

# **The Depiction of late 1960's Counter Culture in the 1968 Films of Jean-Luc Godard**

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# Introduction

## 'The depiction of late 1960's counterculture in the 1968 films of Jean-Luc Godard'

Robin Wood: "...I dropped out on [Jean-Luc] Godard a long time ago."

David Walsh: "Godard dropped out on Godard a long time ago."<sup>1</sup>

Recent historical criticism seems to have divided the 1960's into two possible paradigms. One maintains that the 1960's was entirely populated by two politically opposed factions, the 'Hippies' and the 'Straights,' which, over time, has come to represent something of a status quo. The other appears to be a revisionist exercise, maintaining that the 1960's were a period of apolitical cultural upheaval with no political principles or involvement.<sup>2</sup> One of the features of Godard's filmmaking practice that this thesis will attempt to illustrate, is Godard's far from apolitical motivations, his acknowledgement and understanding of past revolutionary movements, and his obvious celebration of contemporary 'left-wing' political events illustrated throughout his work in 1968.

The five films under discussion are:

*Le Gai Savoir*

*Ciné-Tracts*

*One Plus One/Sympathy for the Devil*

*One AM/One PM*

*Un Film Comme Les Autres*

Examining the five films Godard made in 1968 reveals a greater number of similarities in technique with the cinema of the past than the majority of filmmaking in 1968. The use of intertitles, textual inscriptions on still images, bare sets, and a minimisation of camera movement hearkens back to early silent cinema. These kinds of techniques must have appeared like some form of primitivist 'kick' in 1968 to those who understood the origins of their form, especially when compared to films such as Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey*, also released that year.

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<sup>1</sup> David Walsh, *A Conversation with film critic Robin Wood*. Internet WWW page, at URL: <[http://www.wsws.org/articles/2000/oct2000/tff7-o16\\_pn.shtml](http://www.wsws.org/articles/2000/oct2000/tff7-o16_pn.shtml)> (version current at 29 October 2000).

<sup>2</sup> Arthur Marwick, *The Sixties* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 9.

However, this is not to say that Godard's films from this time offer the spectator anything like a normal narrative film that quaintly utilises some past techniques from the history of cinema. Instead, the spectator is served up a war of images and text that arrests the viewer, presents an idea, and just as quickly makes an association with another. The films are unashamedly intellectual, anti-spectacle, and challenging to any passivity the viewer may bring to the screen. The films revel in contesting the spectator's assumption of films being made for entertainment, and encourage the viewer to explore ideas which, on initial contact, may or may not be within the spectator's knowledge.

This contesting of the spectator's knowledge is representative of what Roland Barthes identifies as the 'Rhetoric of the image.' Godard explores the potential effects of creating a proliferation of alternative readings within individual images. Barthes explains

The variation in readings is not, however anarchic; it depends on the different kinds of knowledge – practical, national, cultural, aesthetic – invested in the image and these can be classified, brought into a typology. It is as though the image presented itself to the reading of several different people who can perfectly well co-exist in a single individual: *the one lexia mobilizes different lexicons...*This is the case for the different readings of the image: each sign corresponds to a body of 'attitudes' – tourism, housekeeping, knowledge of art – certain of which may obviously be lacking in this or that individual. There is a plurality and a co-existence of lexicons in one and the same person, the number and identity of these lexicons forming in some sort a person's *idiolect*.<sup>3</sup>

Generally, what makes Godard's films from 1968 counter cultural is their contemporary ideological critique of these pluralities from different media made available to the public. With the exception of the collaborative *One AM* project, each film can be interpreted as a critique of an individual mass medium that signifies and reinscribes the culture and ideology of bourgeois hegemony.

*Le Gai Savoir*: Television

*Ciné-Tracts*: Print

*One Plus One/Sympathy for the Devil*: Music

*Un Film Comme Les Autres*: Radio

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<sup>3</sup> Roland Barthes, *Image, Music, Text* (Oxford: Fontana Paperbacks, 1984), pp. 46-47.

In the preface to his book *The Making of a Counter Culture*, Theodore Roszak examines the difficulty in studying the intricacies of counter culture and the attendant stress of trying to pin-point something that, almost by definition, should be elusive.

It would surely be convenient if these perversely ectoplasmic *Zeitgeists* were card-carrying movements, with a headquarters, an executive board, and a file of official manifestoes. But of course they aren't. One is therefore forced to take hold of them with a certain trepidation, allowing exceptions to slip through the sieve of one's generalizations in great numbers, but hoping always that more that is solid and valuable will finally remain behind than filters away.<sup>4</sup>

Information or statistics about individuals involved in any particular counter cultural group throughout the 1960's is extremely difficult to obtain. In the case of the highly organised groups during the 1960's, depending on what the goals of the group were, it was best not to release the number of 'subscribed' members if you wanted to avoid persecution or achieve the greatest publicity.<sup>5</sup> It is also unlikely that official censuses would include such questions as 'Are you, or have you ever been an Anarcho-Syndicalist?' or 'Have you ever been a member of the Situationist International or the Enragés?' And which subversive in their right mind would want to say 'Yes' for Government statistical purposes if those questions were included?

Roszak's image of the representatives of American counter culture is distinctively youthful, positioning the counter cultural movements of the 1960's within a "youth culture" which adopted the appearance of "exotic sources" from East and West alike.

...from depth psychiatry, from the mellowed remnants of left-wing ideology, from the oriental religions, from the Romantic *Weltschmerz*, from anarchist social theory, from Dada and American Indian lore, and, I suppose, the perennial wisdom.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Theodore Roszak, *The Making of a Counter Culture* (London: Faber and Faber, 1972), p. xi.

<sup>5</sup> One excellent example is probably Abbie Hoffman and Jerry Rubin's YIPPIE movement, where they spoke for themselves and gave the impression of having hundreds, if not thousands of members by selling Yippie badges to fund their activities. See Jerry Rubin, *DO IT! Scenarios of the Revolution* (London: Jonathan Cape Ltd., 1970).

<sup>6</sup> Roszak, p. xiii.

Aside from the observations of couture, Roszak reveals the disparate elements that comprise any counter cultural movement, but more significantly reveals the history that is represented in the identities that the individuals adopt or identify themselves with. If Roszak's implication takes a 'clothes make the man/woman' perspective, it also sheds light on the powerful alienation a society can feel if its youth start adopting styles and cultural sensibilities alien to the one in which they were raised.

In 1968, Godard maintained that he was attempting to escape his own bourgeois background. Although Godard is of an older generation than the youth culture Roszak describes, it is worth noting the discrepancy between Godard's and his father's generation. Godard's father, Paul, revealed in a television interview, emotions of pride and alienated bewilderment at his son's accomplishments.

Paul: "He obviously had a very literary, even verbal, heredity. That can be seen in all he does."

Veronique (Godard's Sister, smiling): "Verbose."

Paul: "No, not verbose, verbal. Verbal! Certain of his quotations are his own. They aren't all from Lenin."<sup>7</sup>

Although the quote humorously illustrates a judgement on Godard's father's part, Paul Godard's assessment "they aren't all from Lenin" also reveals the origins of Godard's bourgeois past, and a political difference between the two. Daniel Cohn-Bendit analyses this question of differences between the generations in 1968 as not being about

...the impatience of the young to step into the shoes of the old. [But] In the current revolt of youth, however, very much more is being questioned. The distaste is for the system itself. Modern youth is not so much envious of, as disgusted with, the dead, empty lives of their parents.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> From the Cinéma Cinémas video series *Cinéma Cinémas: Jean-Luc Godard*. CEDFI/MAE, 1984-1989. Ed. Claude Ventura.

<sup>8</sup> Daniel Cohn-Bendit, *Obsolete Communism: The Left-Wing Alternative* (London: André Deutsch, 1968), p. 44.



This is echoed by Jean-François Revel's perception of the youth of the United States.

American Revolutionaries do not want merely to cut the cake into equal pieces; they want a whole new cake.<sup>9</sup>

Godard foreshadows the beginnings of this departure from his bourgeois past in the films he made in 1967. The end of Godard's 'old' narrative driven cinema is almost entirely epitomised in an image from *Weekend* [1967]. The image depicts the bourgeois Corinne (Mireille Darc) with a rifle held against her head by one of the revolutionaries who has captured her, played by Juliet Berto.<sup>10</sup> The image is potently symbolic of Godard's past, as well as his anticipation of the future when considering Berto's role as the revolutionary Patricia Lumumba in *Le Gai Savoir* the following year.

In an interview with Andrew Sarris in 1994, Sarris directly asks Godard if he was ever a Marxist. Godard replies that his only desire in talking about Marx was to be provocative "...mixing Mao and Coca-Cola and so forth."

Sarris: ...are you still on the barricades?

Godard: One can still be a good critic and a moral observer, but one remains professionally detached as a writer and a film-maker. I didn't have to pick up a rifle to make *Les Carabiniers*.<sup>11</sup>

However it can be argued that Godard's work has always been political. Some of his initial film criticism for *Gazette du Cinema* in 1950 displays a political consciousness already at work. In his 1950 article entitled *Towards a Political Cinema*, Godard commands the attention of the "...unhappy film-makers of France who lack scenarios.." <sup>12</sup> and questions why contemporary French cinema does not examine modern French political concepts, including political individuals in French society.

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<sup>9</sup> Jean-François Revel, *Without Marx Or Jesus* (London: Paladin, 1972), p. 126.

<sup>10</sup> Wheeler Winston Dixon, *The Films of Jean-Luc Godard* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), p. 98. See Fig. 1. in the Appendix.

<sup>11</sup> Andrew Sarris, 'Jean-Luc Godard Now', *Interview*, 24.7 (1994), p. 84.

<sup>12</sup> Jean-Luc Godard, 'Towards a Political Cinema'. In *Godard on Godard*. Ed. Tom Milne and Jean Narboni. (New York and London: Da Capo Press, 1986), p. 17.

Highlighting the Russian cinema for his article, Godard perceives the "major currents" of Soviet cinema as "..the cinema of exhortation and the cinema of revolution, the static and the dynamic."<sup>13</sup> Although his commentary provides a critical examination of Soviet cinema, his purpose is to reveal exactly what is missing within contemporary French film, something he and his fellow *Cahiers du Cinema* critics were to redress constantly throughout the 1950's.

If Godard perceived there to be insufficient political filmmaking, several of Godard's critics have certainly accused him of leading the wave in creating too much. Critic Nicholas Garnham believes it is Godard's efforts to be more directly political that have obscured his film-making.

As Godard has tried to make his films more relevant in a direct political sense, they have, paradoxically, become increasingly indecipherable.<sup>14</sup>

Garnham blames this upon the "European tradition" of the "art-movie" and the "personal statement." Garnham believes the result of this is the making of films that are the equivalent of "highly convoluted, cryptic, almost encoded articles in fringe left-wing magazines."<sup>15</sup>

Garnham's opinion appears to have been shared by both fans and critics alike. In a speaking engagement Godard attended in 1968, a member of the audience stood to proclaim his disappointment in Godard's departure from his former style and technique of filmmaking. Criticising what he perceived to be an anti-emotional and highly political framework in *La Chinoise* [1967], the fan explained his resentment at the didacticism of Godard's politics. Godard's rebuttal articulates the target of his filmmaking throughout 1968 and an illumination of both *La Chinoise* and *Le Gai Savoir*.

We make a mistake in looking at any work of art as something that exists wholly in itself for all time. About *La Chinoise*, it's clear that I don't want to talk about human emotions, because since the beginning of cinema we have dealt only with human emotions. We must try to show something else—that is, why people are human and how they became that way. We should abandon

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<sup>13</sup> Godard, p. 16.

<sup>14</sup> Nicholas Garnham, *Samuel Fuller* (New York: Secker & Warburg, 1971), p. 160

<sup>15</sup> Garnham, p. 160.

drama and psychology and go in more for politics...There's no interest in relating a story of two young Marxist-Leninists in terms of a love story. What's important is to try to know what Marxist-Leninism is and how it helps them in their love.<sup>16</sup>

Certainly after the events of May, any notions of conventional romanticism are removed from Godard's films. Discussing Godard's work, Colin L. Westerbeck asserts that the events of May not only enabled a different perspective in Godard's filmmaking practice, but that filmmaking became a part of the historical present as it never had before.<sup>17</sup> By creating films within the present, Godard's films are firmly placed within the context of the modern, technological world in order to examine the complications involved in the lives of his characters.

Creating a 'present' context in the film's narrative enables Godard to provide a more transparent focus of political and social intent in his work. In part, the creation of a 'present' environment is constructed around the use of contemporary sounds, and the use of contemporary images that may be familiar to spectators through exposure to other media. By utilising familiar images, the spectator is also more readily able to examine the social and political commentary in the contemporary context Godard provides.

Godard's interest in the past is confined to what can be related to the documentation of the present. This is due to Godard's perception that very little of the past can be recreated truthfully.

The cloche hat is less interesting today than it was in 1925, and it is quite right that *Quai des Brumes* should appear dated. I would be incapable of making a film about the Resistance. People then had a way of talking and feeling which bears no relation to the way we behave today.<sup>18</sup> (Italics mine)

However this antipathy concerning recreating the truth of the past is extended to encompassing the problems in recreating the present in Godard's 1968 films. Due to

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<sup>16</sup> Jean-Luc Godard, quoted in Gene Youngblood, 'Jean-Luc Godard: No Difference between Life and Cinema'. In *Jean-Luc Godard: Interviews*. Ed. David Sterritt. (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1998), p. 48.

<sup>17</sup> Colin L. Westerbeck Jr, 'A Terrible Duty is Born', *Sight and Sound*, 40 (1971), 81.

<sup>18</sup> Jean-Luc Godard, *Le Petit Soldat* (London: Lorrimer Publishing Limited, 1967), p. 12. *Quai des Brumes*. Dir. Marcel Carné. France, 1938. AKA *Port of Shadows*. USA.

the perceived misrepresentation and distorting influence of the media, Godard's attacks on the conventional sources of media became increasingly vehement and highly publicised throughout 1968. From the beginning of the year, at a conference in the United States, Godard's sentiments seemed to be directed towards three observations about contemporary filmmaking: a lack of awareness about the history of cinematic images, a resentment at the under-utilisation of sound in film, and an over-emphasis on visual technologies for superficial purposes. Godard emphasised that this had resulted in the loss of cinema's educational or instructive power.

In contrast to the rejection of the commercial sources of media and filmmaking, Godard began relationships with alternative filmmakers. Godard's increasingly global revolutionary outlook on filmmaking included 'Third World' Argentine filmmakers such as Solanas and Getino, and underground organizations such as 'Newsreel'<sup>19</sup> from the United States.

The increased presence of 'Alternative Media' organizations such as 'Newsreel' in the United States during 1968 had begun to pose an alternative to the 'official channels' of media sources, however Godard began to grow increasingly suspicious of their effectiveness in challenging the status quo of the commercial media. By 1970, there had been a form of dissolution in their relationship whereby the two would only work together, from Godard's perspective, for pragmatic purposes.<sup>20</sup> Part of this shift in perspective can be attributed to Godard's own shifting ideology throughout this time. However, the number of revolutionary groups attempting to undermine a largely state controlled media increased throughout the late 1960's.

In their article *Towards a Third Cinema*,<sup>21</sup> Solanas and Getino examine the fallacy of believing that a revolutionary cinema cannot be made without a revolution already being in existence. On the contrary, Solanas and Getino list some of the guerrilla film movements already in existence, and working towards revolution in other countries.

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<sup>19</sup> Bill Nichols writes "...News reel itself is the single most important film-making and distributing collective to emerge in the United states since the Worker's Film and Photo Leagues in the 1930's. Other individuals have made politically powerful films since 1968, when Newsreel began, and other groups have succeeded in distributing political films widely, but only Newsreel has been able to merge these two functions on a consistently collective basis." In Bill Nichols, ed., *Movies and Methods: Volume One* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1976), p. 202.

<sup>20</sup> Kent E. Carroll, 'Film and Revolution: Interview with the Dziga-Vertov Group'. In Royal S. Brown, ed. *Focus On Godard.*, (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall Inc, 1972), p. 55.

<sup>21</sup> Solanas and Getino. 'Towards A Third Cinema'. In Nichols, ed., *Movies and Methods: Volume One*, pp. 44-64.

Examples are Newsreel, a US New Left film group<sup>22</sup>, the *cinegiornali* of the Italian student movement, the films made by the *Etats Generaux du Cinéma Français*, and those of the British and Japanese student movements, all a continuation and deepening of the work of a Joris Ivens or a Chris Marker. Let it suffice to observe the films of a Santiago Alvarez in Cuba, or the cinema being developed by different filmmakers in "the homeland of all", as Bolivar would say, as they seek a revolutionary Latin American cinema.<sup>23</sup>

Although there was a network of support amongst these filmmakers, the resistance to Godard's work from some of the participants on the political left was as galvanised as the right. Guy Debord, leader of the Situationist International, was perhaps best known for his 1967 literary work *The Society of the Spectacle*.

Providing a veritable manifesto of Situationist beliefs, Debord's work is packaged in a highly stylised aphoristic form. Detailing France's social structure and the seeming complicity of French society with the spectacle, Debord's work analysed the contemporary French socio-political structure and exploded its meaning to encompass bourgeois Western culture illustrating

...the 'negation of life become visible,' by the 'loss of quality' associated with the commodity-form [and] the 'proletarianization of the world.'<sup>24</sup>

Even in its most simplistic reading, Debord's 221 aphorisms provide ample description of the discrepancy between the life society lives, as depicted by media, and the actuality of people's existence. Debord transformed the text into a film by the same name in 1973, and followed the theme of his previous literary work with a book *Comments on the Society of the Spectacle* in 1988. Like the work of Henri Lefebvre<sup>25</sup> (who was momentarily a member of the SI), Debord's later work examines, and attempts to verify his original thesis while expanding on his examination of the means and apparatuses by which the commodified society influences and controls the

<sup>22</sup> By the early 1970's, Godard doesn't appear to have any particular respect for the efforts of Newsreel, frequently accusing them of merely providing reportage. that had little to differentiate it from commercial media sources. See Kent E. Carroll, 'Film and Revolution: Interview with the Dziga-Vertov Group'. In Brown, ed., *Focus On Godard*, p. 55. Or even more bluntly in Andrew Sarris' interview: Andrew Sarris, 'Godard and the Revolution'. In *Jean-Luc Godard: Interviews*, pp. 55-56.

<sup>23</sup> Gene Youngblood, 'Jean-Luc Godard: No Difference between Life and Cinema'. In *Jean-Luc Godard: Interviews*, p. 45.

<sup>24</sup> Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle* (New York: Zone Books, 1995), p. 8.

<sup>25</sup> See: Kristen Ross, *Lefebvre on the Situationists: An Interview*. Internet WWW page, at URL: <<http://www.panix.com/~notbored/lefebvre-interview.html>> (version current at 29 October 2000).

individual. Debord also directed some six 35mm black and white sound films between 1952 and 1978.

Although Debord's film work shares a great many similarities with Godard's, Debord frequently attacks Godard, accusing him of plagiarism and stealing from the 'dustbin of history.' Paradoxically, Debord's own cinematic work is derived from earlier work initiated by the Dadaists. However, the critical thinking of cinema that both employ in their work is the subtle awareness of cinematic history.

A great deal of the criticism directed against Godard's films from 1968 is inspired by a perception that Godard was a part of some 'fashionable' political wave, or, outlandishly, that his films were merely some form of agit-prop that was attempting to convert the 'youth' of his audiences into Communist believers. Unfortunately, the repercussions of this assault resulted in a near total disregard of the films from 1968, and in many respects, continues to the present.

Several critics have noted the fecundity of ideas and the multiplicity of different mediums Godard uses as sources of information or ideas within his films. Using the political and social events of 1968 as a focal point, the aim of this thesis is to clarify what Godard's aims were, and hopefully work towards answering the negative and often reactionary criticism targeted against them. Hopefully the analysis will provide a more positive, and more transparent, understanding of the content in the films from 1968.

