than the clean-cut Beatles and thus their association with the themes of rebellion and violence within Godard's film rings truer. In 1967 members of The Rolling Stones, Mick Jagger, Keith Richard and Brian Jones were arrested and both Jagger and Richard were charged with drug offences. In

[16]N.A. "Youth Killed Himself After Haircut". In: *The Times* (1966), p. 6, p. 6.

reaction to this, 'more than 400 young people massed around Eros in Piccadilly Circus [...] to protest against the prison sentences imposed on Mr. Mick Jagger and Mr. Keith Richard of the Rolling Stones pop group'.[17] In addition to this support it was reported that 'a number of pop groups' were to 'send a vast quantity of flowers to Judge Block, who sentenced the two Rolling Stones'.[18] The Rolling Stones were an anti-establishment pop-group and very much part of the counter-culture of the 1960s.

Just as Raymond Durgnat called *Sympathy for the Devil*, 'Jean-Luc Godard meets Swinging London',[19] in the same way that Godard's film title was changed to better reflect the Rolling Stones' involvement, the same might be concluded of Michelangelo Antonioni's first English Language feature film and iconic milestone of the 'swinging London' scene, *Blow-Up* (1966). Whilst Antonioni's method of echoing the protagonist's inability to maintain focus and drive through filmic technique translates as a distracting and disjointed experience for the audience owing to the distraction and deviation from a linear and focussed narrative, he uses music, and specifically pop-music, within the film to a similar purpose; Antonioni uses music as a distraction. Not only does this add to the cultural commentary he creates but it is also suggestive of the artistic and poetic impact popular music had on a film such as this. Antonioni's photographer, whilst caught up in the extremely important business of murder and unattended corpses, finds himself wandering distractedly into a local popular music venue, the 'Ricky Tick' club. Despite being on an important mission of self-confirmation and the verification of truth, in complete distraction, the photographer hears music and ventures inside. In the club, The Yardbirds are playing live on stage. The lead guitarist, Jeff Beck, is having some trouble with his equipment and in a rage

[17]Tim Jones and Christopher Warman. "'Stones'-Protest at 2am". In: *The Times* (1967), p. 1, p. 1.
[18]Ibid., p. 1.
[19]Durgnat, "One Plus One", op. cit., p. 178.

smashes his instrument à la The Who, another popular group, and throws the pieces into the crowd. Perfectly in keeping with the film's prevailing theme of incongruency and with Antonioni's commentary on the ineffectuality of popular culture, the crowd are, uncharacteristically, comatose throughout the performance. The photographer's reaction to the guitar's destruction is wonderfully indicative of his easily distracted disposition. When Jeff Beck throws his guitar into the audience the photographer goes to great lengths to possess it. He brawls with the now suddenly voracious crowd, beats his way through hoards of people and runs from the club. Once outside, free, and in possession of his prize the photographer simply drops the guitar on the floor and once more wanders off. This reaction is strongly indicative of the Beatlemania phenomenon. The reaction of a crowd like this recalls the mass hysteria that followed The Beatles and was subsequently the cause of their abandoning live performance. The apparently enormous change from emphatic stoicism to terrifying mob mentality as elicited by a pop-group, demonstrates the power and impact of popular music on the youth culture. Pop-groups have a certain power and ability to evoke heightened emotion from their fans, a fact which Michelangelo Antonioni took great advantage of.

Antonioni not only comments on the power of popular music here but indeed asks, does it have purpose, or like the rest of the film, is pop music just another ineffectual, pointless distraction from reality? The Yardbirds in one instant mean the world to the photographer and yet the very next mean nothing at all and are simply dropped like litter; the unwanted debris of life. Like *Help!*, this film is a comment on the ephemeral existence of the pop-group; a commentary on the crass consumerism of sixties Britain in which at one moment a pop-group are on top and in another are just yesterday's news. In the same way that Richard Lester was asked to produce a Beatles film before their popularity diminished and the fickle consumerist society forgets

this group and moves on to another, here Antonioni mocks the industry and satirises the culture of short-lived hyper-fame.

The critique of the fickle pop-music industry and the phenomenon of short-lived hyper-fame is the key concept in a number of films from the 1960s. Notably, it is the key concern which Peter Watkins studied in his film *Privilege* (1967). This film, set in, 'Britain in the near future', satirises exactly what Antonioni can be seen to have done with *Blow-Up*. As the church are seen to say in Watkins' film, "Steven Shorter has the largest following in the history of the entertainment business. We need a larger audience, so we're using Steve's".

Interestingly, it was evidently important to Antonioni that his pop-group be a famous one. Speaking in 2002, Steve Howe, guitarist for progressive rock group Yes, spoke about his involvement with *Blow- Up*. Howe's band in the 1960s, Tomorrow, were originally contracted to play this musical sequence within the 'Ricky Tick' club but were dropped when The Yardbirds agreed to do the film. Howe said, 'I was under the impression we lost it [the film appearance] because Jeff Beck or the Yardbirds were bigger than us, and therefore we lost it through that kind of scale'.[20] Furthermore, interviewer Mike Tiano suggested that Antonioni had originally wanted The Who, a much bigger name than even The Yardbirds. It was clearly of some importance that the pop-group be of as high a cultural standing as possible. The suggestion here is that Antonioni wished to channel the artistic resonance of this culturally revered pop-group in order to infuse his film with pop culture importance and impact. With regards to Sinyard's assertion concerning the aligning qualities of both musical and filmic virtuosity, the same is to be said here, that Antonioni has associated the group's musical virtuosity and artistic profundity with his own film's artistry and technical virtuosity. Just as Godard's film's association with The Rolling Stones was seen to augment

[20]Steve Howe quoted in Mike Tiano. "Conversation with Steve Howe". In: *Notes From the Edge* n.a.230 (2002).

its impact, Antonioni's association with a band of a strong cultural following gives it a larger, more culturally significant, artistic impact.

This art-cinema, pop-music symbiotic relationship is evident elsewhere in the 1960s. As pop music's artistic importance grew, its association with the cinema was seen to change. As pop-music evolved and changed so too did the films in which it could be found. As music was taken to the realms of politics and psychedelia, the art-cinema found it to be a more and more significant device. Although neither a British act nor British director, this cinéma vérité film was made in Britain, featured British musicians Alan Price and Donovan and is thus is worthy of note. *Don't Look Back* (1966), D.A.Pennebaker's film, which documents Bob Dylan's 1965 concert tour of the UK, is an excellent, and deftly crafted piece of art-cinema documentary filmmaking. The film's success owes much to the impact of Richard Lester's faux cinéma vérité take on the Beatles though mostly indeed to the success of Bob Dylan's reception in Britain. As an artist he was received God-like, as one reviewer wrote about Dylan's Sheffield performance documented by the film, that the crowd were waiting for, 'the second coming of Bob Dylan, their singing Messiah.[21] As with The Rolling Stones fan who would rather die than not dedicate his hair style to his favourite pop-performer, Dylan's fans were similarly committed. This same reviewer quoted members of the audience as declaring, 'we can live again tonight [...] Bob Dylan's back and we're singing again'.[22]

Once more revisiting Sinyard's suggestion that musical virtuosity is aligned with a technical virtuosity it is true to say that with these artists, The Yardbirds, Bob Dylan, The Rolling Stones, and The Beatles, there was something extraordinary, consequential or profound about them which identifies them as more artistically viable amongst other groups. The Beatles were a phe-

[21]Dan Oneil. "Review". In: *Guardian* (1965), p. 6, p. 6.
[22]Ibid., p. 6.

nomenon; artistically they were technically and progressively unmatched and critically the world has not seen a reception the likes of Beatlemania since. The Rolling Stones too were enormously well received, and in addition were celebrated for their subversive, 'bad boys' notorious, drug-centred reception. The Yardbirds were representative of what became known as a white British blues movement. This movement was lead in a large way by ex-Yardbirds lead guitarist, then Cream frontman, and famous blues guitar exponent Eric Clapton. About Bob Dylan however, it was said he was just 'an adequate performer on guitar and harmonica' and that he had a 'harsh, unsophisticated and at times profoundly sad voice'.[23] He was called a 'bleater' whose voice is 'not the voice of the traditional "popular" folksinger'.[24] It was Dylan's political bent and powerful poetic lyricism, labelling him as a protest singer, which raised him to fame. Bob Dylan's lyric poetry and profundity were often commented upon. Diametrically opposed to hysterical reception of other pop-groups, one commentator observed of Dylan's first appearance in the UK that at one performance, 'he induced some two thousand teenagers who would ordinarily scream at the drop of a Beatle to sit still and *listen* to his words'.[25] This critic from *The Guardian*, writing that Dylan is 'chiefly remarkable for the verbal content of his songs', spoke strongly and convincingly of his lyrics that 'the words had a loose framework of assonant and consonant rhyme, using shifting eight to twelve syllable iambic rhythms which adjust themselves as naturally to speech as to song'.[26] *Don't Look Back*'s presentation of Dylan's tour is an artistic and poetically presented piece of cinema. Here then, it is the pop-musician which creates the art within this film.

The power of this marriage between cinéma vérité and popular-music was much explored during the 1960s. Peter Watkins, after his extremely well received, quasi-documentary, first feature *The War Game* (1965), went on

[23]Jeremy Rundall. "Chimes of Freedom". In: *Guardian* (1965), p. 9, p. 9.
[24]Oneil, "Review", op. cit., p. 6.
[25]Rundall, "Chimes of Freedom", op. cit., p. 9.
[26]Ibid., p. 9.

to direct *Privilege*, about the fictional pop sensation Steven Shorter, played by real life Manfred Mann front man Paul Jones. This is an incredibly polemic film, commenting discerningly, as Antonioni did, on contemporary social issues, criticising the mass-cultural consumerist and impersonal society which existed at the expense of the individual. Michael Kustow, writing for *Sight & Sound* called *Privilege* a commentary on 'the structural things that matter in our society - the degree of manipulation that characterises politics as much as advertising and mass-culture'.[27] This is however an exemplary film in considering the body of British art-cinema throughout the 1960s. This art-film, exhibiting a dystopian, church-run, coalition-government prophecy is a fantastic, and a rare example of British cinematic craftsmanship at its best. Kustow suggested that *Privilege*, 'blazes with an animus and anger which is rare in British films'.[28] Indeed this is a film which once again stands as testament to Britain's ability to produce art-cinema as powerful, poetic and indeed polemic as any seen in continental Europe. Interestingly, Watkins' film takes the state of British popular-music - albeit transposed, parable-like, a few years into the future - as its impetus for artistic creation. It is the pop-music, and pop-culture industry which Watkins is attacking within this film; a point made all the more true through the film's use of bone fide pop-culture icons such as Paul Jones and Jean Shrimpton. Watkins creates a wonderful world of quasi-documentary causing his audience, like Antonioni's, to question what of which they see is real. A genuine pop-star, a genuine fashion model, a real musical performance and real musical professionals; as Kustow so accurately concludes, 'the figures for profits or record sales quoted are accurate: the trouble is that in the unformed world of the film, sliding from documentary into fiction, you don't know if you can trust them'.[29] In addition to using genuine pop-stars, the inclusion of genuine

[27]Michael Kustow. "Without and Within: Thoughts on politics, society, and the self in some recent films". In: *Sight & Sound* 36.3 (1967), pp. 113–117, p. 115.
[28]Ibid., p. 115.
[29]Ibid., p. 116.

musical performances also gives Watkins' film its credible impact. Pop-music is the key to this film's artistic impact. Far from detracting from the film, popular music here has become an integral component of the film's artistry and success.