As has been noted, Godard is acutely aware of the roots of his own cinema in the styles and traditions of the past. In the same way that Godard's pre-'68 cinema used 'homage' of the director's favourite filmmakers, the 1968 films include homage to the work of the first and second generation of European filmmakers who lived in revolutionary times. However, the culture that produced those filmmakers had changed, and as a consequence, the western world of the Twentieth Century provided a greater array of ideological targets.

# **Le Gai Savoir**

Le Gai Savoir [1968] (AKA: *Merry Wisdom, Happy Knowledge, Joyful Wisdom, The Gay Science, The Joy of Wisdom*) 96 Minutes.

"..did you ever consider that lsd and color TV arrived for our consumption about the same time? Here comes all this explorative color pounding, and what do we do? We outlaw one and fuck up the other."

--Charles Bukowski --'A Bad Trip' from 'Tales of Ordinary Madness'

"If this is to be the cinema of the future, God help us."

--Richard Roud of *Le Gai Savoir*<sup>26</sup>

Taking its title from the work of both Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Friedrich Nietzsche, *Le Gai Savoir* [1968] introduces the viewer to a new formalist style in Godard's work. The techniques and the application of many of the ideas used throughout the film had far reaching consequences for projects Godard continued with throughout 1968 until the early 1970's. These revolutionary changes were due to the social movement of the events in Paris during May 1968, and a continuation of the formalist, politically avant-garde movement Vertov and Eisenstein had introduced in cinema. From Godard's perspective, *Le Gai Savoir* is an experimental film, and although it "is not the film that should be made,"<sup>27</sup> *Le Gai Savoir* does provide a precedent for ideas and the exploration of ideology that he would pursue with the Dziga-Vertov collaborations.

The departure from Godard's pre-'68 style is marked by his rethinking of the way images are ideologically codified, and the way these images are manipulated by new technology and mass media. In many respects *Le Gai Savoir* represents the antecedent of the "Fin de Cinema" he proclaimed at the end of *Weekend* [1967]; and is representative of many of the ideas emerging from new media and communications literature in the 1960's. Concepts of Globalisation and the emerging mass medium of television are reflected throughout, while critically reapplying earlier cultural works such as Brecht<sup>28</sup> and Walter Benjamin to the 'new' medium. Godard is self-critically

<sup>26</sup> Richard Roud, 'Le Gai Savoir', *Sight and Sound*, 38, (1969), 211.

<sup>27</sup> *Masculin Féminin* [1966] had contained a similar authorial statement "This wasn't the film we'd dreamed of. This wasn't the total film that each of us had carried within himself..the film that we wanted to make, or, more secretly, no doubt...that we wanted to live." Jean-Luc Godard, quoted in Jean-Luc Godard, *Masculin-Féminin* (New York: Grove Press Inc, 1969), p. 143.

<sup>28</sup> Godard had already applied Brechtian techniques in his pre-'68 cinema and explicitly used Brecht's name in *Deux ou trois choses que sais d'elle (Two or Three things I know about her)* [1966]. James Naremore mentions Godard's interest in Brecht can be traced to his early criticism for *Cahiers du*



investigating the way in which his own cinematic practice works, and in perhaps general terms, investigating the way film as a medium functions, and the inherent problems of communication and miscommunication. As Godard investigates the new functionality of the filmic medium in the contemporary world, he develops a self-consciousness and reflection on ideology in *Le Gai Savoir*, investigating its uses and applications within his own cinematic practice.

Representative of Godard's "great leap forward,"<sup>29</sup> *Le Gai Savoir* underwent an extended period of shooting and editing throughout 1967/8 before finally being released in 1969. In an interview with *Cahiers du Cinéma* in October of 1967, Godard reveals that the original plot of *Le Gai Savoir* was supposed to be based more directly on a modernisation of Rousseau's text, and to be released under the name 'Emile'.

"A modern film, the story of a boy who refuses to go to his high school because the classes are always overcrowded; he begins to learn outside of school, by looking at people, going to the movies, listening to the radio, or watching television...What the film eventually became was *Le Gai savoir* (sic.), in which, as Richard Roud puts it, "there is, at last, no plot at all."<sup>30</sup>

Initially the project had been produced by the O.R.T.F.<sup>31</sup> and began shooting in December of 1967. However, whether or not Godard was genuinely interested in making such a film, or was merely capitalising on creating a treatment that would receive funding is open to question.<sup>32</sup> Certainly in the past, his adaptations from literary sources were frequently used in order to secure production funding.<sup>33</sup>

*Cinema* in 1959. James Naremore, 'Authorship and the Cultural Politics of Film Criticism', *Film Quarterly*, 44 (1990), 16-17.

<sup>29</sup> Richard Roud, *Jean-Luc Godard* (London: Indiana University Press, 1970), p. 139.

<sup>30</sup> Royal S. Brown, 'Introduction: One Plus One Equals'. In Royal S. Brown, ed., *Focus on Godard*. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc, 1972), p. 9. The original plot of the film sounds uncannily like Truffaut's *Les Quatre Cents Coups/The 400 Blows* (1959), but also Godard's own life. Godard frequently alludes to himself as being a child raised in the cinema.

<sup>31</sup> O.R.T.F. is an acronym for Office de la Radiodiffusion-Télévision Française: The government controlled monopoly of France's radio and television networks.

<sup>32</sup> The O.R.T.F. controls on programming were rigid to say the least. They also held adaptations of French 'Classics' in high esteem during the late 1960's. Jill Forbes, 'The Rise of Audio-visual Culture'. In Jill Forbes and Michael Kelly, eds., *French Cultural Studies: An Introduction*. (New York: Oxford University Press), 1995, pp. 232-233.

<sup>33</sup> Speaking of using Maupassant to begin the *Masculin-Féminin* project, and to entice production funding, Godard says "And in the end things went off course as they always do when I use a "wall" to hoist myself up on. Then I discover something else and I forget the wall I used...I always need a canvas, a trampoline. Then you look and see where you're heading, but you forget, you take off from the trampoline..." Jean-Luc Godard in Godard, *Masculin-Féminin*. pp. 237-238.

On February 14, 1968 in a discussion of his work during a speaking tour of the United States, Godard mentioned the completion of the film's script in passing.

I have just finished a script which started out as Rousseau's *Emile*, but no longer resembles that novel at all. It's about education.<sup>34</sup>

However, upon seeing the material Godard had shot, the O.R.T.F. rejected the film whereupon the rights to the film were finally returned to Godard after a lengthy battle. Completion of the film was left to be produced by Anouchka Films, the Bavaria Atelier, and Sddeutschen Rundfunk after the events of May until its final editing in 1969.<sup>35</sup>

Richard Roud writes about the difficulty in trying to ascertain the completion date of the project.

Furthermore, there was a long gap between the shooting of the film and its final editing, so that it is impossible to say just how much of the film preceded the events of May 1968 and how much came after.<sup>36</sup>

There are a number of direct references to the events of May throughout the film, including the use of speeches and footage that indicate the film was still being worked on well after the January date that is mentioned in many of the publications on Godard's work. Godard was working on the *Ciné-Tracts* [1968] project during May and June, but according to Royal S. Brown, the final editing of the film was completed throughout May,<sup>37</sup> which would in all likelihood place the completion of the film's shooting before Godard's departure to begin production on *One Plus One* [1968] on May 30.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Gene Youngblood, 'Jean-Luc Godard: No Difference between Life and Cinema'. In David Sterritt, ed., *Jean-Luc Godard: Interviews*. (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1998), p. 22.

<sup>35</sup> Brown, ed., *Focus On Godard*, p. 179. In his review of the film, Roud includes 'Kestrel' films as a part of the production. Richard Roud, *Jean-Luc Godard* (London: Indiana University Press, 1970), p. 79. Julia Lesage includes 'Gambit' as one of the producers of the film. See Julia Lesage, *Jean-Luc Godard: A Guide to References and Resources* (Boston: G.K. Hall & Co., 1979), p. 89.

<sup>36</sup> Roud, *Jean-Luc Godard*, p. 139.

<sup>37</sup> Brown, ed., *Focus On Godard*, p. 23.

<sup>38</sup> It is quite likely that Godard had four projects at various stages of production throughout the May and June period. *Le Gai Savoir*, *Cinétracts*, *Un Film Comme les Autres* and *One Plus One* are frequently recognised as being in production in May and June. Godard made at least two trips back to Paris during the shooting of *One Plus One* in June. See Roud, *Jean-Luc Godard*, p. 151.

The completed film seems to have been left after its completion until finally premiering at the Berlin Festival<sup>39</sup> and then on to festival screenings in London and New York in 1969. At the time of Roud's writing in 1970, *Le Gai Savoir* had still not publicly screened in France.

Using the O.R.T.F. studios in Joinville as a location for the shooting of the actors in *Le Gai Savoir*, the main character focus of the film is comprised of seven meetings between the two characters Patricia Lumumba (Juliet Berto) and Emile Rousseau (Jean-Pierre Léaud) over a four year period. The dialogue between the two concerns their quest to experiment with language and images on both a theoretical and practical level. The film illustrates their exploration of sound and image using a variety of forms including: live footage from the events of May, speeches, photographs, on-camera interviews, book covers and other 2-dimensional works of art taken from a number of sources.

Using daytime footage of daily life on the Paris streets, Godard intercuts material illustrating shops and pedestrians, commuters and traffic, all of which contrast with the night-time studio space where Emile and Patricia conduct their experiments. Godard's use of sound in the film takes us through several environments, and due to the duration of some of the audio material, the film is certainly more difficult to examine if the spectator does not speak French.

The casting of actors Jean-Pierre Léaud and Juliet Berto is also partially illustrative of the reflexivity of Godard's political intentions for the film. Both actors had appeared in *Weekend* [1967], however, Berto had also previously appeared opposite Jean-Pierre Léaud in the political *La Chinoise* [1967].

Winston-Dixon summarises the plot of *La Chinoise* as chronicling

the lives of five young revolutionaries who live in a bourgeois apartment in Paris during the summer of 1967[...] they attempt throughout the summer to put into practical application the teachings of Marx and Lenin, as interpreted by Mao Tse Tung [...]The five students are Véronique (Anne Wiazemsky),

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<sup>39</sup> Winston Dixon quotes Julia Lesage as saying the reception in Berlin of *Le Gai Savoir* was 'disastrous'. The screening in New York seems to have suffered a similar fate with an en masse walkout. Wheeler Winston Dixon, *The Films of Jean-Luc Godard* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), p. 95.

Guillaume (Jean-Pierre Léaud), Henri (Michel Sémeniako), Kirilov (Lex de Bruijn), and Yvonne (Juliet Berto).<sup>40</sup>

Léaud's character Guillaume is the jilted lover of Wiazemsky's Veronique, while Berto plays Yvonne, the 'housekeeper', who is "supposed to be grateful to the other members of the group for rescuing her from a life of prostitution."<sup>41</sup> Using this form of intertextuality affords Godard the opportunity to expand on the audience expectations of the characters, as well as utilising an economy with subject matter.

Just as the characters of *La Chinoise* attempt to practically apply the work of Marx, Lenin and Mao to their lives, Patricia (Berto) and Emile (Léaud) attempt to learn theoretical and practical applications of visual and aural communication to help them better understand the workings of ideology and to further their revolutionary goals.

Léaud's history within French cinema almost needs no introduction. Beginning his career at the age of thirteen, Léaud embodies many of the publicly recognised facets that made up the New Wave in French cinema. In her article concentrating on Léaud's career, Maureen Turim suggests Léaud embodied many of the characteristics and attractions for French audiences that James Dean did for US youth<sup>42</sup>. It isn't difficult to teleologically follow this analogy, from Léaud's youthful rebellion in *The 400 Blows* (*Les Quatre Cents Coups* [1959]) to the adult character of Guillaume in *La Chinoise* and Emile in *Le Gai Savoir*, each of these cinematic incarnations plot a growing adult political consciousness.

This use of persona is not unusual in Godard's films. His selection of actors has frequently attempted to lend some form of authenticity to the characters his actors play. For example, the use of 'Ye-Ye' pop star Chantal Goya, who makes a relatively convincing pop star in *Masculin Féminin* [1966].

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<sup>40</sup> Winston Dixon, pp. 80-81.

<sup>41</sup> Winston Dixon, p. 83. Winston Dixon notes that *La Chinoise* was Godard's most successful film at the U.S. box office aside from 1959's *A bout de Souffle*.

<sup>42</sup> Maureen Turim, 'Jean-Pierre Léaud: Child of the French Cinema', *The Velvet Light Trap*, 7, (1972/3), p. 41.

By using actors playing themselves within films, or directors such as Fritz Lang and Samuel Fuller<sup>43</sup>, Godard, at minimum, blurs the line between life and the cinema. Godard himself states

I see no difference between the movies and life. They are the same.<sup>44</sup>

However, Godard further problematises the actor/character relationship in *Le Gai Savoir* by Léaud's announcement at the end of the film that he is going to shoot a film with Skolimowski, which in fact he did, appearing in Skolimowski's *Le Depart* in 1967.<sup>45</sup>

Godard's use of Léaud is given an added complexity when examining the fusion of personal and professional relationships between the actor and Godard. Just as Léaud's relationship with Truffaut became paternalistic throughout Truffaut's 'Antoine Doinel' cycle of films, similar issues of cinematic 'paternity' are raised within *Le Gai Savoir*. Godard assumes Rousseau's role of father and teacher within the film. Reflexively, Léaud can be interpreted as Godard's own child, a child that has been raised within the cinema<sup>46</sup>, and simultaneously shared by other directors who were part of or influenced by the New Wave.

Considering the original plot for 'Emile,' there are a number of comparisons between the plot Godard was developing and events within Godard's own youth. It is not difficult to imagine the possibility that Léaud would be Godard's choice of actor to play himself given Léaud's own developing politicisation at this time.<sup>47</sup>

Written in 1762, Rousseau's novel *Emile* is both a treatise on public education, and didactically offers a guide for the modernisation of education for the children of France. The novel shares nothing with *Le Gai Savoir* in its content, and periodically, the novel comes under satiric attack from Godard. However, the novel does share

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<sup>43</sup> Lang had appeared in *Le Mepris* (1963) and Fuller in *Pierrot le fou* (1965)

<sup>44</sup> Jean-Luc Godard, quoted in Gene Youngblood, 'Jean-Luc Godard: No Difference between Life and Cinema'. In *Jean-Luc Godard: Interviews*. Ed. David Sterritt. (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1998), p. 13.

<sup>45</sup> See: Christian Braad Thomsen, 'Skolimowski', *Sight and Sound*, 37 (1968), 142-144.

<sup>46</sup> Godard has frequently referred to himself as a child raised in the cinema.

<sup>47</sup> See Godard in Youngblood, p. 37. Godard says that in 1967, during the shooting of *La Chinoise*, none of the cast knew anything about Marxist-Leninism. However, Léaud was regularly seen marching throughout the May events.

similar thematic concerns with *Le Gai Savoir*, such as the modernising of education that Godard wishes to extend to the spectator, and the use of the narrator as teacher.

Just as Rousseau's novel helped contribute to the modernising of the French educational system in his time, Godard is attempting to modernise the system within his own time, a time in which the use of images is perceived to be at its greatest in human communications.

Godard plays with Rousseau's characterisation of Emile in original and sometimes humorous ways. If Rousseau's Emile is supposed to "spend most of his time out of doors, running about...leading the vigorous, natural and free life of a young animal,"<sup>48</sup> Godard's Emile is depicted contrarily: by being kept within the confines of the studio, without an on-screen representation of him interacting with an outside world. However, the intent for Emile's role within *Le Gai Savoir* becomes transparent when examining Godard's growing concern with the student movement in Paris of May 1968.

Just as Rousseau rejected the notions of education in his day, the students in Paris during the events of May were rejecting the bourgeois education system of their time. In this respect, Emile is the student who represents both Rousseau and Godard's ideal product of education; he is both an intellectual and a worker. By using this construct, *Le Gai Savoir* parallels ideas and provides a historical context in which the film can communicate.

Royal S. Brown extends the comparisons between Godard and Rousseau by suggesting that Godard himself is 'Rousseau-like' by identifying Godard's work as juxtaposing "a varied layer of idealism". Brown writes,

Generally, Godard seems to have a Rousseau-like vision of a civilization that has lost contact with an idea through the progressive modernization, mechanization, "capitalization," and, ultimately, socialization of human life. Certainly, the dehumanization of man represents an important theme in many of his films...<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> P.D. Jimack, in the 'Introduction' to Rousseau's *Emile*. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile* (London: J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd, 1986), p. 15.

<sup>49</sup> Royal S. Brown, 'Introduction: One Plus One Equals'. In Brown, ed., *Focus on Godard*. p. 11.

However, what Brown does not mention is the relationship between Rousseau's own time and Godard's. Just as Rousseau lived through the French Revolution of 1789, Godard is living through what he believes to be his own revolutionary time in France.<sup>50</sup>

In Robin Bates' discussion of 1968 and history, he contends that the opening lines of Rousseau's *The Social Contract* certainly have a resonance with the events of May 1968 "Man is born free and everywhere he is in chains...[From birth to death] he is enslaved by institutions."<sup>51</sup>

Assuming Rousseau's role within the film, Godard undertakes the dual role of both teacher and narrator. Like his role in *Deux ou trois choses que je sais d'elle (2 or 3 things I know about her)* [1966], Godard's half-whispered voice rises as a punctuation of scenes; and as a somewhat reluctant teacher and guide for Patricia and Emile, Godard facilitates their investigation into the ideology of images.

The narrator's voice that Godard engages the audience with at the beginning of the film somewhat conventionally introduces the spectator to the characters. By the use of the character names, Godard's narrator directs the viewer to outside sources for clues of information. In this case politics and literature.

Emile is the eponymous son of the novelist Rousseau, while Patricia is the daughter of Patrice Lamumba. Patrice Lamumba was the first democratically elected Prime Minister of the Congo (now Zaire<sup>52</sup>). As the daughter of Lamumba, Patricia is

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<sup>50</sup> Given Godard's formalist experimentations and the obvious influence of Dziga-Vertov's films throughout this period, it could equally be said that Godard is aligning his filmmaking with many of the ideas from *LEF* and the successful Russian revolution of 1917. See Translations from *Lef* and *Novy Lef* in *Screen*, 12 (1971/2), 25-103.

<sup>51</sup> Robin Bates, 'Holes in the Sausage of History: May '68 as Absent Center in Three European Films', *Cinema Journal*, 24 (1985), 26. Interestingly, Rousseau's '*Social Contract*' was retranslated and republished by Penguin in 1968. G.D.H. Cole who translated Rousseau's text in 1947, translated the opening line as "Man is born free; and everywhere he is in chains" See Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract and Discourses* (London: J.M Dent and Sons Ltd, 1947), p. 3. The Penguin version from 1968, translated by Maurice Cranston, reads "Man was born free, and he is everywhere in chains." See Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract* (London: Penguin Books, 1977), p. 49.

<sup>52</sup> Lamumba was kidnapped and executed in January 1961, a victim of cold war ideology for his pro-soviet political stance. If not killed at the instigation of the CIA, it appears they were complicit with his murder. See: Elaine Woo, *CIA's Gottlieb Ran LSD Mind Control Testing*. Internet WWW page, at URL: <[http://mojo.calyx.net/~refuse/resist\\_this/041099lsdcia.html](http://mojo.calyx.net/~refuse/resist_this/041099lsdcia.html)> (version current at 7 October 2000).

Charlayne Hunter-Gault, *Second Look: Origins of a Crisis*. Internet WWW page, at URL: <[http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/africa/february97/crisis\\_2-17.html](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/africa/february97/crisis_2-17.html)> (version current at 7 October 2000).

representative of, and a symbol of disenfranchised revolutionary political power and the third world.

Godard also makes significant contributions to the content of *Le Gai Savoir* by engaging the viewer in a dialogue with the process of filmmaking itself. Godard accomplishes this in several moments throughout the film by directly addressing the audience with his voice-over narration using classic Brechtian 'alienation' methods.

In particular, Godard's highlighting of the technicalities of the cinematic image and its use of sound contributes to this distancing. By displacing either the sound or the image from conventional narrative cinema, the effect is of a discordant break. This is often confusing to the viewer due to what MacCabe attributes to the mixing or blurring of conventional forms, and the prioritising of sound and image.

...whether priority is given to the image, as in fiction films (we see the truth and the soundtrack must come into line with it) or to the soundtrack, as in documentary (we are told the truth and the image merely confirms it).<sup>53</sup>

By mixing sound and image on such a scale, Godard is able to attribute as much power and validity to the sounds as the image. In many respects, this represents a larger agenda that Godard was forthcoming about in discussions preceding the release of *Le Gai Savoir*.

Maintaining that he was searching for a new visual alphabet within cinema, Godard appears to be searching for a new methodology in reaction to what he perceives to be a lack of innovation in Hollywood cinema.<sup>54</sup> Attacking the U.S. as the world's largest producer of films, Godard believed the film industry had negatively under-utilised sound since its birth from silent cinema. Extending this criticism, Godard also maintains that there was much more to be explored using silent cinema than had previously been done. The U.S. hegemony of cinema had prematurely dismissed and neglected silent cinema and had created a cult of cinema without difference. Godard states that he wished to broaden cinema's growth by more experimentation with these tools.

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<sup>53</sup> Colin MacCabe, *Godard: Images, Sounds, Politics* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980), p. 18.

<sup>54</sup> Jean-Luc Godard, quoted in Gene Youngblood, 'Jean-Luc Godard: No Difference between Life and Cinema'. In *Jean-Luc Godard: Interviews*. p. 14.



Since the invention of talking pictures we are doing only 10 or 15 percent of what could be done in cinema. We are not using cinema fully. Every time I see a silent film I'm amazed at the diversity among filmmakers of those days. Murnau was so different from Griffith, for example. But talking pictures look and sound pretty much alike.<sup>55</sup>

It is in this mixing of a new sound and image methodology that Godard creates a hybrid of form in *Le Gai Savoir*. By treating sound with the same validity as the image,<sup>56</sup> Godard creates parallels between film and the recording of sound as an image. For example, throughout *Le Gai Savoir*, the spectator frequently hears the sound of recorded speech being rewound or fast-forwarded, but is never shown what it is that Patricia and Emile are watching, or the visual context of what they are listening to. Godard purposely creates ambiguities as to whether his characters are watching or listening to a sound image.

In an attempt to create a sound film that does not look and sound like all the others, Godard raises a concept from *Deux ou trois choses que je sais d'elle* [1966] and *Made in U.S.A.* [1966] that informs the spectator of the progression Godard wants to achieve. Godard directs the viewer to the concept of "back to zero," a concept that encompasses multiple levels within *Le Gai Savoir*.

Back to zero is both a call to re-engage cinema with its earlier revolutionary uses as envisaged by directors such as Vertov and Eisenstein; but also to re-engage the fundamental basis of the image and the means with which it expresses ideas and ideology<sup>57</sup>. This becomes particularly expressive within the film as Godard examines the still image and explores the possibilities of achieving multiple meanings using differing sounds, or textual inscription with the repetition of images. In some respects,

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<sup>55</sup> Godard, in Youngblood, p. 14.

<sup>56</sup> When asked in February of 1968 what Godard's opinion was of the relationship between sound and image, Godard replied " There is a technical difference. But other than that I see no difference. Both are the same, more or less." In Youngblood, p. 36.

<sup>57</sup> The definition of ideology here is used in the Marxist sense, of a dominant or popular system of beliefs that passes itself off as natural. Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*. eds., Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith. (New York: International Publishers, 1997), pp. 375-377.

the film attempts to educate the viewer in matters of ideology using a formalist experimental process, similar to the Kuleshov experiment<sup>58</sup>.

'Back to zero' in *Le Gai Savoir* also represents Godard's intentions to break down both written and oral language. Berto's character says

I want to learn, teach them and myself, everyone, to turn against the enemy  
the weapon which at bottom he uses to attacks us: Language.

Language to be used as a weapon is above all the active subject of *Le Gai Savoir*. Godard explores ideas suggesting that film language and the visual image has lost its educational or instructive purpose, especially in the commercial cinema. *Le Gai Savoir* diagnoses these problems of visual and verbal language, the culture that produces it, and its inherent fallibility.<sup>59</sup>

Perhaps what is just as important is what comes after the investigation when he attempts to redefine the visual image into a politically instructive force. To accomplish this, Godard's aims are created from the destruction of conventional film language, and the fragmenting of them from a politicised viewpoint. Royal S. Brown writes that the effect of this technique is representative of a constant throughout *all* of Godard's anti-narrative work.

The fragmented illogicality of Godard's anti-narratives thus paradoxically represents a documentary technique for looking at a state of the world and civilization.<sup>60</sup>

In a more simplistic way, if Godard's pronouncement of the death of cinema in 1967 is contrasted with *Le Gai Savoir*, 'Year Zero' is 1968. This demarcation point is evidenced in the new work produced after 1968, and the beginning of Godard's

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<sup>58</sup> A number of comparisons between Godard and Kuleshov's montage can be found in contrast with Eisenstein. For example, Ronald Lavaco notes that Kuleshov's experiments with montage "clearly finds its richest layers of signification in metonymic not metaphoric function." Ronald Levaco, 'Kuleshov and Semiology: Selections from Lev Kuleshov's *Art of the Cinema*', *Screen*, 12 (1971/2), 107. In an interview, Jean-Pierre Gorin explains the extended use of Kuleshov's techniques in the Dziga Vertov Group's *Letter to Jane* [1972]. Robert Phillip Kolker, 'Angle and Reality: Godard and Gorin in America'. In *Jean-Luc Godard: Interviews*. p. 62.

<sup>59</sup> If *Le Gai Savoir* diagnoses the problems with Language, Godard's *One Plus One* amply demonstrates his desire to destroy it.

<sup>60</sup> Royal S. Brown, 'Introduction: One Plus One Equals'. p. 11.

experimentation with the new "alphabet in the language of cinema"<sup>61</sup> he wishes to accomplish.<sup>62</sup>

In his writing about *Le Mepris* [1966] and Godard, Richard Roud believes one of the reasons for Godard's changing attitudes to cinema during the late 1960's was "...a growing realisation on Godard's part that the personal and the social are inextricably intertwined."<sup>63</sup> The second was a more "total abandonment" of fictional forms and romanticism from his previous works, and lastly his marriage to Anne Wiazemsky<sup>64</sup>.

Roud also notes the influence of Walter Benjamin's work on *Le Gai Savoir* by quoting from Benjamin's unfinished work '*Paris, Capital of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century*'.

The most worn out, communist platitude means more than the most profound bourgeois thought, because the latter has only one true sense, that of apology.<sup>65</sup>

Although Roud doesn't mention it, a more useful sphere of influence upon Godard's filmmaking at this time surely lies with Benjamin's contemporaries, Dziga-Vertov and the early Futurist work of Mayakovsky's '*Lef*' group. The use of 'trans-sense' language, and the groups' extended ideas on defamiliarising images are readily apparent in *Le Gai Savoir*.

This technique the Lef group called 'ostranenie' or 'making-it-strange' was developed by the artist and critic Shklovsky. Ben Brewster writes,

Ordinary language and everyday perception rapidly become routinised with the result that real understanding and vision cease. It is the function of art, by linking together dissimilar things in tropes, and disappointing routine

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<sup>61</sup> Godard, in *Youngblood*, p. 16.

<sup>62</sup> Michael Witt suggests something similar in his discussion of Godard's use of the term 'the death of cinema' in Michael Witt, 'The death(s) of cinema according to Godard', *Screen*, 40 (1999), 335.

<sup>63</sup> Roud, *Jean-Luc Godard*, p. 131.

<sup>64</sup> Roud, *Jean-Luc Godard*, p. 131. Interestingly, James Naremore believes Godard was aware of "the personal being political" as far back as his time as a critic for *Cahiers du Cinéma* in 1959. See James Naremore, 'Authorship and the Cultural Politics of Film Criticism', *Film Quarterly*, 44 (1990), 21. It should be noted that Wiazemsky refutes any political influence upon Godard whatsoever, and categorically states that if any suggestion were true, she somewhat begrudgingly supported Godard's politics during the course of their relationship. "Reading Mao, Marx and Engels was a horrible bore, but once in a while I had to [...] Certainly not for my work. For love, yes." See *Jean-Luc Godard* in the *Cinéma Cinémas* series produced by Ministrie Des Affaires Etrangères.

<sup>65</sup> Roud, *Jean-Luc Godard*, p. 142.

expectations in all its devices, to make us see and understand afresh, correctly. Thus the more formalised, the more 'true,' the closer to 'reality.' This idea is found in Vertov's *Lef* articles, too, for what characterises the cinema-eye is the *differences* between it and the human eye – hence the emphasis on close-up, unnatural perspective and slow and fast motion.<sup>66</sup>

*Le Gai Savoir* defies any conventional categorising into documentary, dramatic fiction, or even a political essay such as Marker's work. The closest example of other films which reflect similarities with *Le Gai Savoir* are other Godard films, and in particular, Godard's recent work on the *Histoire du Cinéma* [1989-1997] series. However, the focus of *Le Gai Savoir* is perhaps even more ambitious as it attempts to renounce conventional narrative to reveal the relationship between *all* images.

*Le Gai Savoir* opens with black space, and uses electronic sound to introduce the beginning of the film. Significantly, there are no credits or visual cues that the film has begun until the sound of the electronic noise starts. The noise is used throughout the film as a precursor to both Godard's narrator voice addressing the spectator, and as an intervening, often chaotically, inhuman form of communication.

The first words spoken in the film are by Godard as the narrator. He lists numbers, which represent the number of frames that have been used since the beginning of the film, and by doing so, illustrates the materiality of the film medium<sup>67</sup>. By contrasting the electronic sound with the numbers, Godard appears to direct the viewer to a binary use of language such as a computer and its use of numerical language.<sup>68</sup> By using this sound, Godard literally foregrounds the raw source of the televisual broadcast medium and highlights the technological apparatus that presents the image to the screen. By using this technique, Godard strips conventional 'human' language to a raw state, a binary language that is translated into images and sound on the screen.

Without opening credits it is not until Léaud's presence that the viewer is aware of a live space for the actors to inhabit. By Léaud walking on from off-camera, the viewer is shown that what had previously appeared to be a plain black screen where the expectation would be to see the film's credits is in fact the set. Godard also thwarts

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<sup>66</sup> Ben Brewster, 'Documents from *Novy Lef*, *Screen*, 12 (1971/2), 64.

<sup>67</sup> It also somewhat humorously illustrates Samuel Goldwyn's utilitarian adage that a film isn't made up of actors or stories, but 'so many feet of action, so many feet of romance..'

<sup>68</sup> *One Plus One* certainly reinforces the concept and use of a binary language system of images.

this expectation at the end of the film, where once again no credits are given, providing a peculiar circularity. It is as if the film literally comes from a black 'nowhere' of the airwaves and ends itself as abruptly as the blackness from which it came. Because the beginning gives no indication that the black space is in fact an extremely skeletal set, the absence of props or other visual clues defies the spectator's ability to discern what the situation or story might be. By the camera remaining static, Godard avoids giving the viewer any clues as to Berto's location. The intent of this technique appears to be Godard's desire for the spectator to be off-balance, to destroy expectation, and to engage the spectator with a different mode of cinematic expression.

By using the simplicity of the black background, the studio set of *Le Gai Savoir* illustrates a new form of theatricality, that exemplifies modernist minimalism such as Pinter's or Beckett's, whose play 'Happy Days' Godard considered filming in 1967.<sup>69</sup> It is difficult not to think of this blackboard type space as metaphoric of political symbolism. The colour black is usually symbolic for anarchism, and the black space can be interpreted as both a "clean slate" and the inverse of a projection screen.

Godard's Dziga-Vertov collaborative partner Jean-Pierre Gorin goes some way in confirming this idea in an interview that was conducted in a trip to the U.S. in 1972.

For four years we decided to cool down, slow down, to make only stationary shots, make flat films and try to work out the white screen as a blackboard, a whiteboard.<sup>70</sup>

This quote is also partly representational of Gorin's extended critical influence over Godard's films later in 1968, and perhaps unintentionally, he has attributed a great deal of credit to himself. However, due to the extended period of *Le Gai Savoir's*

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<sup>69</sup> "At one time I'd wanted to film *Oh! Les Beaux Jours*. I never did - they wanted to use Madeleine Renaud; I wanted to use young actors. I'd have liked to -- I had a text, so all I'd have had to do is film it. I'd have done it all in one continuous travelling. We'd have started it as far back as we had to get the last line, at the end of an hour and a half, in a close-up. It would have meant just some grade-school arithmetic." Jean-Luc Godard, quoted in J. Bontemps, Jean-Louis Comolli, Michel Delahaye, and Jean Narboni, 'Struggle on Two Fronts: A Conversation with Jean-Luc Godard', *Film Quarterly*, 22 (1968-9), 32. See also Royal S. Brown, 'Jean-Luc Godard: Nihilism versus Aesthetic Distantiation'. In *Focus on Godard*. pp. 116-117.

<sup>70</sup> Jean-Pierre Gorin, quoted in Robert Phillip Kolker, 'Angle and Reality: Godard and Gorin in America'. In *Jean-Luc Godard: Interviews*. p. 67.

production before release, it is not inconceivable that Gorin had some effect on the final editing of the film.<sup>71</sup>

Nonetheless, the raw footage that is set in the O.R.T.F. studios for *Le Gai Savoir* indicates that Godard was already working towards using this technique for his cinema. By using static camera work for most of the studio footage, Godard creates a contrast with the live action shots taken outside, which are frequently shot from what appears to be a moving car. The use of static camera placement in the studio provides a visual compatibility with the photographic images used throughout the film. These techniques encourage the viewer to concentrate on Godard's use of montage and mise-en-scene, which contribute to a dialogue between the images and the meanings they create. In this way, *Le Gai Savoir* hearkens back to a very early form of silent cinema. In its utilisation of small sets, and the static camera, Godard directs the spectator to the foundations of silent cinema where meaning and content are found in the relationship between images as opposed to a sound source.

For example, instead of utilising conventional romantic narrative structures, Godard utilises a more skeletal mechanism of signs to reveal romance or intimacy. Proximity, a gesture, the placement of an arm or hand often reveals intimacy, as well as conventional narrative techniques such as an embrace or a kiss. Using a semiological model for communicating ideas, Godard's methodology creates a different kind of cinematic economy than his pre-1968 films by enabling a greater communication through images than relying upon speech.

When Berto enters the area of the sound stage, she extends her arms in a gesture that both illustrates her feeling her way in the dark, and also illustrates a kind of anguished or claustrophobic pushing against the framing of the camera. Before she stumbles into Léaud, Godard's narrator tells us "440,000 frames tell about them on about 7,500 feet. 127,000 sounds, ditto."

As the narrator, Godard breaks the action of the film using the objectivity of mathematical statistics to reveal one component of the film medium. The statistics he gives also provide one form of reference to try to describe the relationship Patricia and Emile have. This suggests that Godard finds it an impossible task, and does not believe there to be any way to describe in full the objective reality of their relationship.

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<sup>71</sup> Winston Dixon claims Godard and Gorin befriended each other during the production of *La Chinoise* in 1967. Winston Dixon, p. 81.

Berto's costuming is kept simple and contemporary, but of note is the use of colour in her costuming which is confined to red and black. The symbolism of these colours is usually of political significance: communism and anarchism. The only time the background of the studio set changes colour is when the other characters within the film are being interviewed by Berto and Léaud. Significantly, the colour of the background is red. Godard frequently uses colours as representations of political ideas. In *Le Gai Savoir* the colours adopt political significance, but are also a contrast with the national Tri-Colours of red, white, and blue. The use of black and red in *Le Gai Savoir* set the precedent for what would become the dominant colours Godard would use throughout the majority of his film projects in 1968.

After Emile and Patricia meet, the one prop of the film is introduced--a transparent plastic umbrella. Emile identifies it as an anti-nuclear umbrella, but Patricia replies that it is a consciousness reflector. When they pass the umbrella between them, they ask introductory, quasi-Socratic questions, of both themselves and each other. However, the questions they ask are also ambiguous in their meaning. The audience is unaware whether the questions verbalised are coming from the characters for the purpose of introducing themselves to each other; or are the influence of the 'consciousness umbrella' speaking through them, directing the questions back at themselves rhetorically.

Either way, Godard almost instantly allays any thought of communication being simple - either between his characters or with his audience. After each of the characters introduces the other, in turn, they address the audience with "He said" and "She said." This motif continues throughout the film and is a contrast to the objective notions of film that have been introduced by Godard's use of statistics at the beginning of the film. It also highlights the character's mistrust of language and a disbelief in an objective, all-encompassing 'truth' in their statements.<sup>72</sup> Godard utilises this technique to compel the spectator to question the elements that comprise the film's content, but also in a more didactic sense to question the content of all images and language. The spectator is included in Godard's educational instruction as much as Patricia and Emile are.

Although the closed set of the studio appears to be a private space, it is in fact utilised as a shared window or prism between the audience, Emile, Patricia and Godard as narrator. Emile and Patricia both appear to self-censor themselves when they are

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<sup>72</sup> The phrase "We refuse to accept any self-evident truths" is a repeated motif throughout the film.

aware of their exposure to the reaction of the audience and Godard the narrator. It is this kind of development and the use of modernist space which illustrates the programmatic way Godard would use the cinema in his post 1968 films.

For example, in his discussion of *Vent d'Est* [1969], critic James Roy MacBean notes the political use of direct address in the cinema

In short, the bourgeois cinema pretends to ignore the presence of the spectator, pretends that what is being said and done on the movie screen is not aimed at the spectator, pretends that the cinema is a 'reflection of reality'; yet all the time it plays on his emotions and capitalises on his identification-projection mechanisms in order to induce him, subtly, insidiously, unconsciously, to participate in the dreams and fantasies that are marketed by bourgeois capitalist society.<sup>73</sup>

It is also illustrative of Godard's belief that there is no division between the cinema and real life, and in a more abstract sense "What is alive is not what's on the screen but *what is between you and the screen.*"<sup>74</sup>

When Emile tells Patricia that they are alone as usual, Patricia responds that France is still in the Middle Ages and the Communist Party is still nowhere near taking over. Emile counters that they may not be alone as she thinks, directly addressing the audience.

Patricia: You're right. We're on TV aren't we?

Emile: Yes. So what?

Patricia: TV enters every bedroom, so why shouldn't we?

Given that *Le Gai Savoir* was supposed to be broadcast nationally by the O.R.T.F., it seems plausible that Godard thought the project had the potential to reach a greater proportion of the nation than his previous cinematic works. His use of this form of direct address is partly motivational and very obviously didactic. He wishes to promote the kind of intellectual thinking about language, images, and politics that *Le*

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<sup>73</sup> James Roy MacBean, 'Vent D'Est: or Godard and Rocha at the crossroads', *Sight and Sound*, 40 (1971), 147.

<sup>74</sup> Jean-Luc Godard, quoted in Claire Clouzot, 'Godard and the US', *Sight & Sound*, 37 (1968), 114.



*Gai Savoir* affords, but he also wishes to be polemic in his education of the audience without developing pedagogy.

As *Le Gai Savoir* progresses, the spectator watches Patricia and Emile's own relationship develop. Instead of the conventional sequencing of romantic involvement, when we do see Emile and Patricia embrace, it is a part of the dialogue that seems to acknowledge the end of their relationship rather than a beginning. Instead of normative narrative techniques, the viewer is given static placements of gesture to reveal the growing intimacy between the two characters without the usual verbal communication about their changing relationship. Any private communication is kept private. In this respect, the narrative structure is stripped of usual episodic or scenic development in favour of utilising the space between the actors, a style that is almost that of a documentary.

The moment of Emile and Patricia's embrace, and the dialogue that ensues, is ambiguous and open to questioning. Firstly, there is the desiccation of its delivery. Its structure appears to be a monologue, but the responsibility of its delivery is shared between Emile, Patricia, and Godard the narrator. Secondly, the relationship Emile and Patricia have formed is open to spectator interpretation as to whether it is romantic or platonic. As has been mentioned, the viewer is given none of the usual normative indications of either action or language to indicate a sexual relationship.