Cinéma vérité and its association with music is a long standing tradition. The documentary mode is an advantageous model in which to present a pop-group or an artist; a truthful representation of a realistic life. The media glamourises pop-musicians enough that they be an ideal source for filmmaking. As with the *A Hard Day's Night* model, the artist or artists themselves generate a great deal of a guaranteed viewership through fan devotion and so to feature a pop music act is to effectively guarantee a certain portion of your audience. Indeed the bigger the act, the more profitable the film therefore will be. This is the 'problem' as seen by Bernstein and his assertion that film music of the time concerns itself with entering the "pop Top 40 charts".[30] His suggestion is that cinema, in concentrating on simply presenting as big a pop-group as possible, is doing this to its own artistic detriment. The cinéma vérité mode however, in presenting performers is not acting to subvert habitual practice and so it is here we can find many examples of pop-music's playing a key role in establishing artistic credentials for a film. As already iterated, those acts which most strongly suggest artistic sensibilities when presented in film are most often the progressive, political, subversive, radical or unconventional groups. None more so than the progressive-rock group Pink Floyd and their cinematic involvement with the avant-garde filmmaker Peter Whitehead. Whitehead is primarily a documentary filmmaker. Having trained as a painter he moved into film making and shot his first film, *The Perception of Life* (1964), a documentary about biology, filmed entirely through the lens of a microscope. Always an experimental and forward thinking artist, Whitehead said about the film, 'I did it

[30]Bernstein, "Whatever Happened to Great Movie Music?", op. cit., p. 55.

as a ballet, and cut it to music. They weren't happy about it, but I was'.[31] Whitehead then made the landmark film of the poetry event in the Royal Albert Hall, *Wholly Communion* (1965). Following the success of this film Whitehead went on to make what came to be known as his 'pop concerto', *Tonite Let's All Make Love in London* (1967).

This 'satirical collage of the "Swinging London" phenomenon'[32] is a documentary about the culture of sixties London made up of interviews with cultural icons such as Julie Christie, Michael Cain and David Hockney, backed by an avant-garde, prog-rock epic instrumental 'Interstellar Overdrive' by Pink Floyd. Richard Roud wrote about *Tonite Let's All Make Love in London* that, 'this film makes a great advance on Whiteheads earlier "Wholly Communion"; "Tonite," in fact, resolves that eternal problem of direct filmmaking: the search for focus becomes elevated to a style'.[33]

Whitehead's film is a psychedelic performance encompassing an entire cultural spectrum from actors and painters to models and musicians. This 'pop concerto' is an enormously experimental take on the documentary mode. For Richard Roud, Whitehead's documentary so expertly portrays its interviewees that it goes beyond cinéma vérité, creating something more than just documentary. Roud observed that although it is technically a documentary containing genuine interviews:

> although none of them plays a role, each of them appearing in his own person, as it were, yet their function in the film is far removed from what is usually called a documentary. They are finally actors, in a sense, for Whitehead has used them dramatically as the elements in his satirical collage[34]

What Roud has observed here evidences the suggestion that Peter Whitehead, whilst always working experimentally, has taken the documentary,

[31]P.H.S. "Film Man's Philosophy". In: *The Times* (1967), p. 8, p. 8.
[32]Richard Roud. "New Fims". In: *The Guardian* (1967), p. 7, p. 7.
[33]Ibid., p. 7.
[34]Ibid., p. 7.

cinéma vérité mode to a new position, effectively evolving the medium. This type of experimental cinema is only augmented by what can simultaneously be labelled as experimental music. The song which Pink Floyd play throughout this film, 'Interstellar Overdrive', is an instrumental piece from their first album. On the album the song is an outstanding and pioneering 9 minutes and 40 seconds long although for the film, more spectacularly revolutionary, it is a 16 minute and 52 second improvised prog-rock piece. This improvisational type of instrumental is often and habitually found with jazz though its use in popular-music was quite unorthodox. In fact, for *The Observer* music critic Tony Palmer, the Pink Floyd soundtrack for the film was much more profoundly impactful than the film itself. Palmer wrote of Pink Floyd that, 'For Peter Whitehead's dreary film, 'Tonite Let's All Make Love in London,' they contributed a notable score which said far more about the nightmare scene depicted than all the pictures put together'.[35] Quite clearly here, the musical performers are equally as artistic as the avant-garde documentarist, if not more so. With regards to the meeting of art-film and art-music, if one stands so artistically and effectively without the other then one can only conclude that their marriage must augment the effect.

Pink Floyd were involved with a number of additional film soundtracks throughout their career although in the 1960s, in addition to their work with Peter Whitehead, the group worked only on Peter Sykes' *The Committee* (1968) and Barbet Schroeder's *More* (1969). Pete Sykes' film is a wondrously incongruent, cinematic modernist film akin to Peter Watkins' parable-esque, and dystopian, *Privilege*. *The Committee*, is a film whose short length, 'adds to the film's sense of non-conformity'.[36] Both films share a protagonist in fact, once again Manfred Mann frontman and pop-singer Paul Jones plays the lead. Sykes' film involves the unnamed Paul Jones character being picked

[35]Tony Palmer. "Pink Floyd's pilgramage". In: *Observer* (1968), p. 27, p. 27.
[36]N.A. *Committe DVD Interviews with Peter Sykes and Max Steuer*. DVD Extras. 2004.

up hitchhiking, losing his temper and be-heading his driver. The eponymous committee is then called, for which Jones' character is to be a member. This committee and others like it are used, like a jury of one's peers, to judge and maintain order in the community, "they keep the 'system' going". This film explores the hitchhiker's paranoia thinking it is he the committee are formed to judge. This film, with its prophetically warning message declares that "one criminal act could turn a reasonable society into an unreasonable one".

Pop-music plays an extremely important role within this film. The musical score was written and performed by Pink Floyd and there is an on-screen performance-mode sequence of a live performance by psychedelic, 'shock-rock' group, The Crazy World of Arthur Brown. Furthermore, the film's title song 'The Committee' is a pop ballad depicting the film's events, sung by Paul Jones himself. This art-film explores arrogance and order, relying largely on its pop-musical pedigree to contextualise it in this socio-cultural, morally liberal and creative mood of the 1960s. Through association with progressive, psychedelic and forthrightly avant-garde music this film strikes a chord with the culturally expanding and intellectually explorative attitude inextricably linked with the progressive music movement and its associated cultural limbs of art and philosophy.

Psychedelia, like progressive 'prog-rock', was a musical movement which too was inextricably linked with an air of cultural expansion and artistic exploration. Regarding their presence within the cinema The Beatles were once more largely instrumental in the marriage of psychedelia and pop-music. The film which accompanied their album of the same name, *Magical Mystery Tour* (1967), was a technicolor, psychedelic coach trip. This film however, was ill received by the majority of critics. John Russell Taylor suggested that this poor critical response was due in part to the belief that, 'with all that money and power they could have bought the best talents to give us a glossy

professional job'.[37]

Another psychedelic piece of art-cinema, punctuated with a score by a pop-musician working on the fringes of his trade, appeared in 1968. Joe Massot's *Wonderwall* (1968), a pop fantasy in which a stereotypically maladroit professor, played by Jack MacGowran, becomes obsessed with his free-loving, hippy neighbours upon whom he spies through a number of holes he bores in their dividing wall. For this wonderful, colourfully expressive and ambiguously unconventional film George Harrison provides a haunting and expressive eastern-infused, psychedelic pop-score. *Wonderwall* did not receive a great deal of critical attention though George Harrison's release of the film's score 'Wonderwall Music' did. It marked the first of his solo albums and was in fact the first solo album of any of The Beatles. Reviewing the soundtrack for *Films and Filming* John Carlsen called it 'an exceptional score',[38] and interestingly observed that the music, 'reflects the strong influence on Harrison of Indian music, which has now become an important part of the psychedelic world'.[39]

Reading this film as an element in art-film psychedelic exploration one can see that the Harrison soundtrack is key to the films meditative and thought provoking message. For John Russell Taylor the film's experimental and fantastic portrayal proved too much. He complained that:

> The first half [...] is not at all bad, and suggests that Mr. Massot may have some real talent for film-making of a straight-forward traditional kind. But then fantasy invades the whole screen and the film loses direction completely[40]

But of course is not this equivocal, direction-free narrative with its per-

[37]John Russell Taylor. "Larking Back". In: *Sight & Sound* 37.2 (1968), pp. 69–70, p. 70.
[38]John Carlsen. "Harrison's Wonderwall". In: *Films and Filming* 15.4 (1969), p. 70, p. 70.
[39]Ibid., p. 70.
[40]John Russell Taylor. "Chabrol's "Les Biches" at Cinecenta". In: *The Times* (1969), p. 12, p. 12.

vading sense of fantasy, exactly indicative of psychedelia and experimentation? Is not this wandering sense of ambiguity perfectly echoed by Harrison's Indian infused score? Indeed it is. For Gordon Gow, reviewing *Wonderwall*, Harrison's score is such an integral component of the film's success that it can be seen equally as a character within the narrative itself. For Gow, 'the Harrison music replaces dialogue, waxing almost vocal like a cinema organist from the silent days'.[41] The music then is an extremely important element of this film. The music works alongside the visual artistry of this film and punctuates key emotional elements of the film. Throughout the film the music intrudes diegetically to invade the professor's home and his research to the point that the subjects beneath his microscope react to it, dancing to the beat. As the music animates his lifeless apartment, so too does it breath life into his butterflies as they burst magically into colourful, psychedelic motion. With the semantic incongruencey and ambiguous plot of this art-film, Massot uses the music to speak more clearly. Circus-esque music accompanies the more ludicrous elements of the professors fantasy, whilst slow and solitary strings accompany sadness and sorrow. Massot accentuates and punctuates the impact and emotive nature of the film as did the masters of silence cinema.

Elsewhere within the decade, one of the practices which best associated a film with pop-culture was the appearance of a 'personality' on screen. There were a number of occasions where this visual association was exhibited within the art-cinema of the 1960s. Just as Paul Jones and Jean Shrimpton are visual signifiers of a popular-culture fashion and music industry for *Privilege*, so too is actress and singer Jane Birkin's appearance in Massot's *Wonderwall*. Birkin not only appeared as the comely model and neighbour in *Wonderwall* but appeared as the young model hopeful in Antonioni's pop-culture infused *Blow-Up*.

[41]Gordon Gow. "Wonderwall". In: *Films and Filming* 15.6 (1969), p. 44, p. 44.

A similar effect to the one achieved by Jane Birkin can be seen in the work of singer-actress and The Rolling Stones' Mick Jagger's long time partner Marianne Faithfull. Faithfull appeared briefly in Jean-Luc Godard's film *Made in USA* (1966). A film which in 1967 Ian Cameron called, 'a film which one does not fully understand, a network of references and thematic points, many of which one has possibly missed'.[42] In the film, Faithfull sings a haunting verse repeated in moments throughout this B-Movie homage. Faithfull however did have the starring role in Jack Cardiff's psychedelic, sexualised and metaphor laced *The Girl on a Motorcycle* (1968). Cardiff's film is experimental, albeit leaning towards the pornographic as its reviewer observed, '*Girl on a Motorcycle* will probably thrill countless maidenly devotees of women's magazine pornography'.[43] Although, regarding the film's direction, the reviewer did relent to celebrate Cardiff's, 'lush stops with endless shots of mistily-filtered landscapes, tricky colour fantasies, and nudging shots of the heroine's bust and buttocks'.[44]

Beyond her appearing if not naked then wearing only her tight leather suit, Marianne Faithfull, pop-star and pop-culture personality, adds nothing more to the film than any other actress might. Her pop-star status does not inform the film and unlike her singing in Godard's film Faithfull does not demonstrate herself to be a pop-star and no indication is made towards her cultural status. A most revealing comparison could be made here with Richard Lester's *How I Won the War* (1967). This film was ill received when it appeared that the film's purpose was widely misunderstood. In his book on the films of Richard Lester, Neil Sinyard quoted both *Films in Review* and the *New York Times* as calling the makers of the film 'traitorous mad monsters' and attacking the film claiming 'war isn't funny'.[45] Sinyard

[42]Ian Cameron. "Made in U.S.A". In: *The Films of JEAN-LUC GODARD*. Ed. by Ian Cameron. London: Studio Vista Limited, 1969, pp. 131–139, p. 135.
[43]N.A. "Girl on a Motorcycle". In: *Monthly Film Bulletin* 35.417 (1968), p. 156, p. 156.
[44]Ibid., p. 156.
[45]Neil Sinyard. *The Films of Richard Lester*. Kent: Croom Helm, 1985, p. 53.

concludes that this film, which claims 'war might sometimes be necessary, but it is never noble',[46] is a 'perverse film that sets itself the task of making an audience feel ashamed of what it sees'.[47] It was this very device of portraying a volatile mixture of humour and horror which critics found so abhorrent and 'traitorous' about this art-film. Penelope Houston, writing in 1967, took from the film that it was, 'not so much directly anti-war, as anti other war movies'.[48] But for Houston too, the film's message falls short. She complained that the film's detail was, 'too undernourished: more *Carry On*, in fact, than *Catch 22*'.[49]

Interestingly, Houston's attention to the film did not bear any consideration of the role which John Lennon played whereas Neil Sinyard called *How I Won the War*, 'Lennon's most important film'.[50] For one critic, Lennon's presence, far from augmenting the film's impact in fact goes some way to the contrary. Indeed, 'the casting of John Lennon as the whimsical Gripweed [does not] serve Lester's purpose'.[51] For Jan Dawson, Lennon's pop-musician and culturally iconic status serves only to alienate the audience from the character. Dawson complained that, 'one is reminded principally that he is, after all, a Beatle'.[52] For Sinyard, Lester's pervading sense of alienation is used as a Brechtian device in an, 'attempt to destroy the illusion of narrative and present the film as a kind of political debate'.[53] One might attribute the audience's alienation from Lennon's credible performance of Gripweed to this Brechtian device though as Dawson does, one is inclined to read that Lester's 'ideas misfire, lost somewhere between the paper on which they were

[46]Ibid., p. 48.
[47]Ibid., p. 55.
[48]Penelope Houston. "HOW I WON THE WAR". In: *Sight & Sound* 36.4 (1967), p. 202, p. 202.
[49]Ibid., p. 202.
[50]Sinyard, "The English Army Had Just Won the War", op. cit., p. 126.
[51]Jan Dawson. "HOW I WON THE WAR, Great Britain, 1967". In: *Monthly Film Bulletin* 34.396 (1967), pp. 168–169, p. 169.
[52]Ibid., p. 169.
[53]Sinyard, *The Films of Richard Lester*, op. cit., p. 50.

conceived and the film on which they finally appear'.[54] What one witnesses here is the negative impact this use of pop-culture personalities can have on a film. In the same way that the inclusion of a pop-group can go some way to guaranteeing a certain portion of a dedicated audience as in *Blow-Up* and *Sympathy for the Devil*, so too can their inclusion be detrimental. What is evident is that when used outside of their recognised functionality, pop-culture personalities, singers, models and musicians, do not always carry their artistic prowess across the medium. Indeed pop-musicians as successful as John Lennon would find it difficult to sever themselves from their music. Neil Sinyard however, found Lennon's presence in this film to be potent. This critic asserted that Lennon subordinates his personality within this film and commented on how Lester chose not to play on the 'mythic associations of the pop superstar'[55] as many other filmmakers did. For Sinyard:

> No other Beatle could have appeared in *How I Won the War* [whereas] Lennon seemed quite at home amidst the film's surreal comedy, its cutting cleverness, its controversial tone and message, and its fearless anti-authoritarianism. It is a film that anticipates Lennon's more overt gestures of protest[56]

As the 1960s came to its chronological end so too did the permissive culture and the 'swinging London' premise find its demise.

K. J. Donnelly went so far as to call *Performance* (1970), 'a fittingly symbolic end to the 1960s'.[57] The impression of this darkly pessimistic film for many was of a similar vein, just as he too classified the film as being, 'crucially about the end of the 1960s',[58] Neil Sinyard observed that, '*Performance* leaps about in time and space, as it exposes an era of permissiveness now collaps-

[54]Dawson, "HOW I WON THE WAR, Great Britain, 1967", op. cit., p. 169.
[55]Sinyard, "The English Army Had Just Won the War", op. cit., p. 131.
[56]Ibid., p. 130.
[57]Donnelly, *Pop Music in British Cinema*, op. cit., p. 14.
[58]Neil Sinyard. *The Films of Nicholas Roeg*. London: Letts, 1991, p. 11.

ing under the twin onslaughts of drugs and violence'.[59] As Sinyard highlights Richard Lester's shifting mood into his 'trilogy of disillusionment',[60] the popular mood shifted towards a darker, gangster infused world, punctuated by a rising dissatisfaction and ennui with 'swinging London'. This attitude is perfectly highlighted by *Performance*.

Popular-music and its association with British cinema of the 1960s relied on its interdependence on the cultural phenomenon of 'swinging London' for its success. In the latter half of the decade, 'swinging London' and its cultural connotations, it seemed, had reached its media saturation point and had fallen out of favour with British critics. John Russell Taylor felt that the trouble was, 'that swinging London is now for us what Lenin is for the Russians. It's there, of course, but who in his right mind would make a film about it now?'.[61] Russell Taylor's complaint came in 1967, just a year after the famed *Time* magazine cover story attributed with coining the term. Writing about the release of Peter Whitehead's 'pop concerto' *Tonite Lets All Make Love in London*, Russell Taylor highlights, 'the feeling of "oh no, not again" to be got over'.[62] Moreover, this feeling of boredom with what had become a commonplace approach was documented by Gordon Gow who warns of being, 'jaded by too prolonged an exposure to the swinging half-myth'.[63] John Russell Taylor's complaint remained and his issue with a style of filmmaking which he termed 'thoroughly old hat' reared itself again in 1968 when he suggested that:

> The whole myth of swinging London was exploded nearly eighteen months ago, but films reporting on it excitedly, like *Tonite Lets All Make Love in London*, or with a tiny measure of timid irony, like *Smashing Time*, are still only just arriving on West

[59]Ibid., p. 14.
[60]Idem, *The Films of Richard Lester*, op. cit., p. 53.
[61]John Russell Taylor. "Remarkable film from British director". In: *The Times* (1967), p. 8, p. 8.
[62]Ibid., p. 8.
[63]Gow, "Wonderwall", op. cit., p. 44.

End screens[64]

For Taylor, Gow, and and a number of other critics the 'myth' of 'swinging London' was thoroughly defused and with it too was the free-spirited pop-musical. *Performance* then, featuring Mick Jagger, a story about a crazed and disillusioned has-been pop-star who has lost his power as a 'performer', ushered in a different kind of pop-music commentary. Jagger's character, Turner, takes in James Fox's character Chas in order to, 'siphon off his predatory persona, like Dracula drawing in the life-giving plasma'.[65] One can read this film as an inversion of the 'swinging London' film; an inward look at the underside of the pop-world and the drug culture it connotes. Mick Jagger here is an interesting choice for the musician Turner in accordance with his own arrest record and infamous association with a 'bad-boy' drug culture. Mick Jagger's presence in this film functions conversely to John Lennon's appearance in *How I Won The War*. As opposed to acting towards the detriment of the film's artistic impact, the on-screen presence of Mick Jagger, the pop-icon, serves to authenticate and ground the narrative. This pairing of pop-personality and art-cinema functions in a unique way to other elements of the 1960s. Only as this film depicts this disillusioned world of collapsing counter-culture and darkening, oblique ideals does the presence of the musician act to enhance the film. Sinyard suggests that the film's use of Mick Jagger, 'adds an extra explosive dimension',[66] concluding that this power comes from the fact that, 'more than the Beatles, Jagger symbolises *alienated* youth. More even than that, Jagger seems alienated by his own image'.[67]

A further film which effectively demonstrates the changing use of pop-musicians within the British cinema of the 1960s was made by a Polish film-

[64]John Russell Taylor. "Accident". In: *Sight & Sound* 35.4 (1966), pp. 179–184, p. 69.
[65]Walker, *Hollywood England*, op. cit., p. 415.
[66]Sinyard, *The Films of Nicholas Roeg*, op. cit., p. 16.
[67]Ibid., p. 16.

maker working for the first time in London. Jerzy Skolimowski's *Deep End* (1970) was set in a bath house in London, 'a city compounded in equal parts of swinging myth and squalid observation, garishly coloured discotheques and faceless smoke-stained streets'.[68] Jan Dawson, writing in 1971, observed of Skolimowski's use of pop-music that, 'with a pop score by Cat Stevens and a frenetically running hero, it seems intermittently to be exploiting the swinging genre on which it so caustically comments'.[69]

As the cultural mood of the 1960s declined into the drug addled and gangster infused, crime and dystopia of the 1970s, so too did British cinema's long profitable (financially, but indeed more importantly, artistically) symbiotic relationship with popular music. The future of the relationship between popular music and art-cinema found hold in the career of 1960s music critic Tony Palmer. Palmer went on to create a prolific filmography as a director, proving most successfully as he involved popular music in the films he produced and directed. Working largely in producing concert footage Tony Palmer started out working in television, notably as Ken Russell's assistant director on *Isadora* (1966). Palmer has worked with a great number of popular musicians from The Beatles to Cream to Rory Gallagher and Frank Zappa and even produced a number of features on the subject of classical musicians. During the 1970s Palmer produced a mammoth television series, *All You Need Is Love* (1976 - 1980), which encompassed an entire history of popular music.

These films can be seen as really cementing the British cinema's profound art-cinema output of the 1960s. These films rebelled against the previously accepted conventions of cinema both technically and thematically, they progressed the medium beyond its current state and explored convoluted, indefinite and ambivalent narratives. During this period Peter Whitehead's film,

[68]Jan Dawson. "London Festival". In: *Sight & Sound* 40.1 (1970/1971), pp. 14–18, p. 17.
[69]Ibid., p. 17.

Tonite Lets All Make Love in London, took the documentary, cinéma vérité mode to a new position, effectively evolving the medium within the cinema; Peter Sykes' *The Committee*, was observed as a rebellious and progressive film, a film whose short length, 'adds to the film's sense of non-conformity';[70] Joe Massot's *Wonderwall*, this equivocal, direction-free narrative with its pervading sense of fantasy is exactly indicative of the psychedelia and experimentation redolent of the ambivalence and tenuous delineation of Bordwell and Thompson's definitive illustration of art-cinema. Furthermore, Richard Lester's *How I Won the War*, as Neil Sinyard observed critics calling the makers of the film 'traitorous mad monsters' and attacking the film claiming that 'war isn't funny',[71] this film too clearly rebelled against accepted perceptions of filmic conventions and progressively reinvigorated the cinema.

Popular music provided British cinema with some of its best and in particular, most artistically profound and morally uncompromising films during the 1960s. Whilst for many, popular music served only to devalue the cinema, in an era when music enjoyed its 'greatest popularity as an art'[72] it is inevitable that popular-music would infect and augment British art-cinema for the better.

[70]N.A. *Committe DVD Interviews with Peter Sykes and Max Steuer*, op. cit.
[71]Sinyard, *The Films of Richard Lester*, op. cit., p. 53.
[72]Bernstein, "Whatever Happened to Great Movie Music?", op. cit., p. 58.

7.0 An exploration of British Directors Working Against Convention

Television men such as Ken Russell, Ken Loach, Peter Watkins and Peter Collinson seem to have swallowed the cinema whole; they are full of tricks learnt from Godard, Resnais, Fellini, Antonioni and almost anyone else you care to name[1]

A great number of eminent film directors over the years have began their feature film making careers by directing for the television. In Britain in particular, television directors seemed a surprisingly prolific source for finding innovative and progressive film directors during the 1960s. Whilst there are several other aspects of circumstance which classify the directors to be studied within this chapter as 'problematic' in the context of my thesis, one of the primary common denominators with regards to these film makers is that they started out working in the medium of television. Names such as Joseph Losey, Richard Lester, Ken Russell, Ken Loach, John Boorman and indeed several others, all occur as directors on the big and small screens alike.

Within the remit of my thesis it is prudent to consider the idea of filmmakers engaging with the experimental but not falling within the neatly defined parameters of my argument. My suggestion, whilst contesting Brian Hoyle's

[1]Taylor, "New Faces in British Cinema", op. cit., p. 17.

assertion about directors working in the late 1970s and 1980s,[2] is that British cinema had an art-cinema as early as the 1930s but none more stronger than it was during the 1960s. There were a number of elements which strongly support the concept of a British art-cinema from the Free Cinema movement, the British New Wave and Swinging London films to the psychedelic pop-infused art-film of the later sixties. More problematical however, are several aspects of British art-cinema which are not so steadfastly definable. Directors such as Joseph Losey, Richard Lester and to some extent Stanley Kubrick, of American nationality but working in Britain, cause some difficulty of critical classification. There is no contention that the films which these directors were producing with mostly British money and British actors, largely on British soil, were in fact British films. There is however, the emotional question as to whether one can categorise the ethos and general feel of these films as British, given the factors involved. The often commented upon and widely critically considered 'nationality debate' is not something I wish to contend nor pursue but these films simply do not settle, without gentle persuasion, into my British art-cinema question. Undoubtedly, and indeed in observation of industry standards, these films are British but through my placing them here within my thesis I wish to highlight my handling of them a little more carefully or at least with some trepidation in outright declaration of films such as *The Servant* (1963), *Accident* (1967) and *The Bed-Sitting Room* (1969) as evidence of a British art-cinema.