Perhaps even more important is the underlying critical depiction of Godard's monologue, which seems to break with any of the previous scenes between Emile and Patricia. In this scene the viewer is unsure whether they are watching a dialogue between Emile and Patricia as they have previously appeared throughout the film, or a self-conscious monologue/dialogue that is specifically directed and authored by Godard the narrator, or Godard the director of the film. This Brechtian style of communication can also be interpreted as a monologue not between the characters, but between the actors Jean-Pierre Léaud and Juliet Berto. When Godard's own narrator voice intercedes in the conversation, it further renders the monologue into one that some criticism has suggested could be between Godard and his then ex-wife Anna Karina. The polysemy of the monologue also acts as an example of Godard's mistrust of spoken language and, in hindsight, reveals the end of romance within Godard's films until the early 1970's.

By denying an overt emotional basis to his filmmaking, Godard conceives a cinema that dispenses with traditional compartmentalisation in favour of a highly mediated space that the characters use to strip the veneer of their socially created lives. *Le Gai Savoir* is illustrative of this as the spectator watches Emile and Patricia come to a better understanding of the tools that have created ideologically 'natural' viewpoints. With a renewed understanding of their environment, they propose to reshape it into a different set of relationships, and in turn change their relationship with their perception of themselves in the world, both inwardly and outwardly.

Godard made a point of dropping the original narrative scenario he had chosen for *One Plus One*; and in *Le Gai Savoir* it is no accident that the film reveals so little information concerning the character personalities or private lives.

In Royal S. Brown's article entitled 'One Plus One Equals,' Brown discusses the broadening definition of the word 'bourgeois' in connection with Godard's work at this time.

[...] the word "bourgeois" has come to represent, both philosophically and aesthetically, a much broader concept than that of a simple social class. Today the word implies an entire mentality, a middle-of-the-road way of life involving a halfway materialism justified by a religious confidence in the inexorable operation of a cause-and-effect absolute, and a halfway absolutism whose whole *raison d'être* is bound up in totally materialistic goals.<sup>75</sup>

If the bourgeois consciousness can be defined by the above, it is this type of thinking that Godard's films are trying to counter.

[...] one of the prime ways Godard has broken most strongly with traditional filmmaking is through his avoidance of just about anything resembling a conventional storyline, narrative or plot. It is the presence of a narrative in a work of art that can provide the internal event or events with an overall cause-and-effect justification so that, basically, there is eventually a reason for everything that happens.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Brown, 'Introduction: One Plus One Equals'. p. 5.

<sup>76</sup> Brown, 'Introduction: One Plus One Equals'. p. 7.

Godard seems to indict television as one of the largest proponents of bourgeois ideology, and is critical of television's state control as represented by the O.R.T.F. and the strict guidelines in its programming.<sup>77</sup>

The power that the O.R.T.F. had within French national life was unquestionable, and its moral imperatives were myopically drawn directly from state control.

Moral and political censorship was a direct constraint on broadcasting: control of programmes was from 1953 vested directly in the government Ministry of Information, which paid careful attention to the composition and presentation of news, and exercised the right to schedule official announcements. Advertising was not permitted before 1968, though public information broadcasts on matters like health and safety used similar techniques of persuasion on behalf of the public good, as the Ministry understood it...It's most lavish productions tended to be historical documentaries and adaptations of classical theatre, generally conveying a sense of the depth and continuity of French national identity.<sup>78</sup>

In his book on Charles De Gaulle, Regis Debray alludes to the increasingly prevalent role played by television and mass media in directly changing politics within France in the 1960's. Television in France grew at such an exponential rate that when De Gaulle came to power "...there were a million television sets in France: people still had TV at home. When he left there were ten million, and people were at home on TV."<sup>79</sup> Due to the growth in television consumption, the international cinema-going public had been in decline since the beginning of the 1960's.<sup>80</sup>

With the nascent growth of television and mass communication, repercussions and debates took place across the entire spectrum of the arts. Within the field of literature, people such as Marshall McLuhan arose to investigate and diagnose emerging new

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<sup>77</sup> Forbes, 'The Rise of Audio-visual Culture'. pp. 232-233.

<sup>78</sup> Michael Kelly, Tony Jones and Jill Forbes, 'Modernization and Popular Culture'. In *French Cultural Studies: An Introduction*. pp. 146-147.

<sup>79</sup> Regis Debray, *Charles De Gaulle* (London: Verso, 1994), p. 34.

<sup>80</sup> Falling from 1,082 million patrons a year in 1955 to 600 million by 1960. Subsequent assessments reached figures of 326 million by 1965 and falling to 20 million by 1970. See Winston Dixon, p. 100.

forms of media and their effects upon the old. While many celebrated the advent of television, an equal number were left hot under the collar by the 'cool' medium.<sup>81</sup> Writing of television's increased influence in 1969, Rudolf Arnheim criticises the banality of the televised image.

Television proves daily how revealing a small gesture, caught from life, can be for the eye of the beholder and how tediously absurd is, on the other hand, the endless exposure of talking human bodies. Speech, wisely subordinated, supplements, explains, and deepens the image. But the image continues to rule the screen; and to explore its properties remains a topical task.<sup>82</sup>

Godard is no less critical of the medium, but reserved judgement in the hope that control of it could be exercised for greater breadth of viewpoints and political ideas, such as those expressed with *Le Gai Savoir*. An example of this type of expression can be found in one sequence in *Le Gai Savoir* where the spectator is shown a series of images that depict everything from advertising copy from magazines to images taken from television. One television image prominently shows a CRS<sup>83</sup> policeman with a television. The sequence also illustrates the demands Godard places upon the spectator's attention to image and word. By fracturing the sentences using individual words or short phrases with a series of static images, Godard obfuscates the meaning of the message by forcing the spectator to maintain concentration for an extended time.

Image 1. A magazine image of a naked woman with guns.

Textual inscription: 'Henceforth'

Image 2. A photograph of Fidel Castro in a field.

Textual inscription: 'we refuse to accept'

Image 3. A photograph of a riot scene in a field.

Textual inscription: 'any kind of'

Image 4. CRS guards and a TV.

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<sup>81</sup> One of the inventors of television, Vladimir Zworykin, was so disappointed in the use of the technology that he expressed his disappointment to the President of the United States. "Wiesner introduced his visitor to the president as "the man who got you elected." Startled, JFK asked, "How is that?" Wiesner explained, "This is the man who invented television." JFK replied how that was a terrific and important thing to have done. Zworykin wryly commented, "Have you seen television recently?" Nicholas Negroponte, *Being Digital* (New York: Vintage Books, 1996), p. 82.

<sup>82</sup> Rudolf Arnheim, *Film As Art* (London: Faber and Faber, 1969), p. 5.

<sup>83</sup> Compagnies Républicaines de Sécurité: National riot police. Many of the posters produced throughout May criticised the media for being the puppets of the CRS.

Textual inscription: 'self-evident truths'

Image 5. Photographic image of a band of guerrillas.

Textual inscription: 'we'

Image 6. Photograph of a relay runner passing a baton.

Textual inscription: 'do not believe'

Image 7. CU of text from a book.

Textual inscription: 'that there exist any'

Image 8. split-screen photographic image of an older figure on left and Cohn-Bendit on the right.

Textual inscription: 'self-evident truths'

Image 9. CU bikini clad woman on magazine cover.

Textual inscription: 'self-evident truths'

Image 10. CU from advertisement of a hand holding a can.

Textual inscription: 'belong'

Image 11. Sexualised cartoon image of a semi-clad woman in a hammock, and sewing.

Textual inscription: 'to'

Image 12. Photograph of siblings washing family car.

Textual inscription: 'Bourgeois Philosophy'

When Godard starts to introduce two-dimensional images and scenes shot outside of the studio where Patricia and Emile converse, he creates new ideas and fragmented concepts and equations that defy the viewer on a denotative level. Instead, they are asked to piece together ideas through association. The criticism Godard attaches to televisual and print images found in advertising are of great significance within *Le Gai Savoir*. By reinscribing the image with a textual signifier, or associating two images to create a new equation, Godard is able to capitalise on the original image and subvert it with a new meaning.

In his role as a teacher, Godard tries to not only educate the audience on the role images play, but also attempts to 'unmask' the ideological coding behind them. Through the repetition of these images with new textual signifiers, the images adopt a palimpsestual quality that eviscerates any constancy in meaning.

David Bordwell writing in *Narration In Fiction Film* describes these methods in Godard's films as 'generators of confusion,' and the results obfuscate meaning through technique, until they become "...elusive on a simple denotative level..[they]..invite

interpretations but discourage, even defy analysis.”<sup>84</sup> Much of this interpretation stems from what Bordwell believes is the psychological use of the ‘cocktail effect’ in Godard’s films. The multiplicity of image and sound leads to “perceptual and cognitive overload” in the viewer.

Peter Wollen rebuts Bordwell’s argument that Godard’s films “discourage, even defy analysis,” by pointing out that *Le Gai Savoir* doesn’t provide the open ended multiplicity of interpretation that Bordwell seems to imply.

Nor, of course, is it indifferent to Godard what types of new meaning are produced. Although his work is open-ended, it does not offer itself simply for a delirium of interpretation, as though meaning could be read in at will by the spectator.<sup>85</sup>

Much of Godard’s filmmaking uses fragmented images, but as Godard points out, this is literally what the mechanics of cinema are. The meanings we derive from a film are nothing more than the composition of an ensemble of fragmented images. “For me to make a film is to seize in one gesture a whole through fragments. Each shot is not organised with respect to the dramatic function. A film is not a series of shots but an ensemble of shots.”<sup>86</sup>

Bordwell writes that the films from this period are typified by an almost gratuitous inclusiveness of material that breaks the unification of the fabula.

It is as if Godard has extended the principle “replete” parametric cinema to so many parameters that we grasp each stylistic event only as a discrete burst of technique, immediately arresting our attention and disrupting the construction of a unified fabula. The narration shifts violently and without warning between principles of organisation.<sup>87</sup>

Bordwell’s representation of Godard’s filmmaking denies any other significant formalist tactic. All of the films from 1968 can arguably fit into being anti-narrative.

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<sup>84</sup> David Bordwell, *Narration in the Fiction Film* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), p. 311.

<sup>85</sup> Peter Wollen, ‘The Two Avant-Gardes’, *Edinburgh '76 Magazine*, 1 (1976), 82.

<sup>86</sup> Wollen, p. 317.

<sup>87</sup> Bordwell, p. 320.

Colin Westerbeck, in his discussion of *Pravda* [1969] and *See You at Mao (British Sounds)* [1969] suggests that *Le Gai Savoir* is the demarcation point for the beginning of Godard's anti-narrative filmmaking.

They also have continuity with earlier work because they go beyond *Le Gai Savoir* in eliminating traditional narrative elements. Whereas *Le Gai Savoir* does away with everything except a couple of central characters, these films do without the characters as well.<sup>88</sup>

However, it might be fairer to look further back at the development of cinema from the 1920's to get a clearer picture of what Godard is trying to accomplish with narrative in *Le Gai Savoir*. Writing in *New Lef* in 1928, Arvatov denies the use of the term 'anti-narrative' in favour of the word 'deformation'.

Firstly, a few words on the misunderstanding of the concept of narrative structure. The term is used to describe the succession of events which makes up the theme (*syuzhet*) of an art product. Bourgeois art tradition has taught us to consider that narrative structure belongs to the realm of imagination (the tale, the story etc) but any fact out of reality developed in time obviously has a narrative structure....This problem is tightly bound up with the problem of 'deformation' and the problem of so-called agit-art.<sup>89</sup>

Godard's 'abandonment' of fictional forms should not be confused with an abandonment of narrative forms. 1968 is frequently alluded to by many critics as the year Godard's films either dropped narrative structures or became anti-narrative in their content. The real departure in Godard's filmmaking is in reality attributable to his changing attitude to what constitutes narrative.

In his tour of the United States in February of 1968, Godard spoke to student filmmakers about his career and changing perspectives on filmmaking. One of the participants, Eli Hollander asked,

EH : *When looking at your films, one sees two directions you take. On one hand there's the group of films with a strong fictional narrative line, while on the other hand certain films have a strong intellectual, essay approach. For*

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<sup>88</sup> Colin L. Westerbeck Jr, 'A Terrible Duty is Born', *Sight and Sound*, 40 (1971), 82.

<sup>89</sup> Arvatov, 'Film Platform' in *Lef*, No. 3, 1928. In *Screen*, 12 (1971/2), 80-81.

*example, Contempt and Band of Outsiders are much more fictional than Masculine/Feminine or La Chinoise. When you introduced La Chinoise you talked about a new film language you are searching for. Does that mean you are going in the direction of the more intellectual films?*

JLG : No—I disagree with you. There is always a narrative line. In *La Chinoise* I am narrative about ideas, and in *Contempt* I am narrative about people. That's the only difference. In both, I was very much narrative. And if I was not, I couldn't go on shooting. It's only because I have a narrative line in mind that I'm able to improvise and to go on shooting every day...I'm just moving away from something I call drama. Most movies use drama, but I think it's good for stage but not movies. I'm trying to avoid drama. But drama has nothing to do with narrative. French literature, for example, has avoided drama for some time now...<sup>90</sup>

For example, the first piece of footage shot outside of the studio that the viewer is shown in *Le Gai Savoir* demands concentration and the ability to juggle and suspend ideas from the sounds, images and words they are shown. In this way, the viewer is forced into producing a new lexicon of ideas. In no way are these ideas, sounds, and images random. However, the spaces between the ideas are frequently confounded or obfuscated to challenge the viewer. Godard wants the spectator to relearn their understanding of images by teaching the viewer that 'the eye must listen before it looks.'

In René Clair's 1953 book *Reflections on the Cinema*, Clair imagines a conversation with his former self from 1923 and endeavours to explain his own desire to educate the spectator anew.

R.C. 1923: If I could teach you to forget I would turn you into fine, simple savages. In front of the screen, at first entirely blank, you would marvel at elementary visions: a leaf, a hand, water, an ear; then a tree, a human body, a river, a face; after that, wind in the leaves, a man walking, a river flowing, simple facial expressions. In the second year, you would solve visual puzzles. You would be taught the rudiments of a provisional syntax. You would learn to guess the meaning of various successions of images, as a child or a foreigner, little by little, finds out the meanings of the sounds he hears. And after several

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<sup>90</sup> In Youngblood, pp. 39-40.



years, or, perhaps, several generations (I'm not a prophet), you would have learned to accept the rules of a visual convention as practical as the verbal one, and no more exacting.

R.C. 1950: And after that?

R.C. 1923: After that we'd invent something else. Perhaps a tactile, or an olfactory convention.<sup>91</sup>

When Emile parodies Dostoyevsky's "Knowing is not enough" with "Just knowing is pretty good," the camera pans left to the black of the set and cuts to live footage of cars and shops in the Paris streets. The scene then cuts to a close-up poster image of a giant razor blade being held aloft by what is obviously a group of workers. In the background of the image is a bridge which looks like many of the bridges that cross the Seine in Paris. Inscribed on the image, in Godard's own handwriting is 'Revolution.' A voice that is not Emile, Patricia or Godard's tells us "A...society...reduced," cutting to a live action shot of a car passing under a bridge similar to the one in the illustration; and then to a still image of a large pair of psychedelic eyes, inscribed underneath is the word 'Image'. There are a number of allusions in this sequence. Visually, the spectator is offered a set of relationships with the still image of the workers:

[1] The razor blade can be interpreted as a metaphor of the workers cutting ties with the past through revolutionary ideas and their unity.

[2] The bridge of the illustration can be tied to the reality of the live action bridge.

[3] The revolution that has been depicted in images is becoming a revolution in reality.

[4] Aurally Godard begs the question that if society is reduced to spectacle, then it is up to the workers in society to regain control of the image and use it to their own political ends.

He also touches upon a reference to Guy Debord's book (and later film) 'Society of the Spectacle'<sup>92</sup>. A part of this reference is the cutting from the image of the razor, and then to the image of an eye.

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<sup>91</sup> René Clair, *Reflections On The Cinema* (London: William Kimber And Co., Limited, 1953), pp. 12-13.

<sup>92</sup> 1967 and 1973 respectively.

The live footage is obviously shot out of a car window, and hearkens back to Godard's earlier film work, such as 1959's *A bout de Souffle*. In many respects, the Godard of 1968 is recapitulating the earlier methods of the New Wave. Low budget, cheaper methods of making film--but still retaining the actors he believes can accomplish his aims. Significantly, Godard has dispensed with the concept of *Politique des Auteurs* in reaction to his belief of having a bourgeois past.<sup>93</sup>

The new alphabet of films can be interpreted as reworkings of older ideas and concepts in Godard's films--there is still romance, it is merely reworked into a system of signs without the romanticism of his previous work. Godard still uses techniques such as the use of interviews that became familiar to most spectators of his films in *Masculin Feminin* [1966]. Even the exploration and criticism of the two-dimensional images found in advertising that Godard utilises for the majority of the still images can be found in previous work. These still images reflexively illustrate past interests in the depiction of women and the prostitution of the self, as well as the concept of the cash nexus.

..the anecdote it tells (2 or 3 things I know about her) coincides with basically with one of my most deep-rooted theories. The idea that, in order to live in Parisian society today, at whatever level or on whatever plane, one is forced to prostitute oneself in one way or another, or else to live according to conditions resembling those of prostitution.<sup>94</sup>

Godard uses this kind of formulation with Patricia and Emile's professional lives in *Le Gai Savoir*. At the end of each of their meetings, they frequently describe what work they are going to do. Emile explains one of his occupations is as a journalist. "Michel and I are going to steal the dreams of two big pop stars, and sell them to the tabloids, and give the bread to North Vietnam."

Both Emile and Patricia are acutely aware of the political ramifications of what they do occupationally. Both realise that there is something exploitative in what they do, and their reasons for pursuing their occupations frequently hinges on exploiting the exploiters, and making the conscious decision that this will help achieve their radical

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<sup>93</sup> "I escaped from a bourgeois family into show business. And then I discovered that show business was a bigger bourgeois family than my own. Or came to feel it." Godard, quoted in Andrew Sarris, 'Godard and the Revolution'. In *Jean-Luc Godard: Interviews*. p. 53.

<sup>94</sup> Jean-Luc Godard, quoted in Jean-Luc Godard, 'One Should Put Everything into a Film'. In *Godard on Godard*. eds., Tom Milne and Jean Narboni. (New York and London: Da Capo Press, 1986), p. 239.

objectives. By using his characters to describe their roles like this, Godard appears to be revealing as much about his own professional life as he is about his characters motivations.

In many of Godard's pre-1968 films, his characters lives sometimes appear to be destroyed by the discrepancy between the lives they lead, and the lives they wish to live evidenced by the, frequently fictional, literature they read. Critic Robert Stam quotes Marianne from *Pierrot le Fou* [1965] saying

"What makes me sad," she laments, "is that we can't live in life the way we can in novels." Life she goes on to explain, lacks the order, harmony, and logic encountered in works of fiction."<sup>95</sup>

Perhaps beginning with *La Chinoise*, Godard's films shift from these literary roots into a different means of expression. In *La Chinoise*, the characters literary means of education is non-fiction, which, in turn, they abandon in order to learn to live in revolutionary ways. This proposal is cemented in *Le Gai Savoir*. If Roud's assertion that Godard abandoned fictional forms in his films is correct, Godard and his characters can be interpreted as having abandoned fiction also. For example, the distinction the film initiates between the interior of the minimalist night-time studio space, contrasted with the outside world of the Paris streets the actors occupy during the day.

Godard shows the spectator images of non-fiction book covers as clues, and as a means to illustrate what has been influencing his thinking, almost as a friend recommending a good book to the spectator. This technique can be seen in *Deux ou trois choses que je sais d'elle* [1966], but Godard plays with these images much more than he has done previously. The books are treated with all the objectification that the camera can summon. Mostly simple shots, vertically framing the cover. However, every now and again the book will be placed horizontally, making the spectator physically move in their seats to be able to read the book cover.

As a spectator, Godard wants any kinds of suspension of disbelief broken by making his audience mentally and physically interact with the film. Books are politically influential tools, and their power has to be critically examined. The only book we see

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<sup>95</sup> Robert Stam, *Reflexivity in Film and Literature: From Don Quixote to Jean-Luc Godard* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), p. 9.

Patricia and Emile studying is a children's book which reveals a political power struggle of representation.

The new interests explored within *Le Gai Savoir* are the proliferation of images within society, and Godard's sense of urgency in dispelling their cumulative effect. By asking his audience to use the images against the bourgeois establishment who created them, Godard hopes *Le Gai Savoir* will provide an education in resistance and application.

# Cinétracts

*Ciné-Tracts* [1968] AKA: Cinétracts (3-4 minutes each)

"Actually, if I have a secret ambition, it is to be put in charge of the French newsreel services. All my films have been reports on the state of the nation; they are newsreel documents, treated in a personal manner perhaps, but in terms of contemporary actuality...When people ask me why I talk –or have my characters talk – about Vietnam...I refer the questioner to his own newspaper. It's all there. And it's all mixed up. This is why I am so attracted by television. A televised newspaper made up of carefully prepared documents would be extraordinary...This is why, rather than speak of cinema and television, I prefer to use the more general terms of images and sounds."<sup>96</sup>

--Godard in 'L'Avant-Scene du Cinema 70', May 1967.

"But a still photograph cut into a film acts like the curse on Lot's wife."

--Rudolf Arnheim 'Film as Art'

The *Ciné-Tracts* [1968] project was undertaken by a number of French directors as a means of taking direct revolutionary action during and after the events of May 1968.<sup>97</sup> Contributions were made by Godard, Chris Marker,<sup>98</sup> Alain Resnais and others during this period. Each of the *Ciné-Tracts* consists of 100 feet of 16mm black and white silent film shot at 24 FPS, equalling a projection-time of 2 minutes and 50 seconds.<sup>99</sup> The films were made available for purchase at the production cost, which at the time was fifty francs.

As part of the prescription for the making of the films, the director was to self-produce, self-edit, be the cinematographer, ensuring that each film was shot in one day. Godard had undergone a series of encounters on the barricades during the 'Langlois Affair' in February of 1968,<sup>100</sup> and during May was seen actively involved in

<sup>96</sup> Godard, 'One Should Put Everything into a Film'. In Jean-Luc Godard, *Godard on Godard*. Eds., Tom Milne and Jean Narboni. (New York and London: Da Capo Press, 1986), p. 239.

<sup>97</sup> Although unverified, the project is likely to have been conceived by Chris Marker and the S.L.O.N. Groupe after the events at Cannes in May of 1968. Godard had previously contributed *Caméra-Oeil* to Marker's *Loin du Viêt Nam (Far from Vietnam)* project in 1967.

<sup>98</sup> Marker is possibly one of the foremost proponents of using the photographic image within cinema. Both *La Jetée* [1964] and *Si j'avais quatre dromadaires* [1966] use photographs extensively.

<sup>99</sup> Some of the *Ciné-Tracts* break with this format and reach four minutes in length. See Yosefa Loshitzky, *The Radical Faces of Godard and Bertolucci*. (Detroit, Michigan: Wayne State University Press, 1995), p. 268. Also David Sterritt, ed., *Jean-Luc Godard: Interviews* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1998), p. xxv.

<sup>100</sup> The 'Langlois Affair' was an important moment preceding the May events with a number of French and international film directors becoming directly involved in the fate of Henri Langlois' position as head of the Cinémathèque Française. See Glenn Myrent and Georges P. Langlois, *Henri Langlois: First Citizen of Cinema* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1995). Also Sylvia Harvey, *May '68 and Film Culture* (London: British Film Institute, 1978), pp. 14-16.

labour marches, photographing the riots in the Latin Quarter. He also took time to shoot some material at the University of Paris campus at Nanterre.<sup>101</sup>

Due to the anonymous approach of the directors involved in the *Ciné-Tracts* project and the unification between the directors, no credits are given in any of the *Ciné-Tracts* to identify who made them. This use of anonymity extends to the way each film is numbered. The number of each *Ciné-Tract* is allocated by where the contribution falls within the total number completed by the group. For example, Godard's contributions available for viewing at the British Film Institute are numbered 001, 004, 7, 9, 16, 018, 019 and 23.<sup>102</sup>

Julia Lesage notes that many of the *Ciné-Tracts* exhibit signs of Godard's direct involvement, such as Godard's distinctive handwriting on the intertitles or directly upon the images themselves.<sup>103</sup> Although these signs of Godard's authorship might be attributable to work he had done for other contributors to the *Ciné-Tracts* project, it would appear to be unlikely given the project's prescriptive nature.

Winston-Dixon states that part of the prescription involved in the making of the *Ciné-Tracts* was that each of the films was supposed to be edited entirely in camera. Given that Godard's *Ciné-Tracts* are entirely comprised of still images, and frequently make use of intertitles, it is understandable that this method may have sped up the process of recording the films. If Winston-Dixon's information is correct, the amount of preparation that this method must have involved is readily apparent. The process of editing within the camera would have entailed an enormous amount of storyboarding given that the *Ciné-Tracts* use hundreds of still images, frequently repeated between the films.<sup>104</sup>

The *Ciné-Tracts* were distributed outside of the commercial system of distribution. Owing to the modestly successful private distribution and availability within France, the project succeeded in reaching audiences interested in the shared ideals of workers and students in the May revolt.

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<sup>101</sup> Wheeler Winston Dixon, *The Films of Jean-Luc Godard* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), p. 103. For an image of Godard shooting the *Ciné-Tracts* in May, see the Appendix. Figure. 2.

<sup>102</sup> The potential that other Godard contributions to the *Ciné-Tracts* project is possible. I have not been able to determine the exact number made by the group.

<sup>103</sup> Julia Lesage, *Jean-Luc Godard: A Guide to References and Resources* (Boston: G.K. Hall & Co., 1979), pp. 93-94.

<sup>104</sup> Winston Dixon, p. 103.

The eight Godard *Ciné-Tracts* available at the British Film Institute were shot in May and June of 1968 with screenings also taking place over those two months. They were made for a predominantly French audience, and were screened in French "student assemblies, factories on strike and political action committees in May [and June] 1968."<sup>105</sup> However, the films were also screened in England at the New Arts Lab,<sup>106</sup> and the National Film Theatre, with limited screenings on the festival circuit, notably in Venice and New York.

Although the textual inscriptions used within the *Ciné-Tracts* are in French, and there does not appear to have been a subtitled translation into English made available, Godard's montage reveals a great deal of information that would not be lost on an English-speaking audience.

It should be noted that international distribution of the *Ciné-Tracts* was most likely an after-thought that can be attributed to overseas interest in the directors involved in the project, as opposed to the content of the films. By 1968, both Chris Marker and Godard were internationally known on the festival circuit<sup>107</sup>; while Godard and Truffaut's disruption of the Cannes Film Festival that year had also been highly publicised.<sup>108</sup>

The purpose of the *Ciné-Tracts*, as with most of Godard's 1968 film projects, was to offer a critically alternative source of 'news' or information in contrast to the commercially offered mediums available. Although the prescriptive nature of the films, their limitation of budget and the limitations introduced by their use of silence, technically confines what can be achieved by the project, the amount of 'alternative' documentary information contained in the *Ciné-Tracts*, subverts the state controlled

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<sup>105</sup> Winston Dixon, p. 103.

<sup>106</sup> Winston Dixon writes that *Loin du Viêt-nam* [1967] (including Godard's contribution to the project *Caméra-Oeil* or *Camera Eye*) was screened in the summer of 1968 at the New Arts Lab. It is likely that Godard's *Ciné-Tracts* were also shown at this time. See Winston Dixon, p. 85.

<sup>107</sup> For a detailed analysis of Godard's films and their screenings in the U.S. throughout the 1960's and 1970's see Craig Fischer, 'Films Lost in the Cosmos: Godard and New York Distribution and Exhibition (1961-1973)', *Spectator*, 18 (1998), 47-66.

<sup>108</sup> See Penelope Houston, 'Cannes 68', *Sight and Sound*, 37 (1968), 115-117. The article provides a somewhat tongue-in-cheek look at the happenings on May 18. Godard got into a "tussle" with Polanski "about who or who wasn't a Stalinist," which is ironic considering Godard got into a fight with Polanski's old room-mate Quarrier later in the year (see *One Plus One*). Truffaut apparently got into a knock down "scuffle" as well (reportedly his fifth that year). See also Gilles Jacob, 'The 400 Blows of Francois Truffaut', *Sight and Sound*, 37 (1968), 190-191.



media information. The state censorship of the media throughout the events of May necessitated communication along different lines than had existed before. With the *Ciné-Tracts*, Godard was able to provide one avenue of contact and information to various cadres that formed throughout the May revolt. By creating a form of agit-prop for specific audiences, the *Ciné-Tracts* provided a means of encouraging the revolutionary momentum begun in Nanterre earlier in the year.

As part of the 1998 Viennale Film Festival's recognition of the events of 1968 on cinema, Jonathan Rosenbaum contributed some of his memory of this time.

It's also worth adding that during the week's run of *La Chinoise* that started at New York's Kips Bay Theater on April 3, I and many friends of mine went to see it more than once. Some of these friends were attending Columbia University at the time, and when that college campus was taken over by students a short time later, I couldn't help but think that Godard's film had inspired and influenced their militancy. Maybe part of this was wishful thinking, but maybe not: word of mouth travelled more quickly in those days--faster than the New York Times, faster even than television--because there was less media to compete with. *Not that the media didn't exist, but it was believed in much less by people of my generation; all one had to do was read --or, on television, see--the reports of the demonstrations we participated in, against the Vietnam war and on behalf of civil rights, in order to understand that the truth of what happened was available only from fellow demonstrators and other members of the counter culture, not from the "official" channels.* And the same thing was true when it came to finding out about movies: the David Denbys and the Eugene Archers of 1968 were not the authorities one had to turn to.<sup>109</sup> (Italics mine)

*Le Gai Savoir* [1968] had used images from advertising sources illustrating 8mm Cine-equipment, suggesting the means of communicating through the cinematic medium were being opened to a greater number of individuals. There is a form of implicit homage to the industrialisation or production of photographic and Cine-equipment within Godard's *Ciné-Tracts*. The widespread availability of filmmaking equipment to

<sup>109</sup> Jonathan Rosenbaum, 'My Filmgoing in 1968: An Exploration', *That Magic Moment: 1968 and the Cinema* (1998). Internet WWW page, at URL: <<http://www.viennale.or.at/1998/magic/rosenbe.htm>> (version no longer available).

Publication (in German) available from Internet WWW Page, at URL: <<http://www.viennale.or.at/english/shop/index.html>> (version current at 7 October 2000).

consumers and institutions in the late 1960's allowed a reappropriation of the means to record and distribute visual communication outside the confines of a conventional or commercialised media system.

That is not to say the *Ciné-Tracts* are some form of celebration of the democratising of technology, but they do hint at the function new technology can serve as a catalyst for a public revolution of images. Although the 16mm format was frequently a choice for professional filmmakers, it is used in its most basic form in the *Ciné-Tracts* project. Given that the *Ciné-Tracts* did not use sound, the most basic of equipment could be utilised to screen the films. In particular, the format was relatively easy to duplicate and disseminate throughout institutions such as the Universities; and due to the portability of the equipment needed to project the films, it is imagined the University 16mm projectors were 'borrowed' to allow the *Ciné-Tracts* to be screened within the factories where strike action was taking place.

The overwhelming amount of historical data about meetings that took place within the confines of the university and factories undergoing strike action, suggests that these places were not just chosen because they were under siege by the state, but were geographic places that provided the technology to distribute communications and organise plans of action.<sup>110</sup>

Winston-Dixon points out that this sort of filmmaking would have been done on video tape today, but video technology was in its infancy in 1968 making it difficult and impractical to use for the *Ciné-Tracts* project. Godard had tried to experiment with video technology as early as 1967 when filming *La Chinoise*<sup>111</sup>. However, shooting the *Ciné-Tracts* in this format would have destroyed their political purpose. Shooting with video would contradict the objectives of the project, which could only be achieved through the maximisation of distribution to those the films were trying to encourage. Video technology was only accessible to a very few, such as television stations--one of the media avenues the films were attempting to undermine--and the means of screening 16mm were at the disposal of both students and workers who were the target audience *creating* the revolution. In her examination of film culture in May 1968, Sylvia Harvey points out

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<sup>110</sup> See *Grands soirs et petits matins: Mai 68 au Quartier Latin*, dir. William Klein, 1978.

<sup>111</sup> Colin MacCabe, *Godard: Images, Sounds, Politics* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980), p. 133.

A film projected in a factory is a rather different phenomenon from a film projected in a cinema, and the former was seen as part of an attempt at breaking down the 'normal' relationship that exists in capitalist society between the audience-consumer and the spectacle-product. The emphasis on new locations for screenings indicated the beginning of a realisation that it was not enough simply to change the content of films, but that the whole socio-economic structure in which they operated had also to be changed. Film as a consumer product was seen as an intrinsically non-revolutionary phenomenon, and to simply use the film content to show a condition of misery, of contestation or of struggle was regarded as an inadequate, an incomplete solution.<sup>112</sup>

The *Ciné-Tracts* demonstrate Godard's desire to contribute revolutionary 'tools' in an openly political way. In an interview with Kent E. Carroll in 1970, Godard stated that there had been an enormous change in his attitude towards his role as a filmmaker during this period.

I was a bourgeois filmmaker and then a progressive filmmaker and then no longer a filmmaker, but just a worker in the movies.<sup>113</sup>

Without the necessity to address the cinematic material to a 'larger public,' the target audience is confined to the militants Godard wants to encourage to pursue revolutionary goals. If Godard's aim is the production of smaller films for smaller audiences, the *Ciné-Tracts* also demonstrate his ability to enter a non-commercial sphere, albeit in a limited way.

Due to their relatively limited means of distribution, the *Ciné-Tracts*, and later projects such as *Un Film Comme les Autres* [1968], also represent a turning point in Godard's aims in relation to spectatorship. In this respect, the films are the precursor of the

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<sup>112</sup> Sylvia Harvey, *May '68 and Film Culture* (London: British Film Institute, 1978), pp. 28-29.

<sup>113</sup> Jean-Luc Godard, quoted in Kent E. Carroll, 'Film and Revolution: Interview with the Dziga-Vertov Group'. In *Focus on Godard*. Ed., Royal S. Brown, (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall Inc, 1972), pp. 51-52. This statement also highlights Godard's alignment with the ideas proposed by the *Lef* group. See Richard Sherwood, 'Documents from *Lef*', *Screen*, 12 (1971/2), 27.

problems Godard would face with the films made in the post-1968 Dziga-Vertov period.<sup>114</sup>

Each of Godard's Cinétract films opens with either simple machine produced type, or what is recognisably Godard's hand-written script that is either white on black or black on white with a title reading 'Cinétract' and its attendant number. Individually, the films illustrate Godard's political concerns with the May movement, and provide ample illustration of the social divisions that were created. The majority of images are representative of both sides in the revolutionary struggle of May. For example, the pro-Gaullists are frequently pictured opposite their anti-Gaullist counterparts. By manipulating the binary oppositions, Godard is able to reveal the tensions between opposing sides in the revolt, but he is also able to exacerbate them.

For example, the *Ciné-Tracts* creates a very clear-cut depiction of the pro-Gaullist members of French society. Footage shot in the Latin Quarter is contrasted with the Pro-Gaullist marches in the Champs Elysees. The images Godard selects of these marches include the Arc de Triomphe as a prominent and potent symbol of the older generation. Men in bowler hats with their wives in twin-sets and pearls look on in disgust at the younger generation. City officials in Tri-Colour sashes look on in earnestness as they march with pro-Gaullist banners down the Champs Elysees. The C.R.S.<sup>115</sup> celebrate the violence inflicted on the students and workers by slapping each other on the back. Each of these images contributes to what Godard hopes is the galvanising of the spectator with the ideological aims of the demonstrators.

Using montage, Godard creates sequences that contrast young with old and bourgeois with revolutionary. These sequences cut from the youthful protestors to the older onlookers who disapprovingly watch the confrontation between police and protestor. This can also be interpreted as a call to the spectator for direct revolutionary action, by its indictment of those who watch and are not participating in the revolution. Scenes such as this also enforce the idea that the revolution is an active force that is presently happening, thus creating a sense of urgency or immediacy to the images.

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<sup>114</sup> Claire Johnston and Jan Dawson contributed an interesting article about contemporary alternative developments for independent filmmakers and exhibitors in 'Declarations of Independence', *Sight and Sound*, 39 (1969/70), 28-30.

<sup>115</sup> C.R.S. Compagnies Républicaines de Sécurité: National Riot Squad

In general terms, Godard's *Ciné-Tracts* also explore the uses of photography, photojournalism and the relationship the still image has to news reportage and the understanding of events. This is usually achieved by textually inscribing an image to reflect revolutionary ideology or contrasting binary images that give a politically sardonic satirical allusion. For example, in *Ciné-Tract 018*

A series of shots that produce a montage of individual faces in CU shouting.

Faces of smiling C.R.S. police marching. Camera pans<sup>116</sup> left revealing the enormity of the phalanx, and revealing citizens on the curbside clapping them on.

Intertitle [Pen on Paper]: "Vive La Police!"

LS of crowd receding into background. Camera pans left over image to reveal people in CU laughing.

Intertitle: "Les Brave Gens Avec Nous!"/The Brave People With Us!

MCU of bourgeois man in dinner suit with bow tie and military-styled moustache stroking chin.

CU Elderly man wearing a black beret with determined/concerned face.

MCU Middle-aged men in uniform black suit jackets, white shirts and black ties.

MCU Younger man in almost identical dress,

Image of marching women holding the Tri-Colour flag. Camera pans right over the marching figures to linger on a shot of a woman whose dress and style emulates Jacqueline Kennedy.

Intertitle: "Et Assez De Violence!"/ And Enough Of Violence.

CU Hands holding sign "Assez De Violence"

MCU of man who is holding sign, panning down to reveal sign.

Intertitle: "Compris?"/ Understood?

The butt of a rifle in MCU positioned diagonally across frame. C.R.S. in background with one member who has his face averted.

Intertitle: "Nous Protestations"/ Our Protest/Pleas.

Godard frequently uses *mise-en-scene* within the *Ciné-Tracts* to depict action and movement. Using the borders of the frame, Godard contrives images of the C.R.S. as robotic figures that have a similar and equally humorous functionality to Sennett's Keystone Cops. They're frequently shot running diagonally from one corner of the frame to the other with no readily apparent purpose. The majority of the time they are depicted as faceless automatons, or inhuman masked oppressors – helmeted and goggled, they are devoid of human identity.

<sup>116</sup> Frequently Godard uses pans over the still images to give feelings of action or movement.

However, Godard also manages to shamelessly satirise the C.R.S. by capturing them with their batons in obvious Freudian poses. In contrast to the humorous depiction of the C.R.S., Godard frequently illustrates the brutality of the violence that the C.R.S. were capable of inflicting. By contrasting the comic images of the C.R.S. with the acts of violence, the intensity of the effect upon the spectator increases their sympathy or support for the demonstrators.

One particular shot of a demonstrator bleeding as he is being beaten also shows his girlfriend looking directly into the camera seeking help. By the juxtaposition of the comic with the dramatic images, Godard is able to effect a greater impact upon the audience, and create a sense of outrage.

A great deal of the footage used within Godard's *Ciné-Tracts* steps outside the prescription of the filmmaker's own recording of events. Using images from other sources of information lends the films an appearance of a bricolage of material almost bordering the aleatory. For example, Godard includes Edouard Boubat's photograph '*Plutot la vie,*' [1968] an internationally published image that became recognised as one of the seminal photographic depictions of the May 1968 events.<sup>117</sup>

Many iconic pop-cultural images of the 60's circulating today are represented in the *Ciné-Tracts*. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that the first shot of *Ciné-Tract 23* is of Che Guevara. Guevara, whose image has possibly lasted the longest as the 60's iconic embodiment of revolutionary youth and spirit, is still found battling it out with St. Exupery's 'Little Prince' in Paris tourist shops today.<sup>118</sup> However the image of Guevara also assigns a far more serious implication to the May revolt. As with the images of Vietnam, Godard broadens the meaning of the May events into a global revolution of which France is a part by destroying the conservative perception of the May events as a 'national moment of unrest'.