In addition to issues with nationality, there are other elements which stand to be highlighted as 'problematic'. To further iterate this idea of art-cinemas as 'railing against' that which came before, key to the idea of my exposing British art-cinema is the concept of filmmakers working against convention. Considering the Bordwell and Thompson definition of art-cinema from the Introduction, one expects semantic incongruency, ambiguous characterisa-

[2]Hoyle, "British art cinema 1975-2000: context and practice", op. cit.

tion and non-linear plot deviation. Inherent within these ideas is the sense of working very much against convention as did for example, the directors of the French *nouvelle vague* or the New Wave in Britain; a new cinema inherently denotes a school of working against convention. There were several filmmakers working throughout the 1960s at producing films against conventions although problematically, often encapsulated within mainstream practices. Ken Loach for example made a large number of unconventional and, to an extent, experimental films throughout the 1960s. Throughout the decade, Loach's work considered the much unexplored themes of social class problems, abortion and homelessness. Indeed his work fits thematically and stylistically, if not chronologically, into the British New Wave mould. However, before his first feature film *Poor Cow* (1967) Loach had worked in filmmaking for the television, placing his early work, if only slightly, beyond the boundaries of British art-cinema. His films nonetheless exist as a strong testament to an art-film sensibility as exhibited by the British filmmakers of the 1960s.

One can similarly read the work of Ken Russell. Films such as his Monitor shows for the BBC series and his documentary *Isadora* (1966) display a great deal of art-film sensibilities and art-house aesthetics. A further film maker, who started his work in American television, and fortunately for Britain emigrated here following his black listing from Hollywood, was Joseph Losey. With such grand critical attention as attributed by this *Monthly Film Bulletin* reviewer, Joseph Losey's work stands out as a body of exemplary films of great British significance:

> Neither a dynamic central performance, nor a director and script writer of individual talent, can conceal the frayed conventions of a story-line [...] largely irrelevant to this film's main purpose: a realistic and unvarnished picture of English prison life[3]

[3]Peter John Dyer. "Criminal". In: *Monthly Film Bulletin* 27.312 (1960), p. 150, p. 150.

Due to their significant, and artistic, contributions to the British cinema what follows is a consideration of the British works of Joseph Losey, Ken Loach and Ken Russell. American born Joseph Losey provided British cinema with some of its most iconic and successful art-films during the 1960s, whilst Ken Loach and Ken Russell, less prolific directors during the 1960s, were important figures in the art cinema of the latter decades yet did provide Britain with some sincerely artistic, personal and poetic art-cinema within my decade of study.

7.1 Joseph Losey

Joseph Losey was a filmmaker with great artistic prowess and an 'art house audacity'.[4] Often credited with exhibiting a strong, European style, art-cinema, Joseph Losey was a genuine art-house filmmaker. Geoffrey Nowell-Smith claimed that British cinema owed its world cinema connections to Losey writing that the British cinema connected with: 'European trends through the alliance of director Jospeh Losey and play-wright Harold Pinter'[5] and contested that Losey's career in Britain, 'gave British cinema a distinction which it had lacked since the demise of the working-class realism movement'.[6] Writing as early as 1966, after Losey had made only five films in Britain, Gilles Jacob declared that, 'Losey has hoisted himself up there at the top as a director'.[7] In his famously scathing attack on the British cinema V. F. Perkins claimed that, 'none of our directors is going to change over night into an artist of extraordinary sensibility',[8] yet went on to suggest that hope does rest in the hands of Joseph Losey. For Perkins, 'Losey has managed to produce three films which can stand comparison with practically anything that any other countries can offer: *Time Without Pity*, *Blind Date*, and *The Criminal*'.[9]

Losey's films are widely and critically accepted as fine examples of British art-cinema. For Neil Sinyard, Losey's films, *The Servant*, *Accident*, *King and Country* (1964) and *The Go-Between* (1971) were the core of his intellectual expression and achievement and are, 'among the glories of British film'.[10] Throughout the 1960s Joseph Losey made a number of films which faultlessly encapsulate his cinematic prowess and artistic expression but that also

[4]Sinyard, "Intimate Stranger: the early British films of Joseph Losey", op. cit., p. 112.
[5]Nowell-Smith, *Making Waves: New Cinemas of the 1960s*, op. cit., p. 133.
[6]Ibid., p. 135.
[7]Gilles Jacob. "Joseph Losey or the camera calls". In: *Sight & Sound* 35.2 (1966), pp. 62–67, p. 62.
[8]Perkins, "The British Cinema", op. cit., p. 6.
[9]Ibid., p. 6.
[10]Sinyard, "Intimate Stranger: the early British films of Joseph Losey", op. cit., p. 124.

perfectly exemplify what is to be seen as an extremely fruitful period for British art-cinema.

In 1963 Losey made *Eva* (1963), staring Jeanne Moreau and Stanley Baker, shot in Venice. This wonderfully expressive exploration of the life of a high-class call girl has been called, 'Losey's greatest mistake,'[11] and about which Losey himself remarked, 'How could I possibly have made a film that, even no matter what they did to it, was so bad'.[12] Upon its release the film was predominantly ill received. Speaking with James Leahy, Joseph Losey explained that the issue lie with there being multiple versions of the film. He spoke of three prints of the film that were never shown, the work print, the version he cut and then the version he re-cut for the producers. In addition, there was the version that the producers themselves put out:

> of which there were various versions, in which they re-dubbed a number of the principle actors, destroying completely any conception of language unity - consistency of accents and the languages themselves - and in which they re-dubbed Virna Lisi to make her performance quite idiotic[13]

The film which was put out on general release was not the film which Losey cut and presented but was in fact the result of studio changes made without Losey's consent. The studio cut 'integral' sections of dialogue, inserted more where it was not needed and, as Losey complained, 'They eliminated what I consider to be one of the great soundtracks of all time'.[14] In Losey's words, these cuts were made, 'without any sense of the rhythm of the picture, the intention, or the poetic qualities in it'.[15] However, given the

[11]Jacob, "Joseph Losey or the camera calls", op. cit., p. 62.
[12]Losey quoted in James Leahy. *The Cinema of Joseph Losey.* London: A. Zwemmer Limited, 1967, p. 106.
[13]Ibid., p. 109.
[14]Ibid., p. 110.
[15]Ibid., p. 110.

film's final, if not original, release, much of Losey's vision was restored. The resulting film is an extremely personal and passionate portrayal; and a beautifully presented art-film whose aesthetics, from the expert mise-en-scène to the adept and visually stunning cinematography, echo a great deal of what can be seen in the works of Fellini, Antonioni, Resnais and other European greats. Such sequences as the beautifully suggestive cinematography of the silent funeral procession and the 'fallen angel' which must be folded down in order to enter Venice and the quick montage editing of the sultry and metaphoric night club sequence in Rome and its sequences of juxtaposed images of the young blond girl with white pearls and the dancer in the black leotard, jazz dancing, eliciting the feeling of conflict so key in this film. James Leahy heralded this film as, 'perhaps Losey's most personal and subjective film, [...] one of the very great films, and arguably Losey's finest work so far'.[16]

Following *Eva*, Losey made a film, as Tom Milne claimed,

> which demonstrates - if it still needs demonstration - that Losey is a brilliant and often inventive technician whose uncertain selective powers are just as likely to lead him to absurdity, as art[17]

For Milne, Losey's work on *The Damned* was both brilliant and inventive; a somewhat telling description of the potential Losey held as this praise comes in advance of his making those films for whose enormous impact he is better remembered. In 1963 Losey made the wonderfully expressive and richly symbolic, seminal film, *The Servant*. This film marks the significant point in Losey's career at which he teamed up with playwright Harold Pinter. The three films which they made in collaboration, *The Servant*, *Accident* and

[16]James Leahy. *The Cinema of Joseph Losey*. London: A. Zwemmer Limited, 1967, p. 116.
[17]Tom Milne. "The Damned". In: *Monthly Film Bulletin* 30.348 (1963), p. 59, p. 59.

The Go-Between, are some of Losey's best known and most expertly crafted, art-cinema masterworks.

The Servant explores the deteriorating relationship between servant and master; an analysis of the inadequacies of the antiquated and anachronistic British aristocracy; the problematic nature of complicated relationships and difficult love and the invasion and disruption of the home equilibrium. Tony, as a symbol of the old ways of the aristocracy, hires Barrett as his man-servant, with which Tony's fiancée Susan takes issue. Barrett brings his sister to work for Tony as a maid with whom both Barrett and Tony enter into sexual relations, it becoming clear that it is not in fact Barrett's sister. This relationship acts to destabilise Tony's position of power within the household and to instigate the film's eventual role reversal.

Losey's style is to be perceived as an incredibly important element in creating meaning. Losey uses mise-èn-scène so expertly as to highlight every shot as a rich tableaux. There are a great number of leit-motifs within the film, from bars, to mirrors, to games; cinematographically, his shots are often interrupted by bars, or gates, or windows, and as such, Tony is often shot through the stair banisters or through the dividing woodwork of the restaurant. Thus, Tony is imprisoned within this film in may ways. Trapped by his upbringing and circumstance, in the old ways of the aristocracy; Tony is trapped in a relationship with Susan, a character both he and the audience come to despise he is ensnared in the web of Vera's sexual advances which are used to blackmail and destabilise his position. He is also trapped within himself when Barrett apparently drugs him, inducing an almost comatose, perambulatory state. Yet, most effectively, Tony is trapped within his infernal house. This is a house which, from the decor and furniture to the food and flowers, bares Barrett's distinct finger print and strong hold. Tony is trapped behind the house's banisters, within its shower and, as evidenced by his confusion of secret doors and unknown rooms, he is trapped in the

labyrinthine home itself. Ultimately, Tony is trapped by what the house represents; its size and decadence, with its secret library and enormous brand glasses, echo an aristocratic and ultimately outdated home and lifestyle.

The home too represents Barrett, or rather Barrett's power over Tony. Barrett is this house as much as he is the servant of it. He has decorated it, chosen the furniture, defended it against the dangers of the builders, sourced the sculpture for the garden, essentially chose its inhabitants in his 'sister' Vera and the group of women he brings in at the end, and he of course maintains it in cleanliness and stability. Interestingly, once these traditional roles of servant and master are reversed and Barrett becomes the one being doted upon, the house falls almost into ruin. What is telling is that, this house is to be seen as a new order and a modern world, a world which engulfs out-dated Tony. And yet, when Tony finds a more fitting, and subservient role, he cannot maintain the house and fails in his new position at which Barrett once so expertly succeeded. This house then, both overwhelms and consumes Tony, as the new order and modern Britain must consume, destabilise and remove the old ways of the aristocracy.

Visual symbolism, through virtuoso mise-èn-scène and masterly cinematography, is Losey's most powerful weapon as a director and it comes across most strikingly in this film. Losey's use of mirrors and mirror images within this film is a fantastic device through which he builds meaning and echoes the distortion and destabilisation happening within the narrative of *The Servant*. The one bevelled and convex mirror hung in the drawing room is used to particularly lasting effect. This stretched, contorted and distorted view given here acts as a brilliant metaphor for the emotional state of the characters and for Tony in particular. Just as Tony is continually trapped, so too is he contorted, doubled and metaphorically broken, stretched and spread too thin by Losey's artistic use of both mise-èn-scène and cinematography.

The film was described by Peter John Dyer as, 'though by no means perfect, *The Servant* is Joseph Losey's most impressive film'[18] and as a film in which, 'Dirk Bogarde gives the performance of his career'.[19] For Dyer, the film was, 'consistently gripping in its imagination and overall tact, and there is less evidence of a straining after a *tour de force* than Losey has ever shown before'.[20]

Gilles Jacob, whilst referring to *The Servant* as 'gold',[21] did find fault with the director's style and approach. Specifically within *The Servant* Jacob found that the last third of the film shows:

> that by indulging ornamentation in the name of beauty, and by submitting to the mannerisms which nag away inside him, Losey can coin a tinselly counterfeit to mar his collection of genuine gold'[22]

For Jacob, 'Losey is inclined to overload his films with symbolic meanings'.[23] This technique, seen however detrimentally, is also read by Jacob as an advantageous and artistic approach to creating intricately subtle and profound cinema. Jacob praised Losey's work with symbolism and metaphor with specific reference to *The Servant* when he celebrated:

> In *The Servant*, the emphasis given to angles and staircases should be seen not so much as a strategic advantage or disadvantage given to a particular character, as a latent symbolism of the complex moral ascendancies and submissions which work as interdependently as the water-levels in a chain of canal locks[24]

[18]Peter John Dyer. "SERVANT, THE, Great Britain, 1963". In: *Monthly Film Bulletin* 30.348/359 (1963), p. 169, p. 169.
[19]Ibid., p. 169.
[20]Ibid., p. 169.
[21]Jacob, "Joseph Losey or the camera calls", op. cit., p. 65.
[22]Ibid., p. 62.
[23]Ibid., p. 62.
[24]Ibid., p. 65.