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<sup>117</sup> As of May 1999, Boubat's image is a 'picture-postcard' for tourists in most Paris tourist shops.

<sup>118</sup> Michael Harder, *Michael Harder Photography - CUBA - Alberto "Korda" Gutierrez*. Internet WWW page, at URL: <<http://www.pix.dk/korda2.htm>> (version current at 7 October 2000). Korda's image of Guevara has been used largely for advertising purpose in recent years for 'Revolutionary' cachet. Leica are currently using Korda's image of Guevara for their 2000 'Totally Revolutionary' advertising campaign. Korda is currently suing Vodka manufacturer 'Smirnoff' for wrongfully appropriating the image. CNN.com. *Vodka ad featuring famed photo of 'Che' Guevara sparks furor*. Internet WWW Page, at URL: <<http://www.cnn.com/2000/WORLD/americas/08/09/cuba.cheguevara.ap/index.html>> (version current at 7 October 2000).

This war of icons is in part the inspiration for Godard's 'cold war' attack on the French establishment. In his 1964 book *'Understanding Media,'* Marshall McLuhan reveals the ideological use of images and their purpose within the cold war by the State. Recent evidence from media sources have suggested, for example, one of the pivotal moments in the cold war was the internationally televised national parade of the USSR's nuclear capabilities during the 1960's. In fact, the USSR had nowhere near the nuclear arsenal that was suggested by the television images that were broadcast. All of the 'missiles' shown were empty casings, due to the Russian military not having perfected the technology to create such a weapon. However, the effect of having shown what 'appeared' to be a nuclear arsenal was incontrovertible to the western media.

Using the space programme as an example of image over substance, McLuhan expressed the opinion that it was immaterial whether or not a US or USSR based space programme made it to the moon first. The image that corroborated it however was worth a great ideological victory.<sup>119</sup>

Even ideological warfare in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries proceeded by persuading individuals to adopt new points of view, one at a time. Electric persuasion by photo and movie and TV works, instead, by dunking entire populations in new imagery.<sup>120</sup>

By repeating images that have become familiar to the audience from media sources, and reinscribing their meanings, Godard is able to remake the meaning of the image to reflect a different ideological discourse. Through directly annotating the image, or by the use of montage, Godard confronts the spectator and encourages them to take direct revolutionary action. In another way, by critically examining the devices the commercial media use, Godard attempts to reformulate or transform the original image into one that concurs with the ideological aims of the May revolt. For example, Godard often depicts text used as image.

Protestors hold newspaper headlines aloft to show their solidarity with the message<sup>121</sup>, or to illustrate their objection to what the headlines say. For example, Ciné-Tract 7

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<sup>119</sup> Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: The MIT Press, 1995), p. 338.

<sup>120</sup> McLuhan, p. 339.

<sup>121</sup> One protestor holds an edition of the newspaper 'Action' that bears the headline "De Gaulle: Assassin Assassin Assassin"

uses familiar images of De Gaulle and Franco, merging the images so that their visages appear indistinguishable.

By using 'ready-made' still images, Godard is able to emulate the print medium, but is also able to use the images from outside sources giving them movement. Largely using the camera for panning and zooming, the *Ciné-Tracts* includes only one use of what could conventionally be called a 'cinematic sequence'. The sequence of images shows a protestor throwing an object at the C.R.S. and illustrates a staccato-like movement of the protestor picking up the object, running forward and throwing it.

Significantly, the images may either have been derived from cine-footage, achieving the effect by dropping alternate frames, or have been taken with a motorised still camera, reinforcing Godard's challenge to the print medium.<sup>122</sup> In *Ciné-Tract* 001, Godard deflates the effects of the violence committed by the C.R.S. into a dangerous children's game of catch. After positioning a C.R.S. guard on the left hand side of the frame throwing an object off-screen to the right, Godard cuts to an image of a protestor on the right hand side of the frame throwing an object back into left off-screen space.

The textual inscriptions on the images frequently use inclusive language such as "us," "we," or "our". There is no doubt that Godard not only wants to include himself as an active participant in this 'dialogue' he wishes to establish with the spectator, but he also wants to provide guidance and ask questions as to what a revolutionary is—drawing a line where passivity is to be excluded, and action with solidarity is the only way forward.

By contrasting the image with the text, Godard expects the play between the two to engage the viewer and catalyse the spectator into revolutionary action, as opposed to what Godard obviously perceives as a normal submissive or passive watching of moving images. For example,

An image of naked lovers with the script reading 'sentiments d'amour'/feelings of love.

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<sup>122</sup> As far as I've been able to ascertain, most commercially available SLR's in 1968, such as the Nikon F, were capable of up to 4 frames per second with Mirror Lock Up, which is easily capable of capturing the sequence.



A poster advertising *La Chinoise* [1968], Godard inscribes the image with 'Dans Notre Ambition'/ In our ambition.

Two soldiers with a rocket launcher inscribed with 'De Revolution Naire'/ From the revolution born.'

4. An oil painting depicting a road in front of an abstract house inscribed with 'Nous Tacherons D'Avancer'/We must advance.'

In many respects, the importance of the *Ciné-Tracts* project, as a whole, is their documenting of the May revolt from an alternative perspective. However, Godard's *Ciné-Tracts* undermine any conventional 'serving' of the documentation of events, and instead, try and pull the viewer into a dialogue with the material. The intertitles in particular pose a number of questions that Godard phrases with sardonic sarcasm. It should be noted that Godard uses approximately two question marks throughout all of the textual signifiers in the eight *Ciné-Tracts*. This would suggest to the spectator that they should regard the textual material as rhetorical. By using this technique, Godard reinforces the exclusivity of the audience that the *Ciné-Tracts* was created for.

One of the means to counteract the effect the state media has had upon moving images from the May revolt is Godard's attempt to reappropriate the original power of the images by guiding the spectator to alternate readings through the textual signifiers. By reappropriating the images with renewed textual meanings, Godard is able to subvert images used by the media, reformulating them into revolutionary texts. As has been suggested, the language employed by the *Ciné-Tracts* is inclusive, and Godard goes to great lengths to position the revolutionary struggle in a much wider sphere of influence than the national level.

Using the Vietnam conflict as a contemporary reference, Godard also refers to an earlier historical struggle by including images of Franco and merging them with the face of De Gaulle within the *Ciné-Tracts*. The inclusion of the images of Franco attempts to raise a revolutionary consciousness that has its generational historical precedent rooted in an earlier struggle which aroused revolutionary sympathy.

Writing on the effectiveness of the Spanish Civil War in politicising his generation, Louis Althusser illustrates the significance of the war in its transformation of class awareness.

It surprised us just as we entered the world, and turned us students of bourgeois or petit bourgeois origin into men advised of the existence of classes, of their struggles and aims. From the evidence it forced on us we drew the only possible conclusion, and rallied to the political organisation of the working class, the Communist Party.<sup>123</sup>

To the spectator the majority of the footage used throughout the *Ciné-Tracts* appears to be executed in a clinical, almost mathematical way. Generally, each of the shots appears on the screen for two or three seconds, giving the spectator sufficient time to comprehend the image and read the textual signifier Godard provides. However, this methodical style also exists where there are no textual signifiers to be read. This consistently measured filmmaking is not the usual style expected from Godard, although he had made intimations of using such a mathematically derived process throughout the year.<sup>124</sup>

By using the same timing of each shot where there are no textual signifiers to be read, Godard accentuates the two dimensions of the source material. There are few shots that reveal different contrasting points of view to reveal a 3-dimensional space for the subjects to inhabit; and with only one example of what could be called a cinematic sequence that depicts subject movement, the figures within the *Ciné-Tracts* are immobilised in a 2-dimensional space.

By using text, Godard is able to contrast political tracts from different sources and contrast the written message with the photographic evidence. For example, Julia Lesage observes that one of the tracts reproduces a speech of De Gaulle's in the intertitles and uses images of students demonstrating to reveal the contradictions between De Gaulle's speech and the events as they happened.<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> Louis Althusser, *For Marx* (London and New York: Verso, 1997), p. 21.

<sup>124</sup> "At one time I'd wanted to film *Oh! Les Beaux Jours*. I never did - they wanted to use Madeleine Renaud; I wanted to use young actors. I'd have liked to -- I had a text, so all I'd have had to do is film it. I'd have done it all in one continuous travelling. We'd have started it as far back as we had to get the last line, at the end of an hour and a half, in a close-up. It would have meant just some grade-school arithmetic." Jean-Luc Godard, quoted in Bontemps, Comolli, Delahaye, and Narboni 'Struggle on Two Fronts: A Conversation with Jean-Luc Godard', *Film Quarterly*, 22 (1968-9), 32. Godard had mentioned to Richard Roud that *One Plus One* was possibly going to be shot in "...ten eight-minute takes, unless of course he decided to do it in eight ten-minute takes instead." See Richard Roud, 'One Plus One', *Sight and Sound*, 37 (1968), 183.

<sup>125</sup> Lesage, p. 94.

The 2-dimensional political art used throughout the May revolt frequently used text as a means of 'Detournement'.<sup>126</sup> Originally devised by Guy Debord and the Situationist International throughout the early 1960's, Detournement is the repossessing of an image for different ideological purposes than that for which it was created. Frequently this technique entailed placing text over the top of an image to subvert the original meaning.<sup>127</sup> One of the more expansive uses of this method was employed by Debord in his 1973 film *La société du spectacle* [1973]. Frequently using montage and text as a means to criticise and reappropriate images and their textual meaning, Debord uses a method similar to Godard's own techniques.

However, Debord was highly critical of Godard, accusing him of being bourgeois; but also of plagiarising Situationist techniques without fully understanding them. It should however be noted that the use of the techniques Debord criticises Godard for are found in much earlier movements, such as the *Lef* group, the Lettrists and other avant-garde traditions that mixed politics and art.

The work of Isidore Isou and the collaborations between Breton, Trotsky and Rivera all play a part within this historical tradition of experimentation between politics, text and image.

As in *Le Gai Savoir*, Godard's interest in using formalist techniques for the *Ciné-Tracts* is evident. Godard even goes so far as to use some of the same images from the film. Just as the poster from *La Chinoise* is used, the 'folding in' of these still images and textual signifiers reflexively reinscribes Godard's earlier work and provides a signature of identification. They also furnish evidence of the Saussurean investigation of images that had concerned Godard's work from *La Chinoise* onwards. Although the majority of Saussurean theory had been confined within the field of linguistics during the early 1960's, it expanded into literary criticism in the latter part of the decade.

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<sup>126</sup> Guy Debord, and Gil Wolman, *A User's Guide to Detournement*. Internet WWW page, at URL: <<http://www.slip.net/~knabb/SI/detourn.htm>> (version current at 7 October 2000).

<sup>127</sup> An excellent example is René Viénet's detournement of the bourgeois painting in the Sorbonne, which the revolutionary councils oddly concluded, was more of a 'desecration.' Viénet was asked to remove the text he inscribed. See René Viénet, *Enragés and Situationionists in the Occupation Movement, France, May '68* (Brooklyn, New York: Autonomedia, 1992), p. 51.

Developments within the field of linguistics obviously offered new tools for Godard's criticism of the social order.<sup>128</sup> With the emergence of Cultural Studies, and the work of Louis Althusser on Saussure's work in the late 1960's, it is not difficult to understand Godard's attraction to the new ideas emerging from literary discourse and to see their application in his 1968 work.<sup>129</sup>

Tony Bennett's assertion that "...language constantly generates the illusion that it reflects reality instead of signifying it"<sup>130</sup> can be applied to encompass the language of mass media and visual communication. Godard's acute awareness of these ideas is clearly contained within the *Ciné-Tracts* and is representative of earlier themes that appeared in *Le Gai Savoir*. Godard had determined language to be the enemy and cited Noam Chomsky's work in *Le Gai Savoir*. Godard continues his analysis of language as the enemy in the *Ciné-Tracts*.

Although *Le Gai Savoir* illustrated a number of different textual methods of word play which culminated in Jean-Pierre Léaud's character Emile creating the word 'Misotodiman' (a mixture of the words method and sentiment), this kind of word creation, play, and fracturing of spelling has become a more advanced set of linguistic tools in Godard's *Ciné-Tracts*. Occasionally they are graphical representations which seem to take a cryptographic purpose or sometimes the textual inscriptions evidence serious intentions and sometimes not. These moments are representative of the lighter side of the *Ciné-Tracts* and Godard's 1968 work. As Richard Roud points out, who else but Godard would play with the word, 'analyse' transmogrifying it into 'anal'?<sup>131</sup>

For example, *Ciné-Tracts* 9 and 16 make great use of intertitles as a form of semiological play. Magnification of certain words, the crossing out of others, the accentuation of certain words by underscoring them multiple times, the drawing of frames to accentuate their message – all of this contributes to multiple meanings from the text or disorientating the information being imparted.

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<sup>128</sup> Particularly within *Le Gai Savoir*, a great deal of attention is given to revealing book covers, which can be from any discipline from psychology to linguistics, and of course, Chomsky's work is prominently mentioned.

<sup>129</sup> Tony Bennett provides an excellent summary of Saussure's ideas in his discussion of Formalism and Marxism. See Tony Bennett, *Formalism and Marxism* (London and New York: Methuen & Co Ltd, 1979), pp. 4-6.

<sup>130</sup> Bennett, p. 5.

<sup>131</sup> Richard Roud, *Jean-Luc Godard* (London: Indiana University Press, 1970), p. 170.

Sometimes a simple rearrangement of the words by breaking them up to give different meanings aids in disorientating the spectator. These techniques also provide the implication that there is a cautionary warning for the spectator to be guarded about the messages being given. By complicating the form of the messages, they cannot be passively read. In this respect, they come to represent Brechtian methods of alienation.

On a theoretical level, the *Ciné-Tracts* demonstrate a freshness of something new in film that was only seen in literature at that time. Godard was, and still is, regularly pressed by interviewers and critics alike for his controversial, and often quoted view that he is both a critic who directs film, and a director who films criticism. The form of cultural commentary found in the *Ciné-Tracts* is no exception to this idea that Godard has formulated about his work.

Roud maintains the *Ciné-Tracts* are influenced by the 'Left Bank' methodology in revealing "the whole book-layout aspect" of the work.<sup>132</sup> Although Roud's observations of this aspect of the films can be given some validity, the prescription of the project entails the use of silence, leaving textual modifiers as an essential means to communicate and subvert the material of the films. It could also be said that the textual signifiers hearken back to a much earlier time in the cinema, and reveal Godard's utilisation of techniques employed by earlier revolutionary movements. For example, there are a number of comparisons between Godard's textual signifiers and the Futurists' 'trans-sense' language. Moreover, there are also comparisons to be made with Vertov's filmmaking techniques and his use of textual signifiers.<sup>133</sup>

One particular sequence in the *Ciné-Tracts* cuts from the image of the 'C.R.S. SS' symbol to the word 'Anarchy' spray painted on a wall. This shot then cuts to an image of a cartoonish characterisation of De Gaulle that has been drawn on a building wall where an elderly couple inspect it. The cartoon image of De Gaulle was originally constructed by art school students for posters,<sup>134</sup> but the use of the image evolved and began to be used directly on buildings and walls in Paris during the May revolt. The image succeeds in belittling the political power of De Gaulle by reducing him to a cartoon figure, a militarist figure of fun, replete with kepe. However there is also a deeper meaning to this image. Firstly, the image's evolution into graffiti makes it

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<sup>132</sup> Roud, *Jean-Luc Godard*, p. 171.

<sup>133</sup> See: Dziga Vertov, 'Film Directors, A Revolution', *Screen*, 12 (1971/2), 52-58.

<sup>134</sup> Burn Collective. *Paris 1968 - Table of Contents*. Internet WWW page at URL: <<http://burn.ucsd.edu/paristab.htm>> (version current at 7 October 2000).

public and available for all to see. Secondly, it represents the transition of an image from its original medium.

In particular, the use of graffiti in public spaces, and the messages it conveys become increasingly important throughout Godard's *Ciné-Tracts*. These public messages can be anything from the popular image during the May revolution that equated the C.R.S. with the SS, to aphorisms inciting revolutionary action. These images provide a different form of reportage of ideas and questions than the traditional media.

However, they are also representative of an inherent change in attitudes to the mediums available. If the state or private means of communicating revolutionary messages are unavailable or untrustworthy in their reporting of ideas or the 'truth', then graffiti is the only vehicle for taking revolutionary messages 'directly' to the public. The disposability of the print medium and the fleetingness of the televisual medium are therefore contested by the 'direct' image of protesting against media and state by using public spaces where the message of the May revolt is unavoidable.

Godard's 1968 work is predominantly concerned with both materialist and formalist inquiries in order to transparently or reflexively reveal the mechanics of both the media and his own filmmaking. This technique or process goes a step further with the *Ciné-Tracts*. It is not the revelation of art, per se, but the revelation of the art of the media.

By creating an individual form of anti-spectacle, Godard compromises the bourgeois message of the majority of media sources. For Godard to create a form of media that is 'straight' documentation or documentary in style would mean complicity with the ideologically dominant media sources. By creating the *Ciné-Tracts*, Godard provides a different ideological code that pejoratively reveals the operation of the mass media, and importantly, *how* it works.

This is not to say there are any 'man-behind-the-curtain' theories in evidence, but Godard strips the material of anything that might be passively ingested. Using the textual signifiers within the *Ciné-Tracts* reveals two seemingly contradictory ideas. Firstly, there is the question of skeletally revealing the techniques of communication the media use to seamlessly illustrate political perspectives. Secondly, there is a complicity in the use of similar techniques to those employed by the mass media to communicate its alternative political intent, albeit in contradistinction – by revealing

the seams. If the *Ciné-Tracts*' methodology is thought of analogously (like the techniques employed in *Le Gai Savoir*), the *Ciné-Tracts* can be interpreted as Godard performing some form of autopsy on the media corpse.

Usually this is achieved by Godard's use of *mise-en-scène*. For example, frequently the spectator is shown what appears to be a portrait of an individual filling the frame. The camera then zooms out to reveal the person as part of several thousand people. Often these images are used to illustrate the cruelty of the C.R.S. and the bourgeois bystanders. *Ciné-Tract 9* reveals a student being beaten in the doorway of a building, later within the *Ciné-Tract*, the image is repeated, but the camera pulls back to reveal the student is being beaten by C.R.S. and bourgeois bystanders. The implications of these types of shot are obvious. The media is frequently not giving the spectator the total picture, and the spectator needs to be re-educated to see correctly.

In contrast to Godard's documenting of the events of May, William Klein's<sup>135</sup> documentary *Grands soirs et petits matins: Mai 68 au Quartier Latin* [1978] presents the May events in a conventional 'Cinema Verité' construction. Illustrating the employment of different forms of technology to aid the revolutionary cause, Klein shows the use of radio, telephone and public address technologies that helped enable the spread of ideas and communication that protestors relied upon for action. Protestors gather in the street around radios for information about Government decisions, speeches by De Gaulle and news of action taking place elsewhere in France. Organisers gather around tables in the Nanterre buildings, waiting for and making telephone calls, while printing leaflets on the university copier machines. Each of these instruments illustrates the significance of technology in aiding revolutionary goals.

Similarly, Godard repeatedly uses the image of one of these technological instruments—the megaphone—throughout the *Ciné-Tracts* as a symbol of communication and a technology of the voice.<sup>136</sup> One sequence uses individual shots of a megaphone being aimed outwards toward each corner of the frame. In one shot, the depth of field in the image allows a figure with a megaphone to appear to be shouting directly into the ear of an individual. As a metaphor, the shot depicts a

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<sup>135</sup> Like Godard, Klein was a contributor to Marker's *Loin du Viêt Nam (Far from Vietnam)* project in 1967.

<sup>136</sup> The use of the megaphone as an image of verbal communication carries over into Godard's intentions for the *One AM* project. One of the scenes under consideration was having an actor speak Eldridge Cleaver's dialogue into the street using a megaphone.

message of the strength of language, and the belief that the message of the revolution will succeed. However, it also reveals that the technology available is not only helping accomplish the aims of the revolution, but is in part responsible for its success up to the present time.