In his appraisal of Joseph Losey's work in 1966, despite the praises of *The Servant* and the heralding of Losey's, 'constant questioning evolution',[25] this consistent revolutionary approach to reinvigorating the art-cinema, Jacob still felt a distinct foundering on Losey's part. Jacob, suggesting that, 'Losey's real problem is that he has nothing much to say, nothing original at least',[26] questioned, with an air of finality, 'why, then, should this body of work which amounts almost to a scientific program so often leave one with a sense of dissatisfaction'.[27]

Losey then made the wonderfully satirical *Modesty Blaise* (1966). This film, which is a tongue-in-cheek, spoof spy thriller, paying great deal of attention to the bumbling government officials who cause nothing but trouble and chaos. For its powerful anti-establishment and comically inspired stance, *Modesty Blaise* did not do well critically. Losey himself complained that, 'I don't think that *Modesty Blaise* is the picture that most people are taking it to be'.[28] The film's anti establishment, or at least anti-political message comes across strongly and it was subsequently received somewhat as an 'angry' film. Seen within the critical framework of this thesis it is to be seen that this 'angry' film was rebellious and rejected the conventions of mainstream cinema in its questioning authority and questioning the acceptable. The film's message, however shrouded in pop-culture references to outrageous fashion, great music and a 'swinging', sexually free lifestyle, is indeed a negative one. James Leahy describes the film as, 'an essentially *anti* film; it is anti, certainly, those targets that it obviously aims at - politicians and military leaders for example'.[29] Losey, too, corroborates with this, perhaps ill, reception of *Modesty Blaise* as too negative, calling it, 'a bitter film'.[30]

[25]Ibid., p. 65.
[26]Ibid., p. 64.
[27]Ibid., p. 67.
[28]James Leahy, *The Cinema of Joseph Losey*, op. cit., p. 148.
[29]Leahy, *The Cinema of Joseph Losey*, op. cit., p. 150.
[30]James Leahy, *The Cinema of Joseph Losey*, op. cit., p. 148.

Losey's aim with this particularly scathing narrative was, 'to make its comment on a particularly empty and hideous era of our century. This was the intention.'[31]

After *Modesty Blaise*, Losey returned once more to working with Harold Pinter, producing between them perhaps one of Losey's most underrated films, the incredibly biting, darkly portrayed life of a fickle university Professor, *Accident*. This film explores the fragile nature of man's simple existence; an exploration of how easily a settled existence and a settled family can be disrupted as every sense of stable and wholesome relationships are destroyed and crumble around them. Losey questions one man's equilibrium by removing it entirely and allowing it to return under its own steam. Stephen, played by Losey devotee Dirk Bogarde, has his world turned upside down as his professional future is threatened, his pregnant wife leaves him, he commits adultery in more than one instance, his best friend becomes an enemy and new younger friends seem to destabilise his position of power and authority. This is a film which Leahy called an, 'exploration of the tensions arising from the three-way conflict between man's emotional desires and needs, his legacy of guilt from the morality of the past, and his responsibility towards his fellow human beings.'[32]

1967 saw the release of the second of Losey's films made in collaboration with Pinter, *Accident*.The narrative structure of *Accident* has a wonderfully convoluted construction, encompassing a number of both forward and backward - flashing scenes. Largely in argument for the power which comes from the Losey - Pinter pairing, the strength and beauty of this film is very much in the structure. John Russell Taylor considers this film as highlighting a particular trend in Losey's work, a trend, 'towards something much more restrained and sober, altogether less visually flamboyant and closer to

[31]Ibid., p. 148.
[32]Leahy, *The Cinema of Joseph Losey*, op. cit., p. 158.

the characters'.[33] This is an extremely personal art-film, relying enormously upon empathic identification with the protagonist Stephen. These artistic flashbacks draw us into his psyche with such power that this film relies on. The flashbacks reveal a great deal of what is happening under the surface of Stephen's life. The most interesting of which, and certainly the most dislocating of which, is the sequence in which Stephen meets with Francesca in London. Throughout this sequence the flash backs and flash forwards technique is used to such a marvellous extent that the film here is extremely temporally dislocated. Here, whilst we hear the conversation these two have over dinner we see Stephen call Francesca to make the date, his picking her up, the actual dinner, his taking her home and the two lying, post-coital, in her bed. Thus we see the strain this illicit love affair has on Stephen before, during, and after it happens whilst it simultaneously takes place on the soundtrack. This wonderful atemporal montage sequence is perfectly indicative of the art-film power Joseph Losey exhibits throughout *Accident*.

In conversation with John Russell Taylor, Harold Pinter said of *Accident* that, here, 'the drama goes on inside the characters, and by looking hard at the smooth surface we come to see something of what is going on underneath'.[34] For Pinter, this film explores, 'what happens between the words' and he praised this quality, commenting:

> I think you'll be surprised at the directness, the simplicity with which Losey is directing this film: no elaborations, no odd angles, no darting about. Just a level, intense look at people, at things. As though if you look at them hard enough they will give up their secrets[35]

[33]Taylor, "Accident", op. cit., p. 182.
[34]Harold Pinter quoted in John Russell Taylor. "Accident". In: *Sight & Sound* 35.4 (1966), pp. 179–184, p. 184.
[35]Ibid., p. 184.

The simple, more direct approach to artistic construction, it seems, is key in the success of this film. Its presentation of people, its atemporal structure and its honest depiction of lives is the method Losey uses to 'create' with *Accident*. The artistic prowess here was much compared to the work of Alain Resnais. Dirk Bogarde felt that, 'the whole film is based on strange time-shifts, a bit like what Resnais does'.[36] Pinter too, considering the air of the strange, mysterious and frightening in *L'année dernière à Marienbad* (1961) declared that, with *Accident*, 'its something of that sort of feeling we're trying to get here'.[37]

For Bogarde, the film's artistic impact relies on its narrative complexity. He argued that, 'because the structure is so complex the visual style will be very simple and direct'.[38] In fact, Losey's move away from the ornate and flamboyant style of *The Servant* and *Modesty Blaise* was integral to the success of the more restrained, Resnais-esque approach to the emotive and personal *Accident*. Moreover, Richard Roud, for *Monthly Film Bulletin*, found that, 'Losey has here opted for a style which is simpler than that of his preceding films',[39] claiming that the acting is 'almost faultless' within this film, Roud concluded that, '*Accident* is Losey's most accomplished film because of the perfect adequation of form to content, and vice versa; but also because of the degree to which he penetrates the surface'.[40]

In 1968 Losey followed *Accident* with *Boom*, a story starring Elizabeth Taylor as an aged widow of six wealth husbands, a film which was poorly received and very little commented upon. This was an oddity in the Losey oeuvre seen as, 'somewhat out of gear'[41] in the context of his work. Whilst *Boom* was seen as such, *Secret Ceremony* (1968), his following film, was

[36]Dirk Bogarde quoted in John Russell Taylor. "Accident". In: *Sight & Sound* 35.4 (1966), pp. 179–184, p. 182.
[37]John Russell Taylor, "Accident", op. cit., p. 183.
[38]John Russell Taylor, "Accident", op. cit., p. 183.
[39]Richard Roud. "Accident". In: *Monthly Film Bulletin* 34.396 (1967), pp. 39–40, p. 39.
[40]Ibid., p. 39.
[41]Philip Strick. "Mice in the Milk". In: *Sight & Sound* 38.2 (1969), pp. 77–79, p. 78.

seen as somewhat as a return to the great Losey style. Tom Milne observed that *Secret Ceremony*, 'looks a little like *Accident* from the dark side of the moon'[42] and that, 'the style is entirely Losey's own, a return to the crystalline ellipses of *Accident* after the opulent undulations of *Boom*'.[43] Losey's film here exhibits a number of his key stylistic signatures. As Milne observes of *Secret Ceremony*, the fantastic house whose vaulted roof, cloisters and frescoed walls are evocative of both temple and mausoleum',[44] he could quite as easily be speaking about *The Servant*. As *Secret Ceremony* sees two people living in one opulent household, with one mothering the other whilst the audience, 'catches a glimpse of evil purpose',[45] one can easily read a return to the styling of Losey's earlier, Pinter collaborations.

Albeit released in 1970, Losey's third and final collaboration with Pinter produced another literary adaptation in *The Go-Between*. Building on the multilayered sense of equivocal semantics laid in foundation by their work together on *Accident*, Losey and Pinter's *The Go-Between* is similarly convoluted. Richard Roud says as much:

> In *The Go-Between* everything in the garden, in the house is lovely; it is only underneath the white muslin dresses that beat the savage hearts, and Losey and Pinter burrow beneath the veneer of a civilisation of manners to lay bare what lies there[46]

With this film Losey again uses a non-linear narrative in order to strengthen the film's meaning. *The Go-Between* is the story of Marion, told from the young boy Leo's perspective. Marion, betrothed to Hugh Trimingham is having an illicit affair with lower-class Ted Burgess, a nearby groundskeeper.

[42]Tom Milne. "Secret Ceremony". In: *Monthly Film Bulletin* 36.420/431 (1969), pp. 142–143, p. 143.
[43]Ibid., p. 143.
[44]Ibid., p. 143.
[45]Ibid., p. 143.
[46]Richard Roud. "Going Between". In: *Sight & Sound* 40.3 (1971), pp. 158–159, p. 158.

The film's go-between, Leo, takes notes in secret between Marion and Ted but tragically falls in love with Marion himself. The narrative is one which slowly unfolds as Marion's web of lies and treachery deteriorates and the truth revealed itself. Similarly, Losey's narrative slowly unfold and becomes clearer as the film reaches its climax as the secret relationship collapses. The narrative uses a frame story whereby 'old' Leo revisits the Norfolk country house to speak with elderly Marion, now Lady Trimingham, whilst the story of illicit and unrequited love unfolds in his memory and in the film's eye. Pinter, quoted by John Russell Taylor during production, clarified that:

> gradually as the film progresses we see things that don't quite belong: and old man, an old woman, the village changed by the passage of many years. And these scenes are not in a coherent, consecutive time scheme within themselves: they change, and break off and backtrack[47]

Comparable to the strength of *Accident*, the power of this film comes from Losey's double articulation of time. This gradual revelation gives *The Go-Between* an effective sense of personal articulation; it is an intensely contemplative film and an exploration of personal discovery and realisation. Richard Roud found that Losey's experiment in time manipulation was inherent in his building the strong sense of moralism within the film. He felt that, 'Losey here achieves an almost palpable sense of reality, which gives the moral force of the film a greater intensity because of the heightened contradiction between apparent surface and true subject'.[48]

[47]John Russell Taylor, "Accident", op. cit., p. 203.
[48]Roud, "Going Between", op. cit., p. 159.

7.2 Ken Loach

In addition to the work of Losey in Britain, the cinematic works of both Ken Loach and Ken Russell, however few within the decade, are to be read as important evidence of significant British art-cinema.

Ken Loach produced two feature films within the time frame of the 1960s, *Poor Cow* (1967) followed by *Kes* (1969). For *Sight & Sound*, David Robinson attributes Loach with a, 'tremendous reputation largely earned by his production of Nell Dunn's *Up The Junction* for BBC television'.[49] Loach was a director who, like Peter Watkins, Ken Russell and to some extent Losey and Lester, earned his reputation and filmic sensibilities from his work in television. In 1967, writing in reference to Loach's television docudrama, *Cathy Come Home* (1966), John Russell Taylor observed that, 'obviously the moment for a new invasion of the British cinema from television has fallen due'.[50] It is interesting to see names such as Loach, Russell, Boorman and Watkins attributed with this British television invasion. In fact, television critic for *The Times*, Michael Billington complained that, 'the policy of signing up so many directors has greatly diminished television without noticeably enriching the cinema'.[51] These directors were seen as a new school of cinema, namely, 'the television men'.[52] With their unique position on film making it was seen that these directors, 'swallowed modern cinema whole: they are full of tricks learnt from Godard, Resnais, Fellini, Antonioni and almost anyone else you care to name'.[53] In the case of Ken Loach however, his prestige work in British television did not translate well into the cinematic medium, his first film, *Poor Cow* being received somewhat poorly by the critics. His feature film debut was called, 'a superficial, slightly patronising incursion into the

[49]Robinson, "United Kingdom", op. cit., p. 39.
[50]John Russell Taylor. "Film Clips". In: *Sight & Sound* 36.2 (1967), pp. 98–100, p. 99.
[51]Michael Billington. "The Lost Directors". In: *The Times* 57450 (1969), p. 17, p. 17.
[52]Taylor, "New Faces in British Cinema", op. cit., p. 17.
[53]Ibid., p. 17.

nether realms of social realism',[54] and it was complained that his, 'confusion of method is matched by a wild rocketing of atmosphere'.[55] Loach uses static titles, in a Godard-esque way, in order to punctuate the narrative throughout the film. For 'Monthly Film Bulletin', Jan Dawson compared Loach's work to that of author Èmile Zola though referred to it pejoratively as, 'Zola in a pop wrapper'.[56] Loach's use of titles as symbolic chapters functions within this film as artistically inspired yet they do not serve to supplement whether the the film's plot or its artistic impact. Davies too suggested that these titles fail to generate significant impact, calling Loach's technique, 'a method which suggests fashionable influences without in itself contributing to the coherence or impact of the almost non-existent plot'.[57] For Davies it seems that Loach's debut as a big screen film maker had the necessary artistic intention though, in part dues to a lack of style which, fell short in its execution. With regard to these chapters in particular, they are indeed, 'apt to look more like lazy script writing than any kind of comment'.[58] However, Loach's had enough of an impact to highlight him as a growing talent with a great deal of potential. Indeed his television work was highly regarded and his film *Poor Cow* generated enough interest in his artistic credentials to warrant such comments as, 'Ken Loach will make better and more important films'.[59]

However, upon release of Loach's adaptation of the Barry Hines novel, *Kes*, it appeared that critical opinion had changed. A highlight in the film's initial critical success came in the form of John Russell Taylor's calling the film, 'the outstanding British film of the year'.[60] In a year which saw Richard Lester's *The Bed Sitting Room* (1969), Tony Richardson's *Hamlet* (1969), Peter Collinson's *The Italian Job* (1969), John Boorman's *Leo the Last* (1969),

[54]Jan Dawson. "Poor Cow, Great Britain, 1967". In: *Monthly Film Bulletin* 408.491 (1968), p. 23, p. 23.
[55]Brenda Davies. "Poor Cow". In: *Sight & Sound* 37.1 (1967/68), p. 43, p. 43.
[56]Dawson, "Poor Cow, Great Britain, 1967", op. cit., p. 23.
[57]Davies, "Poor Cow", op. cit., p. 43.
[58]Ibid., p. 43.
[59]Ibid., p. 43.
[60]John Russell Taylor. "Hawks and Apes". In: *The Times* 5782 (1970), p. 7, p. 7.

Ken Russell's *Women In Love* (1969) and of course *On Her Majesty's Secret Service* (1969), the sixth 'James Bond' epic and the ever popular 'Carry On' films[61], Taylor's was a bold claim. For Russell Taylor, as for a number of other critics, *Kes* displayed:

> a directness and simplicity, a resolute refusal to preach, moralise or stretch the truth in any way to make an easy point, which gives it far greater eloquence than any more formally ambiguous approach possibly could[62]

Brenda Davies too, commenting that Loach and co-writer Tony Garnett's prowess lie in creating realism, 'of such conviction that their plays [...] were taken for documentaries',[63] and of *Kes* she noted that it exhibited. 'a blessedly simple filmic style (much less overtly sentimental than in Loach's previous feature, *Poor Cow*), and beautifully photographed'.[64] It was widely thought that *Kes* was 'streets ahead of *Poor Cow* though still this film was not seen to entirely succeed in firmly planting Loach's career in the cinema. Russell Taylor did tackle the artistic credentials of the film, calling it, 'the film which has claims to be considered art and no balancing advantages of sensational detail to help it along'.[65] Loach's second feature film was nonetheless still weak in places and found some negative criticism. Jack Ibberson in particular noticed the film's uninspiringly 'conventional telly-type coverage of the British working-class' and went on to complain of the film's ending that it, 'lacks the intensity of, for instance, the final scenes in *Les Quatre Cents Coups*'.[66] Even Russell Taylor , whilst praising the film's, 'remarkable lack of sentimentality' did in fact observe that the ending was 'a trifle too neat and significant for a story which depends heavily for its effort on the

[61] *Carry On Again Doctor* (1969) and *Carry On Camping* (1969)
[62] Taylor, "Hawks and Apes", op. cit., p. 7.
[63] Brenda Davies. "Kes". In: *Monthly Film Bulletin* 37.432 (1970), pp. 74–75, p. 74.
[64] Ibid., p. 75.
[65] John Russell Taylor. "Boy and Kestrel". In: *The Times* 57823 (1970), p. 10, p. 10.
[66] Jack Ibberson. "Kes". In: *Sight & Sound* 38.4 (1969), p. 214.

impression it creates of untidy reality'.[67]

Ultimately, despite a somewhat uneven reaction, *Kes* appeared a success, if only in light of his first feature; a comparative failure. Nonetheless, Ken Loach had an uncanny ability to provoke interest in his work, causing a large number of critics and viewers alike to regard his work as at the very least, of potential artistic success and to inspire the feeling that, if he had not yet, Loach would deliver quality and significant cinema. After *Kes*, Ibberson wrote of being 'eager to see his [Loach's] forthcoming film'[68] and Davies proclaimed that 'Ken Loach will make better and more important films'.[69]

[67]Taylor, "Boy and Kestrel", op. cit., p. 10.
[68]Ibberson, "Kes", op. cit.
[69]Davies, "Poor Cow", op. cit., p. 43.

7.3 Ken Russell

Another of the 'Television Men', and perhaps the most artistic, but certainly the most controversial, is Ken Russell. Russell is perhaps best known for his early career television work for the BBC Monitor programme. He began his cinematic career making films on artistic subjects such as musicians Elgar and Delius and Debussy. One of his more impactful and better known films for Monitor was, *Isadora Duncan, the Biggest Dancer in the World* (1966), a biopic which was also later made by Karel Reisz in 1968 starring Vanessa Redgrave as *Isadora* (1968). Russell's filmic interest in the art world also produced, *Always On a Sunday* (1965), the biopic of French painter Douanier Rousseau, *The Debussy Film* (1965) and the earlier short, *Antonio Gaudi* (1961).

Despite entering into feature film making with *French Dressing* (1964), a relative failure, followed shortly by *Billion Dollar Brain* (1967) Russell's third film was the largely successful *Women in Love* (1969), an adaptation of the D. H. Lawrence novel. *Billion Dollar Brain* was the third instalment in the Harry Palmer film series, the 'anti-Bond'[70] spy thriller based on the Len Deighton Spy novels. The first of these novels to be adapted to the screen was *The Ipcress File* (1965), directer by Sydney J. Furie. *The Ipcress File* has become a landmark in British cinema, firstly establishing Michael Cane as the cool and colloquial icon he became. Alexander Walker wrote about the decision to make a film featuring a spy functioning almost as James Bond's binary opposite, and why the subversion of the spy stereotype was such a success. Russell's contribution to the series despite the success of the Furie film, was not well received. In his 1973 book about Russell, John Baxter wrote of *Billion Dollar Brain* that it was:

> in many ways the best of the Harry Palmer series but finally an

[70]Walker, *Hollywood England*, op. cit.

> involuted but trivial plot and Russell's lack of feeling for the slick thriller format hold the film back, and it is not a success[71]

Russell acknowledges his own shortcomings when it came to the failure of both his first and second feature films. Despite his observation that there were underlying issues with the source text, complaining that 'the book was totally illogical',[72] he does however submit to Baxter's suggestion in admitting, 'I'd had no experience of films like that, just as on *French Dressing* I had no experience of comedy'.[73]

As Russell pointed out, the film could well be perceived as anti-American. He spoke of the film's development, saying that:

> the script gradually became more and more anti-American and pro-Russian, in that the film deals with American interference in affairs which are not its concern[74]

Although the film was somewhat of a failure, 'many young people liked it for that [anti-American] reason'.[75]

Russell then went on to make what Baxter boldly claims to be, 'a commercial and artistic milestone in British cinema',[76] *Women in Love*. In 1969, writing for *The Times*, John Russell Taylor commented about the film that, 'Mr Russell is too busy with Art. Still, at least *Women in Love* is wild and weird; it may not be good, but it is certainly different'.[77] Taylor's reaction is symptomatic of the mixed reception the film received upon its release. Whilst commercially the film appeared an enormous success, with the film being nominated for the Oscar for Best Director, Best Writing, Best Cinematography and Glenda Jackson for Best actress which she indeed won. And

[71] John Baxter. *An Appalling Talent: Ken Russell*. London: Joseph, 1973, p. 25.
[72] Ibid., p. 153.
[73] Ibid., p. 154.
[74] Ibid., p. 154.
[75] Ibid.
[76] Ibid., p. 26.
[77] John Russell Taylor. "Lawrence to the life". In: *The Times* 57716 (1969), p. 13.

furthermore it won the Golden Globe for the best English language foreign film of the year. However, the critical response was very much mixed. Taylor called the film, 'wildly ornate',[78] accused the characters of being, 'totally unbelievable'[79] and complained that, 'the film does lose interest and momentum disastrously'[80] but then goes on to excuse its mistakes by offering, 'but then so does the book'.[81]

With *Women in Love*, Ken Russell had indeed taken on a more than challenging novel for adaptation. Russell himself indeed pointed out the issues with this adaptation process:

> A lot of the book seemed pretentious and repetitive, and I left a lot of it out because films lasting twenty-four hours are frowned upon by distributors and partly, as I say, because Lawrence simply repeated his theme about the separate-yet-united philosophy of love eight times over in different disguises[82]

Ian Christie too observed that the biggest challenge Russell need overcome was the adaptation of such a difficult book. Christie wrote of Russell's method of adaptation that, 'what Russell and his scriptwriter/producer have made is a film *about* the novel, rather than of it'.[83]

For Ian Christie, Russell overcame the obstacles of this particular adaptation by making the film an entity of its own, beyond the novel. Christie celebrated this outstanding and somewhat unique approach when he claimed that, 'perhaps the film's ultimate achievement lies in its creation of an evocative structure which, although deriving from the novel, squires a life of its own.[84]

[78]Ibid.
[79]Ibid.
[80]Ibid.
[81]Ibid.
[82]Baxter, *An Appalling Talent: Ken Russell*, op. cit., p. 175.
[83]Ian Christie. "Women in Love". In: *Sight & Sound* 39.1 (1969/1970), pp. 49–50, p. 50.
[84]Ibid., p. 50.

Richard Combs extolled the film's 'glistening camerawork' and claimed that, 'the film is never merely a high coloured saga of generational decline and fall'.[85] Even this reviewer however, found the film to fall short in places. Combs regarded *Women in Love* as a hollow film, describing it using words such as 'superficiality', he complained that:

> disappointment with the film, however, develops over the way this more didactic content is eventually incorporated. Lawrence's continuous, argumentative, and often abusive polemics have lost their tone of philosophical wrangle and been insinuated so smoothly into the period prettiness of the images as to appear somehow trivialised[86]

This film began and layer the foundations for the reputation Russell propagated as a controversial director, as Pamela Church Gibson and Andrew Hill claim, Russell's films have become, 'synonymous with the notion of visual excess and explicit displays of sexuality'.[87] Russell's *Women in Love* was the first feature film presentation of full frontal nudity.[88] Russell himself spoke of the sequence in which Alan Bates' and Oliver Reed's Rupert and Gerald wrestle naked in front of the fire. At the time, due to a particularly ill conceived cut made by the American censors, this scene was misconstrued as being a depiction of homosexual intercourse. As Russell specified:

> The censor had cut out the entire wrestling match. In the South American version Gerald simply locked the door, then there was a direct cut to the men lying naked on the carpet side by side, panting. It became known as The Great Buggery Scene and filled

[85]Richard Combs. "Women in Love". In: *Monthly Film Bulletin* 36.420/431 (1969), pp. 263–264, p. 263.
[86]Ibid., p. 263.
[87]Pamela Church Gibson and Andrew Hill. "'Tutte e Macchio!': Excess, Masquerade and Performativity in 70s Cinema". In: *The British Cinema Book*. Ed. by Robert Murphy. 3rd. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, pp. 333–340, p. 338.
[88]Ibid., p. 338.