Godard's relationship with the still image appears to be contradictory (not to mention ironic, considering the number of commercial postcards where he is the central image) and illustrates his concerns, not only with the images created within cinema, but all images. In this respect, work such as the *Ciné-Tracts* provides a precursor to the work he has done in the last few years with the *Histoire du Cinéma* [1989-1997] project.<sup>137</sup>

McLuhan suggests the advent of the photographic image provided the means "to make visual reports without syntax"<sup>138</sup> in effect displacing literary forms into headlines with the invention of the telegraph. In Susan Sontag's essays on photography, she illustrates their material nature; they are something to possess compared to the fleetingness of the cinematic experience. Godard's history of using still photographs pre-1968 is relatively extensive. One such usage was in a sequence in *Les Carabiniers* [1963], that satirically examined postcard images the two central characters bring home.

Although the *Ciné-Tracts* use a different model of narrative explanation in contrast to *Les Carabiniers*, the theme developed within the *Ciné-Tracts* answers and complements the critique *Les Carabiniers* established. If the images that 'Ulysee' and 'Michel-Ange' bring back from the war are a ridiculously 'objective' depiction of their adventures, Godard's *Ciné-Tracts* attempt to rescue the subjectivity of images, and reappropriate them into a coherence for those who have lived through the struggle they see unfold before them on the screen. However, the exclusivity of using still images in the *Ciné-Tracts* reveals a greater economy of usage. Without the use of sound, the limitations of the films' length and the immediacy involved in their creation and distribution, the films eviscerate conventional narrative structures for a semiotic examination of the media using still images.

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<sup>137</sup> Talking to Prairie Miller about History and its significance to his work, Godard says, "Cinema is the only way for me to talk about history. It encompasses the history, at least of this century. Please do not put the mike too close, I'm allergic to it. History has usually started with words, but words are not as close to reality as images and sound together. Cinema, since it can be seen and screened, can make history visible, it reveals the history of this century. If you have an image, then you can ask a question." Godard, quoted in Prairie Miller, 'Forever Mozart', *Downtown Magazine*, Issue 348 (June 29, 1994).

<sup>138</sup> McLuhan, p. 190.



Discussing the use of photographs in *Les Carabiniers*, Sontag believes the acquisition of post-cards and photographs is a key representation of the modern in Godard's films, they are "the ideal arm of consciousness in its acquisitive mood."<sup>139</sup> However, Sontag also alludes to the loss of power still photographs have when used within the cinematic medium. In essence, a photograph is created to be looked at for a duration of time that is at the will of the viewer. In contrast, the film medium removes this control or power from the spectator.

What the spectator sees is dictated by what the director has chosen to present and the spectator has no control over how long they will be allowed to view the image. By consciously adopting this precept, Godard strips the photographic image of its material 'static' power and uses the photographic images cinematically to break their 'bourgeois' coding. It is by their appropriation into the cinema, that they take on a revolutionary purpose. Textually inscribing their meanings, or using montage to create new equations, the corollary of this concept suggests an ideological equation. Due to its ability to be possessed materially, the still image has a bourgeois functionality within society, in contrast to, or at war with the cinema, which represents a revolutionary medium.

Richard Roud stated that one of the contributions to Godard's changing attitudes to film making in 1968 was, he believed, that Godard was discovering the personal was political. The thought could be extended to mean that Godard is searching for something much more profound – a total personal and political revolution.<sup>140</sup>

Ameliorating the anonymity that the prescription of the project entailed by the revealing of signs of authorship in the *Ciné-Tracts*, and Godard's willingness to directly identify himself with revolutionary struggles outside of his work, lends this some form of credibility. In an interview with Anne Wiazemsky in 1987, she suggests that some of Godard's revolutionary work may have stepped outside the parameters of his films.

Was he a terrorist? Oui. [...] Very feebly.<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (London: Penguin Books, 1979), p. 4.

<sup>140</sup> In response to the question if he was trying to change his audience, Godard responded "Well, I am trying to change the world. Yes." Jean-Luc Godard, quoted in Gene Youngblood, 'Jean-Luc Godard: No Difference between Life and Cinema'. In Sterritt. ed., *Jean-Luc Godard: Interviews*. p. 49.

<sup>141</sup> *Cinéma Cinémas: Jean-Luc Godard* Ministère Des Affaires Etrangères, D.G.R.C.S.T.- Direction de l'Action Audiovisuelle Extérieure.CEDFI/MAE. 1984-1989.

Interestingly, the published criticism of the *Ciné-Tracts* project is usually limited to briefly mentioning their existence. Colin MacCabe's exhaustive look at Godard from 1968 to 1980 *Godard: Images, Sounds, Politics*, mentions the existence of the films once in a brief time capsule of Godard's work<sup>142</sup>, but does not include them in the filmography. Yosefa Loshitzky's book *The Radical Faces of Godard and Bertolucci* gives an unusual seven line summary of the films, that appears to relegate them to material "made by Godard at home"<sup>143</sup>. Royal S. Brown indicates the existence of the project in his chronology of Godard's career,<sup>144</sup> while Tom Milne's *Godard On Godard* does not even include the existence of the project.<sup>145</sup>

The critical work on the *Ciné-Tracts* that does exist is unusually negative. A number of criticisms are directed against the *Ciné-Tracts* from critics such as Richard Roud, who was normally a great supporter of Godard's films in the United States. Incorrectly ascribing the chronology of the *Ciné-Tracts* and *Le Gai Savoir*, Roud believes the *Ciné-Tracts* fall victim to the 'acrostic/aphasiac manner' that was to be evidenced later in *Le Gai Savoir*, a project that had been completed *before* the *Ciné-Tracts*.

It is also significant, and perhaps unfortunate, that some of the more annoying aspects of the tracts one ascribes to Godard can be found in his later films, like *Le Gai Savoir*, where the acrostic/aphasiac manner reaches new—and perhaps irrelevant—heights.<sup>146</sup>

Or: The same is certainly true of that curious method of underlining single letters in a handwritten title which he developed in the *Ciné-Tracts*. Sometimes the underlined letters spell out a word; at other times they simply form chains of 'u's, 'n's 'i's and 'o's. Even if one does construe the word 'Union,' does it really help? In either case, the technique—or tic—is less than illuminating.<sup>147</sup>

Roud seems to miss the possibilities of using this technique. By breaking words down into individual letters or phonemes, their spelling can take on otherwise unnoticed meanings. To use Roud's own example, the word 'Union' when broken down into its

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<sup>142</sup> MacCabe, p. 21.

<sup>143</sup> Loshitzky, p. 28.

<sup>144</sup> Brown, p. 23.

<sup>145</sup> Godard, *Godard On Godard*, Tom Milne and Jean Narboni. eds., p. 286.

<sup>146</sup> Roud, *Jean-Luc Godard*, p. 171.

<sup>147</sup> Roud, *Jean-Luc Godard*, p. 143.

individual letters can accent possibilities in English, as well as French. U-N-I could merely be a phonetic joke on 'you and I' (that is, It takes you and I to make a union). Roud also misses the historical significance of using this technique to create new meanings or alienate the spectator from the image. One of the features of early Futurism was the use of 'trans-sense' language – a semi-comprehensible collation of nonsense words and neologisms – a play on words, their roots and suffixes.<sup>148</sup>

Interestingly, Jonathan Rosenbaum contends that the pre 1968 work did more for galvanising the counterculture than either the *Ciné-Tracts* or *Un Film Comme les Autres* [1968].

No one was quite sure, at least within my purview, but figuring out Godard's position was secondary at the time to learning what was happening. Unlike all the strictly agitational films made by Godard and others after May '68--starting with the *Ciné-Tracts* and *Un Film Comme les Autres*, which failed to galvanise the same energies--*La Chinoise* and *Weekend* were exciting first editions of global newspapers that were suddenly running off the presses and being devoured more for their excitement as reports than for their status as statements or as works of art (which they also were). Whether or not they were masterpieces was strictly secondary to their value as provocations..<sup>149</sup>

So why are the provocations of the pre-1968 films supposedly more effective? Most critics seem to be intolerant of the textual inscriptions used within Godard's films from this period. Roud seems to openly resent them as being 'irrelevant' in *Le Gai Savoir* and the *Ciné-Tracts*; and although it is not stated, part of Rosenbaum's criticism of *Ciné-Tracts* and *Un Film Comme les Autres* undoubtedly lies with the fact their content is targeted toward French audiences which reduces the accessibility of the films' content. The 'news' elements of both films affected the daily lives of French national audiences during the May events and confine the immediacy of their intent for that audience.

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<sup>148</sup> Richard Sherwood, 'Documents from *Lef*', *Screen*, 12 (1971/2), 25.

<sup>149</sup> Jonathan Rosenbaum, 'My Filmgoing in 1968: An Exploration', *That Magic Moment: 1968 and the Cinema* (1998). Internet WWW page, at URL: <<http://www.viennale.or.at/1998/magic/rosenbe.htm>> (version no longer available).

Publication (in German) available from Internet WWW Page, at URL: <<http://www.viennale.or.at/english/shop/index.html>> (version current at 7 October 2000).

However, the obvious criticism of Godard's work during and after this period of course is Godard's overt change in direction in the representation of his films. An oversimplification, but changing from subtly politicised fiction to openly political non-fiction, and the rejection of his previously popular narrative style not only achieved its goal of alienating the spectator, it managed to alienate the critic as spectator as well.<sup>150</sup> However, it is these kinds of shifts in spectatorship that Godard is wanting to address with his films throughout 1968, and is representative of what would become of increased concern in Godard's work with the *Ciné-Tracts* and subsequent projects.

Like the earlier work in *Le Gai Savoir*, Godard draws the spectator's attention to the uses of the media image and provides an ideological critique. This new exploration and understanding can, in part, be attributed to the work of Walter Benjamin.<sup>151</sup> No image is statically fixed within its context or the boundaries of its medium forever. It can easily be manipulated in its meaning and correlated with other images or text for new meanings and messages. In this sense, the images are like a revolving kaleidoscope. The content is the same, but its shifts into other mediums or contexts present new compositions and ever changing data that can be produced in infinite ways.

The *Ciné-Tracts* are therefore significant not just for their alternative documenting of the events of May, but are testimony to Godard's investigation into the possibilities of ideological cinema, and understanding that without fixity, every image becomes a virtual image.

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<sup>150</sup> Unfortunately, there is not the scope to elaborate further on this very significant idea within the confines of this paper.

<sup>151</sup> Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations* (London: Pimlico, 1999), pp. 211-244. Roud has noted that Godard's *Le Gai Savoir* had been influenced by Benjamin's work. In particular, the uncompleted 'Paris, Capital of the Nineteenth Century' See: Roud, *Jean-Luc Godard* p. 142.

**One Plus  
One**

One Plus One [1968] (AKA: Sympathy for the Devil) 99 Minutes.

"One toke? You poor fool! Wait till you see those goddamn bats. I could barely hear the radio...slumped over on the far side of the seat, grappling with a tape recorder turned all the way up on "Sympathy for the Devil." That was the only tape we had, so we played it constantly, over and over, as a kind of demented counterpoint to the radio. And also to maintain our rhythm on the road."

Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas --Hunter S. Thompson

*One Plus One/Sympathy for the Devil* [1968] is Godard's first film to use English as its principal language; and is accorded by Godard as the last 'bourgeois film' he would make.<sup>152</sup> Approached by Eleni Collard in early 1968 to make a film in England about abortion, Godard agreed to shoot the film if financing could be made available. However, due to changes in English abortion legislation in 1968, the project was cancelled. Godard told Collard he would come to England and 'make a film' if she could get either the Beatles or the Rolling Stones to participate. Collard, working in conjunction with other novice English producers, actor and director Iain Quarrier, and the son of an English Lord, Michael Pearson, eventually raised the finance to begin the project. A budget of £180,000 was raised, and a commitment from the Rolling Stones was assured.<sup>153</sup> Arriving in London on May 30 of 1968, Godard chose the then unknown cinematographer Anthony Richmond<sup>154</sup> for the project and began shooting.

However, before long, the shooting of the production ran into a number of difficulties.

He (Godard) did not ever want to make a film in England, and being obliged to leave Paris in the middle of the May revolution undoubtedly caused a degree of strain. During shooting, Brian Jones was arrested, as earlier was Terence Stamp who was due to play the Quarrier role. The roof of the Stones' recording studio caught fire, and as a result Godard went back to France.

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<sup>152</sup> Kent E. Carroll, 'Film and Revolution: Interview with the Dziga-Vertov Group'. In *Focus On Godard*. ed., Royal S. Brown, (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall Inc, 1972), p. 62.

<sup>153</sup> The majority of the financing came from Pearson, who in conjunction with Quarrier considered the film to be the first in a series the two would co-produce as a means of providing finance for young start-up directors. Martha Merrill's account of the *One Plus One* premiere at the London Film Festival includes comments from Quarrier about this scheme (See: Martha Merrill, 'Black Panthers In The New Wave', *Film Culture (U.S.)*, Spring (1972), 139-140), culminating in *Cupid Productions* formed with Pearson. Michael Pearson's only other production credit is *Venom* in 1971. *Venom* (UK), AKA. *The Legend of Spider Forest* (USA), dir. Peter Sykes, 1971.

<sup>154</sup> This was Richmond's first feature film. Notably he went on to do *The Man Who Fell To Earth*, ironically, with Rip Torn, in 1976. *The Man Who Fell To Earth*, dir. Nicolas Roeg, UK/USA, 1976.

He later returned, only to have the shooting of the Black Power sequences jinxed by rain. He left for Paris again, came back...<sup>155</sup>

One of the other complications that arose throughout the production of *One Plus One* was a change in the film's original premise. Originally, *One Plus One* was almost that of a straight narrative story, an investigation of social issues concerned with race and militancy that would reflect a

parabole based around the parallel themes of creation and destruction. A tragic triangle in London—a French girl, who has at first been seduced by a reactionary Texan, falls in love with an extreme-left Black militant. The girl (Anne Wiazemsky) is named Democracy. The Nazi Texan opposes the Black, who obviously represents Black Power...<sup>156</sup>

This early 'straight narrative' idea was to be illustrated by the visualising of the two themes running in parallel. The first theme of 'Creation,' was to be reflected by the Rolling Stones recording in the studio. The other, of 'Destruction,' was to be Wiazemsky's character Eve's suicide.<sup>157</sup>

Whether or not the story changed due to the circumstances of the production shoot is difficult to determine. However, given Godard's determined movement away from narrative filmmaking, it seems unlikely that the original premise would have eventuated. In a July article written by Richard Roud on *One Plus One* for *Sight and Sound*, Roud reports that the film was also going to be experimental in the way it was shot. Discussing the witnessing of the shooting of the junkyard sequence, Roud reports,

The whole thing lasted about 8 minutes. Talking to Godard later, I remarked on the length of the shot, to which he slyly replied that the whole film was going to consist of ten eight-minute takes, unless of course he decided to do it in eight ten-minute takes instead.<sup>158</sup>

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<sup>155</sup> Richard Roud, *Jean-Luc Godard* (London: Indiana University Press, 1970), p. 151. It is assumed that part of Godard's urgency in returning to Paris was to complete the projects that were all at differing stages of production throughout this time, including, *Le Gai Savoir*, the *Ciné-Tracts* and *Un Film Comme les Autres*.

<sup>156</sup> Royal S. Brown, 'Introduction: One Plus One Equals'. In *Focus on Godard*. p. 8.

<sup>157</sup> Roud, *Jean-Luc Godard* pp. 147-148.

<sup>158</sup> Richard Roud, 'One Plus One', *Sight and Sound*, 37 (1968), 183.

In place of the conventional narrative story, *One Plus One* is comprised of three fictional episodes, intercut with documentary and quasi-documentary sequences. The fictional episodes are allegorical representations of contemporary social and political concerns. The first of these depicts black militant revolutionaries in an urban Battersea junkyard reading political and literary texts. The second scene is a fictionalised media interview of Eve Democracy shot in a woodland area. The scene is significant in its reflection of Godard's thoughts on revolution, and the role of culture and the revolutionary. The third scene, set in a pornographic newsagents or book store, illustrates the role of western fascism and imperialism, and the role these relationships have between art and exploitation. Godard intercuts these scenes with images of the Rolling Stones recording 'Sympathy for the Devil' in the studio, and Wiazemsky/Eve Democracy writing graffiti on walls and billboards. Just as Eve's character appears at random as a silent visual presence throughout the film, Godard's narrator performs a similar verbal function.

When the film premiered at the London Film Festival on November 30 1968, Godard asked the audience in attendance to ask for its money back. The producers had changed Godard's ending of the film to include a complete version of the Rolling Stones song 'Sympathy for the Devil'. Throughout the film, the spectator is shown the process of the Rolling Stones recording the song, but part of Godard's scenario for the film is a lack of any kind of closure for the issues represented in *One Plus One*. Therefore, to include the full version of the song is in contradiction with the meaning of the film.

During the premiere, Godard also asked the audience to contribute their refunded money to the international committee for the defence of Eldridge Cleaver, who had gone underground two days previously. After many in the audience rejected Godard's proposal he stormed from the cinema calling the audience "Fascists," and struck Quarrier on his way out. Quarrier, who plays the fascist proprietor in the 'Occident' scene, must have, in hindsight, felt like an excellent casting choice on Godard's part. After its premiere, the film with the completed version of the Rolling Stones song was renamed 'Sympathy for the Devil,' thus including a marketable reference to the Rolling Stones' song. Partially as a concession to Godard, Quarrier agreed to distribute both versions of the film, often to the same theatre. Which of course created added confusion as to which version the audience would be watching.<sup>159</sup>

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<sup>159</sup> The film was not open for widespread distribution in the United States until April of 1970 when Godard and Gorin toured the U.S. to promote *See you at Mao/British Sounds* [1969] when they were



Godard's reaction to the new ending was "'One Plus One' does not mean 'one plus one equals two'. It just means what it says, 'one plus one'"<sup>160</sup>

The first of the fictionalised episodes within *One Plus One*, 'Outside Black Novel' depicts black revolutionaries organising arms and reading from various texts. Setting the scene in the junkyard provides a dreary backdrop that metaphorically signals a human and technological scrap heap. Using iconic representations of the black power movement, the revolutionaries in the junkyard are a curious mix of both the black nationalist movement and, in particular the Black Panthers in the United States. Godard illustrates the group's affiliation with the Black Panthers ideology by having his characters dialogue throughout the first of the junkyard sequences be almost exclusively from Eldridge Cleaver's 'Soul on Ice,' which had been released that year.

Cleaver, who had become the Black Panthers' spokesperson and Minister of Information in 1968, had become a publicly controversial figure in the black revolutionary movement because of his literary work, and as a consequence of his involvement with the Black Panthers. The reading of Cleaver's text in the junkyard provides a partial narration for the events happening in the junkyard, but also provides commentary for the larger issues of language Godard wishes to explore. Using Cleaver's concept of the "Omnipotent Administrator," Godard uses Cleaver's text as a means of providing a revolutionary attack on white bourgeois values, but also uses the text to illustrate the controversiality of Cleaver's ideas.

Cleaver's novel had pointedly criticised white values and fears, marking out instances of black exploitation. One of his targets of exploitation were the white musicians and the music industry for stealing what had originally been 'black music' and diluting it for their own wealth. Cleaver articulates the white musicians' exploitation of black music as not just theft, but the double standard of derisively criticising black music until it is performed by the white culture.

A well-known example of the white necessity to deny due credit to blacks is in the realm of music. White musicians were famous for going to Harlem and other Negro cultural centers literally to steal the black man's music, carrying it back across the color line into the Great White World and passing off the

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working in conjunction with Grove Press and New Line Cinema. Notably, both versions were distributed. See Andrew Sarris, 'Godard and the Revolution'. In David Sterritt. ed., *Jean-Luc Godard: Interviews*. (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1998), p. 51.

<sup>160</sup> Roud, *Jean-Luc Godard* p. 150.

watered-down loot as their own original creations. Blacks, meanwhile, were ridiculed as *Negro* musicians playing inferior coon music.<sup>161</sup>

Cleaver's statement can equally reflect on the music of the Rolling Stones, who are heavily influenced by 'black music' such as blues. Godard appears to recognise this by passing an acknowledgement when he momentarily cuts from the junkyard to the Rolling Stones in the studio. However, Godard is not attempting to make a reactionary statement by illustrating the Rolling Stones recording in the studio, he is attempting to reveal the politicisation involved in art, and the historical development involved across all artistic mediums.