> the cinemas for months[89]

As controversial as this scene became, it did not mar the artistic impact of this beautifully shot, milestone art-film of the British cinema.

Beyond its misconceived sequence of apparent homosexuality, *Women in Love* was enormously less controversial that Russell's next film, albeit released during the 1970s, *The Devils* (1971). Just as Richard Lester's 'trilogy of disillusionment', Nicholas Roeg and Donald Cammell's *Performance*, and a number of films towards the end of the sixties, Ken Russell's next film exhibited a much darker and more subversive felling, indicative of the changing mood at the onset of the 1970s.

Describing this new film by, 'the wild man of the BBC',[90] John Baxter observed:

> While London's filmgoers form endless queues to see *The Devils* and *The Music Lovers* in their marathon West End releases, and the public at Venice storms the office of the Film Festival director when a scheduled screening is cancelled after pressure from the church, the reaction to the new film from British critics and the establishment is one of outrage[91]

Thus it is that the credentials of these film makers are certainly those of art-cinema directors. From Losey's expertly crafted and suggestive mise-en-scène within *The Servant* to his poetic and personal portrayal of the painful love triangles in the beautifully edited *Accident*, Losey is to be seen as an auteur, a progressive and artistic director and key exponent of the British cinema.

[89]Baxter, *An Appalling Talent: Ken Russell*, op. cit., p. 180.
[90]Ibid., p. 36.
[91]Ibid., p. 33.

Furthermore, Ken Loach's realist style, his films of great conviction and poetic resonance and portrayals of 'untidy reality'[92] associate him clearly with the Bordwellian idea that, 'the art-film defines itself as realistic, it will show us actual locations , 'realistic' eroticism, and genuine problems'.[93] The same conclusion is to be made too, of Ken Russell and his progressive and rebellious controversiality acts to push the accepted boundaries of cinema and to constant move forward what is to be taken as the recognised routine of standard aesthetic and narrative technique.

[92]Taylor, "Boy and Kestrel", op. cit., p. 10.

[93]Bordwell and Thompson, *The Classical Hollywood Cinema: film style and mode of production to 1960*, op. cit., p. 373.

8.0 Conclusion: Where did it go?

The cinema as such has changed more during the 1960s than anyone would reasonably have expected - more probably than in any previous ten-year stretch, including that which encompassed the coming of sound.[1]

This thesis began with an appraisal of Brian Hoyle's contention that directors working in the 1980s, 'made up a fully fledged auteur-based art-cinema for the first time in the history of British cinema'.[2] Following my arguments explored throughout the previous chapters, it is worth re-evaluating Hoyle's statement and in so doing, redefine it. I have evidenced and conclusively argued that Britain did indeed have a fruitful and significant art-cinema during the 1960s, albeit a largely undervalued and somewhat unrecognised one. As this conclusive chapter will demonstrate, Britain's art-cinema began to show itself in the early 1950s and late 1960s, blossomed in the mid-sixties in the ebullient air of freedom and creativity augmented by the 'Swinging London' period and reached its apex with the strong themes of the symbiotic relationship between popular music and art-cinema. However, after this peak, the British art-cinema effectively began to diminish towards the onset of the 1970s. Therefore, my work here aims to substantiate a redefinition of Hoyle's contention to the inclusion of a prefix. Rather than reading as, 'there has been no real tradition of making art-films in British cinema',[3] it should read

[1] Penelope Houston. "Seventy". In: *Sight & Sound* 39.1 (1970), pp. 3–5, p. 3.
[2] Hoyle, "British art cinema 1975-2000: context and practice", op. cit., p. 1.
[3] Ibid., p. 1.

as follows: Since the art-cinema peak exhibited by the British cinema during the fruitful decade of the 1960s, there has been no real tradition of making art-films in British cinema.

Following the evidence laid out within the previous chapters it is possible to conclude first and foremost that Britain had a thriving and significant art-cinema during the 1960s. Despite Brian Hoyle's contention that it was not in fact until the mid 1970s that Britain showed signs of any kind of art-cinema,[4] I have explicitly stated and thoroughly evidenced the contrary.

The earliest examples from this decade of burgeoning art-cinema come from the poetic documentaries of the Free Cinema movement and from those feature films which were born directly from that National Film Theatre programme. From the exploration presented of the British New Wave, Social Realist cinema and its inauspicious comparisons to the cinemas of France and Italy, it is to be concluded that British cinema's biggest failing was its inexorably domestic nature. Unfortunately for Britain, its own critical press had exhibited what I have termed, 'Europhilia', a disproportionate yet dominant attention by British critics towards the European cinemas. Regrettably, the implication for British cinema here was that by not being 'European', its filmic output was invariably classified, definitively as not art-cinema. Through case studies and analysis I have demonstrated that indeed the French and Italian cinemas of the early 1960s were examples of extremely significant works in the context of the progression of art-cinema history. However, it is to be seen that whilst these European cinemas were certainly sources of profound films, the British cinema too was one of prolific and significant art-film output. It need not be exclusively concluded that British and European cinemas cannot simultaneously function as significant art-cinemas.

Furthermore, as has been exhaustively stated, the strong links that the

[4]Ibid.

'Swinging London' period had in its drawing of European auteurs to British shores attests to the strength of the artistic sensibilities expounded by the British cinema of this time. The power of the air of artistic creativity in Britain was such that the most eminent of the irrefutably art-film directors were drawn to make films in Britain and to effectively capitalise on the benefits of working within a fruitful and significant British art-cinema.

Towards the end of the 1960s the British art-cinema was alive, yet it can be read that its mood and impetus was darkening. To look at the films made in Britain during the late 1960s is to observe a declining mood in the cinema. Films like Richard Lester's *The Bed Sitting Room* (1969) and its concept of post apocalyptic Britain and the nonsensical degradation of human kind, Ken Loach's *Kes* (1969) and its sociological study of the grim life of an exploited childhood, John Boorman's *Leo the Last* (1969) and its race oriented problems incurred throughout society and the most peculiar air of failed revolution; Nicholas Roeg and Donald Cammell's *Performance* (1970) and its drug fuelled, gangster themed exploration of identity and reclusiveness, Jerzy Skolimowski's *Deep End* (1970) and its embittered themes of unrequited love and insatiable desire, and indeed many others; these films clearly display a darker and more pessimistic take on what was previously, buoyantly termed 'Swinging Britain'.

Epitomising this downward slope of the attitude in the cinema, Neil Sinyard, most interestingly, put forward his distinction for six of Lester's 1960s films. For Sinyard, *A Hard Day's Night* (1964), *The Knack... and How to get It* (1965) and *Help!* (1966), all fall within what he termed, the 'Youth Trilogy'.[5] On the other hand, *How I Won the War* (1967), *Petulia* (1968) and *The Bed Sitting Room*, fall within his category of, the 'Trilogy of Disillusionment'.[6] This idea of the 'Trilogy of Disillusionment' highlights the very

[5]Sinyard, *The Films of Richard Lester*, op. cit., p. 18.
[6]Ibid., p. 48.

state of the British cinema as it approached the turn of the decade. As 1969 turned into 1970, the air was such that Penelope Houston observed that, '1970 feels rather more like the end of something'.[7]

Described as, 'off-beat to an aggressive degree',[8] *Performance* (1970), is a film which perfectly exemplifies the decline in social mood which punctuated the transition from the permissive and 'Swinging' 1960s to the darker and much more pessimistic 1970s. Summing up the despairing and suspicious air of this film, Alexander Walker depicted *Performance* as affording its audience the ability, 'to taste the dregs of an experience that the 1970s are making recede even more quickly, so that one asks oneself if it really all happened, or if one helped to invent it'.[9]

In reference to the very context of the film, Walker observed that:

> The pop culture had begun to change after 1967 and to assume the characteristics of 'drug culture' as the use of the soft hallucinogenic drugs became written about and practiced. Trendiness turned ever more inwards as the exterior look of things went stale on the very people who had done most to decorate the social and cultural scene a year or so earlier[10]

Neil Sinyard, in his book, *The Films of Nicholas Roeg*, suggested that *Performance*, 'was a film that undoubtedly threw down a gauntlet to traditional British cinema of the period'[11] and that, 'the attitude of *Performance* to the 'swinging", permissive, decadent 60s seems deeply critical, even excessively so, implying a sleight-of-hand link between the criminal world and the pop world'.[12] Positioning *Performance* within the context of the artistic mood of

[7]Houston, "Seventy", op. cit., p. 4.
[8]Walker, *Hollywood England*, op. cit., p. 422.
[9]Ibid., p. 423.
[10]Ibid., p. 412.
[11]Sinyard, *The Films of Nicholas Roeg*, op. cit., p. 11.
[12]Ibid., p. 23.

the 1960s, and more so, within the remit of this thesis, Sinyard went on to propose that,

> In contrast to the predominantly conservative forms of 1960s British film, its time-leaps and enigmatic narrative seemed redolent of the cinematic experimentation of contemporary masters such as Alain Resnais, Michelangelo Antonioni and Jean-Luc Godard[13]

It can be read that this art-film, so reminiscent of the accomplished art-film techniques of the masters operating at the height of 1960s art-cinema, is to be seen as not only embodying the dying permissiveness associated with Britain at this time but also, significantly as somewhat of a swan song of what was an artistically fruitful period for British activity.

One might propose the reading of *Performance* as a semantic and thematic rebuttal to Lester's *A Hard Day's Night*. This film, an exploration of the life and world of an eminent pop star, whose fame has dissolved into reclusive introspection and identity anxiety, can be read as answering the call of the youthful 'Fab Four' at the height of their fame. The freedom implied in *A Hard Day's Night*, of the new liberal society of the 1960s, concreted by other 'Swinging' films, yet none more so than Lester's, is something which, *Performance* suggests, never materialised. Supporting this hypothesis, Neil Sinyard has similarly read the film, suggesting that, 'it would not be too fanciful to see *Performance* as an allegory about the legacy of Harold Wilson's government, with its betrayal of its promises of revolution'.[14] As such it is easy to read this film's critical view of a permissive decade which never manifested its own promises. Whilst the 'excited noises'[15] of *A Hard Day's Night* explored the early stages of cultural revolution and youth culture through

[13]Ibid., p. 13.
[14]Ibid., p. 15.
[15]James Price. "Petulia". In: *Sight & Sound* 37.3 (1968), pp. 154–155, p. 155.

modern art-cinema techniques that were indicative of Richard Lester's entire 1960s film career, *Performance* on the other hand, quite its antithesis, suggests the futility of this cultural revolution and the ephemerality of pop-fame in a fatalist and foreboding fashion.

Nicholas Roeg and Donald Cammell's *Performance* has been compared to other examples of great European art-cinema, such as Ingmar Bergman's *Persona* (1966), the works of Harold Pinter, and to Richard Lester's *Petulia*.[16] Richard Lester has figured a number of times throughout this thesis though primarily within the exploration of popular music in the cinema of the 1960s. Lester is indeed arguably best remembered for his work with The Beatles' films.

Similarly to *Performance*, another film which embodied this declining mood of the cinema toward the end of the decade was Richard Lester's *Petulia*. Lester's career is one which progressed with great speed. After *The Knack... And How to Get It* (1965), Lester made his second Beatles film, the acclaimed, *Help!* (1965). He then went to Hollywood to make the American comedy, *A Funny Thing Happened on the way to the Forum* (1966), with legendary comedians Zero Mostel, Phil Silvers and Buster Keaton. Returning to England the next year, Lester made the wartime comedy, *How I Won the War* (1967), starring Michael Crawford, Roy Kinnear and John Lennon of Beatles fame. Returning once more to America, Lester made *Petulia* (1968), an iconically 'Swinging Sixties' film, though here transposed to America. One of Lester's few American films of this time, *Petulia* is a film which has been described as, 'Lester's swan song to the Swinging Sixties',[17] a film which, 'anatomized a 60s society in its death throes'[18] and as, 'far from the excited noises of *The Knack*, the Beatles' films, or *How I Won the*

[16]Sinyard, *The Films of Nicholas Roeg*, op. cit., p. 16.
[17]Idem, *The Films of Richard Lester*, op. cit., p. 56.
[18]Idem, *The Films of Nicholas Roeg*, op. cit., p. 14.

War'.[19] Sinyard indicated that *Petulia*, 'has had a somewhat chequered critical career',[20] it being a film whose reviews, 'ranged from the enthusiastic and respectful to the angry and downright vicious'.[21] For *Monthly Film Bulletin*, Jan Dawson complained that Lester's direction was, 'obtrusively present in the form of countless jump cuts, flash images, weird angled shots and flashbacks'.[22] Interestingly, Dawson read this as a British film, despite its being only marginally financed by 'Petersham Films Ltd' and the glaring fact that it was the official American entry into the 1968 Cannes Film Festival.[23]

In 1969, Richard Lester directed the surreal and perplexing, *The Bed Sitting Room*, a film which was, 'a critical and commercial disaster'.[24] *The Bed Sitting Room* is a bitingly satirical look at a post-atomic war-torn England. This is Richard Lester's ironic and irreverent look at English life, a life powered only by the sentiment, "keep moving", shouted periodically from a hot air balloon by the country's two remaining living police men, played by legendary satirical comedians, Peter Cook and Dudley Moore. As Allan of the film's young couple says to Penelope the mother of his child, "we better keep moving", her response is the dismissive, "what for?". His rebuttal, "because we're British", provokes from Penelope, "what a fat lot of use that is!". The film is an indictment of a senseless and irresponsible society whose constant and purposeless 'moving on' – a family living on a ceaseless circular tube train, the search for a new queen of this desolated country, and the alteration of the song, "Long live Miss Ethyl Stroake" – a place where despite the near-annihilation of nuclear war, normality is only restored once, ironically, "Great Britain is a first class nuclear power again".

[19] Price, "Petulia", op. cit., p. 155.
[20] Sinyard, *The Films of Richard Lester*, op. cit., p. 64.
[21] Ibid., p. 64.
[22] Jan Dawson. "PETULIA, Great Britain, 1968". In: *Monthly Film Bulletin* 35.408/419 (1968), p. 113, p. 113.
[23] *Official Selection 1968.* [05/03/2013]. URL: `http://www.festival-cannes.fr/en/archives/1968/inCompetition.html`.
[24] Sinyard, *The Films of Richard Lester*, op. cit., p. 71.

Russell Campbell conveyed exactly the air in which this film was released, fitting snugly within Lester's body of work:

> to express a surrealistic vision in a medium as demanding of a dynamic framework as film is fraught with perils: perils which Richard Lester has courted throughout his career as a director[25]

Speaking to Joseph McBride in 1973, in reference to *The Bed Sitting Room*, Richard Lester himself revealed:

> It didn't play around much anywhere except in Scandinavia, where it played fairly successfully. It has never played in Italy, or in France. United Artists decided, I suppose, that the film wasn't going to have a commercial success, and it would be spending good money after bad, or whatever the expression is. It showed two weeks in one cinema in New York and got some extraordinarily good reviews and some extraordinarily bad ones, and that was it. That's the end of it I think[26]

Such was the reception of this extraordinary film. As Lester candidly declared, 'I think the film is in many ways a failure',[27] this was a film considered by its own director as a vain attempt to accomplish his aims. Richard Lester's film was, despite its distinct failing with regards to commercial success, a well crafted art-film. In its rebellious attitude towards war and British Nationalism, this film 'rails against' established ideas and more so than any film presented within this thesis, *The Bed Sitting Room* employs a, 'looser, more tenuous linkage of events than we find in the classical film'.[28]

[25]Russell Campbell. "Bed Sitting Room, The". In: *Monthly Film Bulletin* 37.432/443 (1970), pp. 67–68, p. 68.

[26]Richard Lester. "Running, Jumping and Standing Still: An Interview with Richard Lester". In: *Sight & Sound* 42.2 (1973), pp. 75–79, p. 76.

[27]Ibid., p. 77.

[28]Bordwell and Thompson, *The Classical Hollywood Cinema: film style and mode of production to 1960*, op. cit., p. 373.

That being so, it is imperative that one question why this mood darkened and the cinema became despondent and arguably bleak. Alexander Walker tellingly suggested that, 'At one time in the 1960s the Americans were contributing nearly 90 per cent of the finance for the production of films in Britain'.[29]

> Hollywood, in short, had exported its own inflationary drives to Britain and now found itself going horrifyingly deep into debt at home and abroad. With awesome sadness, there was no more production coin available for spending at home, so the first move was to reduce the cash flow abroad. If it was not possible to increase one's profits, then one cut out one's risks. The British pictures had become risks - they were cut out[30]

During the 1960s, the 'explosion' of British cinematic artistic output coincided with a decline in the American cinema. It has been suggested, as Walker has demonstrated, that the withdrawal of American finance caused the drop off in British film production during the '60s and early '70s. Peter Biskind, in his study of the American cinema of the 1970s saw that:

> Because movies are expensive and time-consuming to make, Hollywood is always the last to know, the slowest to respond, and in those years [the 1960s] it was at least half a decade behind the other popular arts[31]

However, owing to a revolution of the American cinema, Biskind went so far as to propose the converse idea, he suggested that, 'In 1967, two movies, *Bonnie and Clyde* and *The Graduate*, sent tremors through the industry',[32] resulting in the perception that, 'Before anyone realised it, there

[29]Walker, *Hollywood England*, op. cit., p. 16.
[30]Ibid., p. 444.
[31]Peter Biskind. *Easy Riders and Raging Bulls: How the sex drugs and rock 'n' roll generation saved Hollywood*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 1998, p. 14.
[32]Ibid., p. 15.

was a movement - instantly dubbed the New Hollywood in the press - led by a new generation of directors'.[33]

> a decade earlier, when the tectonic plates beneath the back lots began to shift, shattering the verities of the Cold War - the universal fear of the Soviet Union, the paranoia of the Red Scare, the menace of the bomb - freeing a new generation of filmmakers frozen in the ice of '50s conformity. Then came, pell-mell a series of premonitory shocks - the civil rights movement, the Beatles, the pill, Vietnam, and drugs - that combined to shake the studios badly, and send the demographic wave that was the baby boom crashing down around them[34]

What is interesting to note here is that this New Hollywood was born similarly as was both the French *nouvelle vague* and the British New Wave in its modern, fresh thinking approaches to film making and its 'railing against' the previously established cinematic norms. The effect of this revolution can be seen quite similarly as can the 'Swinging Sixties' boom in the British cinema. One can read Peter Biskind's assessment of Hollywood cinema as equally applicable to the sentiments expressed towards the French *nouvelle vague* and the British cinema during the mid sixties:

> By the late '60s and early '70s, if you were young, ambitious, and talented, there was no better place on earth to be than Hollywood. The buzz around movies attracted the best and the brightest of the boomers to the film schools. Everybody wanted to get in on the act[35]

There are a number of similarities to be seen between this new American cinema and those new cinemas of Britain and Europe earlier in the 1960s.

[33]Ibid., p. 15.
[34]Ibid., p. 14.
[35]Ibid., p. 14.

Just as the idea of youth, tantamount to the key concept of 'new' cinema, pervades the European and British cinema movements of the early 1960s, youth was seen as one of the biggest factors in inhibiting the work ion Hollywood during this same decade. Biskind highlighted, with regards to age that:

> In the mid-'60s, when *Bonnie and Clyde* and *The Graduate* were gestating, the studios were still in the rigour-mortis-like grip of the generation that invented the movies. In 1965, Adolph Zukor at ninety-two, and the only slightly younger Barney Balaban, seventy-eight, were still on the board of Paramount; Jack Warner, seventy-three, ran Warner Bros. Daryl F. Zanuck, sixty-three, was firmly in command at 20th Century-Fox[36]

Furthermore, during the early 1970s, a number of both British and European directors went to America to produce films. As on such example, Roman Polanski came to Britain to make *Repulsion* and *Cul-De-Sac* in 1965 and 1966 respectively so too did he move to Hollywood to make a number of films. As Peter Biskind saw the New Hollywood of America:

> The revolution also facilitated ready access to Hollywood and/or studio distribution for Brits like John Schlesinger (*Midnight Cowboy*), John Boorman (*Deliverance*), Ken Russell (*Women in Love*), and Nicholas Roeg (*Don't Look Now*). And Europeans like Milos Forman, who made *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*; Roman Polanski, who made *Rosemary's Baby* and *China Town*; Bernardo Bertolucci, who made *Last Tango in Paris* and *1900*; Louie Malle, who made *Pretty Baby* and *Atlantic City*; and Sergio Leone, who made *The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly* and *Once Upon a Time in the West*[37]

[36]Ibid., p. 18.
[37]Ibid., pp. 15-16.

Just as in Britain this influx of foreign art-film directors entering the country attested to the air of artistic creativity associated with the country at the time the same can be said here about America. In the mid 1960s it is to be seen that the nucleus of art-cinema production was to be found in Britain whereas, at the onset of the 1970s the focus of this centre of activity shifted towards America and the New Hollywood.

Writing in the early 1960s, Penelope Houston claimed of contemporary French cinema that in what she labelled a 'climate of chaotic excitement and opportunity', 'anyone can now make a film'.[38] She went on to suggest that, during this period of cultural exploration and explorative creative freedom, 'anyone who did anything at all in the French cinema was liable to find himself labelled 'New Wave".[39] This air of the ready access to cultural freedom of expression and creativity is to be read as was this new period of excitement and opportunity in the America of the late 1960s. So too did Peter Biskind observe the American cinema of the 1970s, suggesting similarly of this period in American cinema that:

> The thirteen years between *Bonnie and Clyde* in 1967 and *Heaven's Gate* in 1980 marked the last time it was really exciting to make movies in Hollywood, the last time people could be consistently proud of the pictures they made, the last time the community as a whole encouraged good work, the last time there was an audience that could sustain it[40]

This new American cinema, as Biskind saw it, is similarly read as was the emerging art-cinema movements of France, Italy and indeed Britain of the early 1960s. To revisit the ideas founded in the Introduction allows a

[38]Houston, *The Contemporary Cinema*, op. cit., p. 81.
[39]Ibid., p. 100.
[40]Biskind, *Easy Riders and Raging Bulls: How the sex drugs and rock 'n' roll generation saved Hollywood*, op. cit., p. 17.

conclusive reading, in terms of the themes of 'railing against' present in the cinema, the direction to which Britain's art-cinema moved as the onset of the 1970s, and as the New Hollywood closed in. As previously stated, my reading of art-film is built upon the foundation of one that moves persistently forwards, progressively acting in opposition to the cinema's already established perceptions of the acceptable. Most critics and indeed cinematic movements and film makers themselves have worked to define art-cinema simply as working in opposition to that of classical Hollywood cinema. In an understanding of my definition of art-cinema, to be an art-cinema film maker, one's films must be inherently progressive in all of their endeavours. Art-cinema, by my definition, must be consistently working against the established benchmark conventions and thus in order to achieve this it must also be constantly reinvigorating and reinventing and in addition, therefore, must be progressive.

What is to be taken from this definition however, is the inherent idea that in working against the established norms of the cinema, this new, art-cinema, invariably evolves to become known, in itself as that of the conventional cinema. It is axiomatically impossible to be consistently new, and as such my definition of art-cinema must be intrinsically understood as centring around the concept of ephemerality. If an art-cinema must, by definition, be new, thus one art-cinema can only exist impermanently.

This idea of the intrinsically transitory nature of British art-cinema pertains to the idea of established 'movements' and as such can be applied to a reading of why the British Free Cinema movement, The British New Wave cinema, the 'Swinging Sixties' film, and indeed the French *nouvelle vague* and New Italian cinemas of the 1960s were fleetingly short lived. However, this understanding does not allow us to explain the disappearance of the British art-cinema towards the onset of the 1970s. What is to be concluded of the British critical predilection for European cinemas evidenced exhaus-

tively throughout this work is that art-cinema is an essentially competitive endeavour and perhaps owing to the pervading idea of a preference for the European cinema, the critical establishment shifted the balance away from its own domestic art cinema. Thus, to be a progressive cinema, it is understood that one must be *more* progressive than the other. Ultimately it is to be seen that after an enormously fruitful period for art-film production, giving birth to some of the most significant and iconic films and directors in British film history, with the onset of America's New Hollywood cinema, Britain lost.

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