The interview scene 'All about Eve' with Wiazemsky provides a critique of the media and a contrast with the predominantly static camera work of the junkyard scenes. The questions the interviewer asks Eve confine her answers to binary responses of yes or no. Using false bird noises, the sound of passing cars and the 'fashionable' crew, Godard illustrates the artifice of the environment Eve is placed in. Saturating the environment in technology, information is both a tool to help catalyse the revolution Godard believes possible, but also the potential enemy when used as rhetoric.

The interview with Eve reveals a changing focus in Godard's own revolutionary ideology. The belief that "there is only one way to be an intellectual revolutionary and that is to give up being an intellectual" rejects passive involvement and asserts direct revolutionary action.

In part the scene reflects a broad number of issues in both the U.S. and May '68 French events. Youth rejecting the ways of the old bourgeois order, student politics; but there is also a hint of resignation within the sequence. Wiazemsky agrees with the interviewer that culture survives revolution. It is almost as if technology has created so many artefacts and social debris, that there is no longer hope of removing or ameliorating them. The mass media have won.

In contrast to the previous scene with 'Eve Democracy,' the political message we see the Occident figure employing within the scene is the print medium. The Occidental

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<sup>161</sup> Eldridge Cleaver, *Soul on Ice* (New York: Dell Publishing Co., Inc, 1978), pp. 81-2. The opening of the scene where the revolutionary discusses Blues music is taken from LeRoi Jones' *Blues People*. See Julia Lesage, *Jean-Luc Godard: A Guide to References and Resources* (Boston: G.K. Hall & Co., 1979), p. 97.

figure dictates his message to a typist in the corner of the store.<sup>162</sup> Godard therefore provides a comparison to the 'Outside Black Novel' scene contrasting and recontextualising technology, sexuality and violence within a white, conservative, male perspective. He provides a revaluation of the print medium and its power to convey what has been the traditional means of spreading political and ideological thought.

The Heart of Occident sequence is Godard's assessment of right wing and left wing propaganda and rhetoric. The opening of the scene uses close-up in a long take, similar to the shots used of both the Rolling Stones in the studio and the junkyard sequence. The images of pornographic magazine covers reinforce the political/sexual equation that has developed throughout the film. The majority of the magazine covers reflect sexual imagery accompanied by either political images or textual accompaniment that reflects sexist/right wing ideological comments.

The images of males are representative of macho stereotypes and are seen mixed with hobbyist car magazines, creating a link between the mechanical and sex. To emphasise this, the storeowner reading from 'Mein Kampf' quotes an extract about Hitler's desire for man to become like the machine. Critically denoting that neither age nor gender is reflective of ideology, each of the customers who enter the store are of different ages. Godard uses the Grandfather figure in the store with his grandchild to illustrate the right's fear and contempt of the symbolic 'hippies' who are imprisoned in the corner of the store. Although his Grandchild is witness to the pornography, it is prohibited to communicate with the two Hippie figures. Instead the child is left to hold the pornography its Grandfather has bought and witness him violently strike them.

Educating the audience in the political techniques of the right against the left, Godard harshly exposes the pornographic image. The two figures that are beaten are an example of left wing ideals and culture that the right uses as a cultural scapegoat. A parallel is drawn between the new right and Hitler's Nazis, as they both produce and consume the problem they hypocritically blame and victimise the left for. The revolutionary hippie figures' "Long live Mao" and anti-Vietnam war slogans counter the use of Hitler's sloganeering. Consequently, Godard reveals the sloganeering as programmed epithets, revealing the danger of ideological rhetoric. The warning he issues dismisses the uncreativity of regurgitated statements, and directs the viewer to a desire for a creative revolutionary means.

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<sup>162</sup> A visual pun on 'dictator'

It is possibly through his own post-war experience that Godard directs the viewer to Hitler's use and success using other mediums in the Second World War. The manipulation of medium and message for propagandised uses had the ability to spread faster in an increasingly evolved technologically based world in the late 1960's. As Marshall McLuhan states

For electric light and power are separate from their uses, yet they eliminate time and space factors in human association exactly as do radio, telegraph, telephone, and TV, creating involvement in depth.<sup>163</sup>

Godard illustrates that who owns or controls the medium, controls the message. Media involvement in sex, politics, and corruption within England had become a major determinant of public perception during the sixties, certainly after cases such as the Profumo Affair in 1963. The opening intertitle: 'The Art of CID' can be interpreted as a simple drug reference (ACID), or may also be related to this form of exposure of state corruption. The scene therefore provides an indictment, and, somewhat sardonically, a parallel between the fascist right wing and the state. In Martha Merrill's article about *One Plus One* she states that Godard extends this argument to indict an entire cultural identity. "Anglo-Saxon society...is fascistic, violent and dirty-minded."<sup>164</sup>

Using the premise of a Bolivian revolutionary hiding in a London lavatory, Godard's narrator is killing time by reading a pornographic novel. The novel that Godard's narrator reads from is similar to some of the pornographic texts that have been used in earlier Godard films. For example, in *Masculin-Féminin* [1966] two men read aloud

The Duchess was naked, and the little prince was dressed like Charlie Chaplin.<sup>165</sup>

The narrator verbally rises at random throughout the film, contributing snap-shots of political pornography before waiting "on the beach for Uncle Mao's yellow submarine to come and get me." The narrator links popular cultural figures and politicians with pornography, satirising their power within western culture. Godard uses the narrator to sour the cult of celebrity and highlight bourgeois notions of politics and power,

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<sup>163</sup> Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: The MIT Press, 1995), p. 9.

<sup>164</sup> Merrill, 138.

<sup>165</sup> Jean-Luc Godard, *Masculin-Féminin* (New York: Grove Press Inc, 1969), p. 61.

reducing it to vicious parody. The result is an equation where politics, sex, power and pornography become interchangeable artefacts of a bourgeois hierarchy. The use of the narrator in many respects epitomises the sound techniques used in *Le Gai Savoir* [1968], destroying expectation and divorcing image from sound.

Godard uses many of the techniques from his earlier 1968 films in *One Plus One*. The film's intertitles use different highlighted letters for different or tangential meanings; and Wiazemsky's graffiti uses word games and double meanings providing textual signs which have their origins in the *Ciné-Tracts* [1968] project.<sup>166</sup> Frequently they point to a convergence of concepts such as Godard's word for Marxist cinema-- 'Cinemarx,' or to an unusual conflation of concepts, such as 'Freudemocracy'. The effect is similar to the role of the narrator who similarly conflates ideas and dissolves boundaries between concepts. It is almost as if Godard has taken earlier ideas he has had about projects such as his comments on *Masculin Féminin* [1966] and made them literal. Asked about the use of pop music as a means of politicising youth. Godard's response was

But, you know, I think it was Baudelaire who said that it was on the toilet walls that you see the human soul: You see graffiti there- politics and sex. Well, that's what my film is.<sup>167</sup>

Godard utilises the mediated image of the pop star not only as a recognisable entity, but also as a vehicle for revealing the pop star's art. As Godard often reveals the mechanics of his own work, in *One Plus One* he reveals the laboriousness of the collaborative process of the Rolling Stones art, also adding a suggestion of Godard's own process. Colin L. Westerbeck states that

Godard's interest in the Stones was clearly the chance that there would be some instructive analogy between their method of improvisation and his own. A film might attempt to synthesise its rushes the way an A and R man can 'mix' tracks in a recording.<sup>168</sup>

If Godard is playing with figurative and literal concepts and puns in language, the puns also reflexively extend to visual cues that highlight Godard's history in cinema.

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<sup>166</sup> The *Ciné-Tracts* project immediately preceded *One Plus One*.

<sup>167</sup> Godard, quoted in Godard, *Masculin-Féminin* p. 230.

<sup>168</sup> Colin L. Westerbeck Jr, 'A Terrible Duty is Born', *Sight and Sound*, 40 (1971), 82.

Godard's film *Weekend* [1967] was subtitled 'A Film Found on the Scrap-Heap'; in *One Plus One*, a great deal of the film is literally shot in a junkyard.

Filmmaker D.A. Pennebaker recently discussed his youth and the influence early changes in recording technology had upon society in the United States.

You never could hear Louis Armstrong on the radio, never played black people on the radio...The only way you could hear him was you had to buy these little 'race' records that Blue Bird brought out. And they carefully made yellow labels so that you wouldn't mix them up with normal Blue Bird's, in which there weren't any black people singing or playing.<sup>169</sup>

An essential component of *One Plus One* is its focus on the uses of sound and visual technology, especially the significance of sound and its distribution. Perhaps more significant are the issues surrounding ownership of the recorded voice and its application.

Marshall McLuhan writing about the invention of the phonograph discusses Edison's first thoughts of its application being like the telephone for the use of voice. Using an example of a song lyric, McLuhan writes

Take, for example, the shift of English into an interrogative mood, since the arrival of "How about that?" Nothing could induce people to begin suddenly to use such a phrase over and over, unless there were some new stress, rhythm, or nuance in interpersonal relationships that gave it relevance.<sup>170</sup>

McLuhan asserts that it is recordings of voice and the advent of broadcast that have prompted changes in people's methods of communicating. Godard illustrates the same concerns within *One Plus One* using tape recordings in the 'All About Eve' scene with Wiazemsky's Eve, and in the junkyard sequences. However, the import of Godard's message is that the technology is becoming that much more dynamic, and the velocity

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<sup>169</sup> D.A. Pennebaker, and, Chris Hegedus Interviewed by Julian Zelizer, 'Talking History: The War Room'. Department of History, SUNY-Albany, 'Talking History' series. Internet WWW page, at URL: <<http://www.albany.edu/history/specialfeatures.html>>. Online Audio Recording (requires 'RealPlayer', at WWW URL: <[http://www.real.com/products/player/download\\_player.html](http://www.real.com/products/player/download_player.html)>) Internet WWW page, at URL: <<http://www.albany.edu/talkinghistory/archive/pennebaker-hegedus.ram>> (last updated January 24, 2000/Version current at 7 October, 2000)

<sup>170</sup> McLuhan, p. 276.

of its dissemination is that much greater. With the creation of taped sound,<sup>171</sup> information is given even greater mobility and ease of dissemination. It was only in the early 1960's that synchronised sound was available for 16mm film, which led filmmakers such as D. A. Pennebaker and Richard Leacock to experiment and further the methods of direct cinema.

Merrill's article highlights Godard's politically critical thinking, hinted at through his use of intertitles. By adding the highlighted letters of two of the intertitles, Merrill believes Godard is intimating that

...the revolution will bring about Communism, but that to Communism must be added the continuing possibility to criticise that society. This is the one plus one of the title.<sup>172</sup>

To accomplish the revolutionary ideals Godard has made, the sacrifice is of liberal democracy, which Merrill interprets to be embodied by Wiazemsky's character Eve. Caught between communist and anarchist flags in the final scene, Eve is sacrificed on the altar of black revolution.<sup>173</sup>

The final irony in the Godard ending is that the screen goes black and the soundtrack fumbles and runs down and the Rolling Stones never finish the song "Sympathy for the Devil." For Godard the Revolution is not finished. It remains to be done...For him, we have not yet learned to add.<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>171</sup> Philips introduced the cassette tape recorder in 1963.

<sup>172</sup> Merrill, 138. In an interview with Richard Sarris in 1970, Sarris mentions the title originates from graffiti Godard saw during the events of May. See Sarris, 'Godard and the Revolution'. p. 52.

<sup>173</sup> Merrill, 138.

<sup>174</sup> Merrill, 138.

**One AM / One PM**



One A.M. [1968] AKA: 1 A.M., One American Movie, One P.M. [1972] 90 Minutes

In 'Without Marx Or Jesus,' French journalist Jean-François Revel hypothesises a youth led revolution in the United States. Revel believes this revolution is possible due to unprecedented changes in technology and its ability to disseminate information, effectively creating a different social fabric. However, Revel has reservations about the context of the basis of this chance of revolution. There is, he believes a "spirit of criticism of values, which is still more emotional than intellectual, [and] is made possible by a freedom of information such as no civilisation has ever tolerated before..."<sup>175</sup>

Intrigued by the prospect of revolution in the United States, and the rise of a new radicalism, Godard undertook a collaborative project with the U.S. filmmakers Richard Leacock and D.A. Pennebaker in October of 1968. Provisionally entitled *One A.M.*, or 'One American Movie,' the project was to be shot in the United States, but never reached completion under Godard's direction<sup>176</sup>. Pennebaker and Leacock continued with the project under the title *One P.M.* [1972], or 'One Parallel Movie,' and did not release the film until 1972. At the time of Godard's collaboration with Pennebaker and Leacock, the two American directors were known and regarded for their use of cinema-verité (direct cinema) techniques in documentary films. In particular, their success was cemented by the popularity of *Don't Look Back* [1967], a cinema-verité styled documentary film which followed Bob Dylan on his tour of England in 1965.

In an interview at the Sydney Film Festival in 1998, Pennebaker explained the genesis of *One A.M.*<sup>177</sup>

I ran into Godard in Paris—he used to hang around the Cinémathèque which had shown a couple of our films. He saw *Primary* and wanted to make a film with us. The idea was that he would go to a small town in France and he

<sup>175</sup> Jean-Francois Revel, *Without Marx Or Jesus* (London: Paladin, 1972), p. 126.

<sup>176</sup> Richard Roud, *Jean-Luc Godard* (London: Indiana University Press, 1970), p. 152. Roud reveals Godard had completed 90 percent of the film when he left it. He also says that Godard announced he had abandoned it, changed his mind in September of '69 about the abandonment, but had not returned to complete it. In an Interview with the Dziga-Vertov Group during their tour of the U.S. in October of 1970, Godard reveals his abandonment of the project.

<sup>177</sup> Richard Phillips, *Pennebaker and Hegedus: seminal figures in American documentary film* Internet WWW page, at URL: <<http://www.wsws.org/arts/1998/aug1998/penn-a12.shtml>> (version current at 5 October 2000).

would rig it up with all kind of things happening: people would fall out of windows, people would shoot other people, whatever. We would arrive one day on a bus or something with our cameras and then film whatever we saw happening around us. Anyway, this idea never happened, but then somebody at PBS, in those days it was known as PBL, decided they wanted Jean-Luc to make a film in America and we were brought in. It was to be a combination of what Godard called documentary and real life.

Jean-Luc was very keen to make this film, which he wanted to call *One AM* (One American Movie). Godard was, and still is, one of my very favourite filmmakers but he was convinced that America was about to burst into revolution like the student uprisings in France in 1968. He kept saying we have to hurry and get to California because this is where it is going to begin. "I asked, what was going to begin? 'The revolution you fool,' he told me. I said I didn't think so, but we sort of went along with it.

In Stephen Mamber's examination of cinema-verité<sup>178</sup>, he reveals that the techniques employed are used across a broad spectrum of filmmaking, and are hardly confined to non-fiction filmmaking. Mamber describes the essential or primary technique to be the "...use of real people in undirected situations...By 'real' I mean not only the avoidance of professional actors (unless, of course, we see them as actors) but even to the extent that non-actors are not placed into roles selected by the filmmakers."<sup>179</sup>

In the October 31 1968 discussion shot by Robert Leacock and included in *One P.M.* [1972], Godard reveals his stylistic intent for *One A.M.*, which consists of a combination of fictional film and cinema-verité. Breaking the film into two parts, the original concept of *One A.M.* is a synthesis of cinema-verité and a fiction film – the reality of the 'real-life' protagonists Godard wants to speak, and the fictionalising of their speeches done by actors. Godard elaborates five 'A' reality stages for the film, each of which will have a 'B' fictionalised counter-part.

1. Wall Street Lady
2. Eldridge Cleaver
3. The Jefferson Airplane
4. Tom Hayden
5. A Little Black Girl

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<sup>178</sup> Stephen Mamber, 'Cinema-Verité in America: Part 1', *Screen*, 13(1972), 79.

<sup>179</sup> Mamber, p. 79.

Godard also wishes to play with the spectator's perception of gender roles by switching the original speaker's gender with a male or female actor giving their speech. Cleaver's speech is to be redone by an actress, and is given a number of different modes of address which are under consideration. It will either be redone where Cleaver made the original speech, taking the speech directly to the streets as a private 'one to one' address to strangers, or publicly via the use of a megaphone. The speech delivered by 'Wall Street Lady' is to be redone with a series of 'improvisations' by the male actor in front of school children at the Ocean-Hill, Brownsville school Godard has selected.

Godard implies the site where actor Rip Torn talks to the school children has been specifically chosen with the end result or effect in mind. It is obvious he expects the children to react unfavourably to the speech the actor will give, before he has shot the information the actor will use.

The scene can be interpreted as a set-up, in a basic, very reactive way. The oppositions of affluence and race represented by the 'Wall Street Lady' contrasted with the inner-city poverty represented by the (predominantly black) children, are a situation Godard believes will establish some form of controversial, or at the very least negative, reaction. The use of these kinds of situations, and the creation of oppositions fall outside of the 'pure' cinema-verité formulations that Mamber outlines, but they do provide a different kind of politicised synthesis for the *One AM* project.

The use of simple opposites, and mixing the fictional/non-fictional forms Godard wants to employ for the film, may appear to be the 'wearing of so many different hats'. However, the transparent objectives of this process examine issues of social roles, gender, race and the inherent problems of communication these different functions create. In other words, Godard obviously perceives an enormous number of class and racial tensions within the U.S. urban environment that he believes are the basis of the presently impending revolution. He wants to capture some of these ideas on film, but he does not want an overly simplistic depiction of these tensions, he wants to capture and experiment with language using different models of race, class and gender.

The tightness of the hypothesised construction of the film appears sound as well. Superficially, the construction is comprised of five episodes of conventional cinema-verité, with a complement of five fictional episodes that utilise the speech from the cinema-verité sections. This kind of form is reminiscent of *One Plus One* [1968], which Godard had shot earlier in the year, with its use of episodes or chapters that involve the use of binaries. In the discussion about the execution of the film, Godard also makes explicit the kind of camera work he wants to use in the project.

Earlier, in a 1964 article for 'Cahiers du Cinema', Godard had been extremely critical of Richard Leacock's use of camera<sup>180</sup>.

In his directions for how he wants the *One A.M.* project to be shot, he says he wants to avoid the 'reportage' style of shooting, and would like to keep each scene to be edited almost entirely in camera with 'one piece of film for each section'.<sup>181</sup>

In my opinion, there is no editing at all of the picture. The editing is done by the way it's done. The interesting thing is just...block by block...a movie is not in one piece or another piece, it's the relationship between each other.

Significantly he also wants Leacock and Pennebaker to minimise the use of zoom shots.

I don't care if you zoom. Not too much, in my opinion, because it's not done of that. Sometimes it might be interesting...If you are not sure to be focused when you're zooming, I prefer don't zoom.

By excluding the heavy use of zoom shots, Godard appears to want to keep the footage confined to a distanced or unintrusive presence upon his subjects. Also, by the avoidance of zoom shots, the spectator is less distracted by the camera work and left to concentrate on the sound and what the subjects are saying. However, for the

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<sup>180</sup> Jean-Luc Godard, 'Richard Leacock' in 'Dictionnaire de 121 Metteurs en Scene', *Cahiers du Cinema*, XXV (December 1963-January 1964), 40.

<sup>181</sup> "...he wanted something which was, again, something of a furthering of the concept of a documentary, in which we'd take a roll of film and not stop it until we had finished an entire roll, which would be 10 minutes long." D.A. Pennebaker interviewed by Nathan Rabin, *The Onion AV Club*. Internet WWW page, at URL: <<http://avclub.theonion.com/avclub3318/avfeature3318.html>> (Version current at 5 October 2000).

fictional sections, Godard wants the footage to reflect Brechtian concepts by revealing the camera.

I don't mind if I can have one of you in the picture...one or two sequences with the actor...to see a camera looking at the actor. It will bring the difference between both. But in the documentary sequence, I think we just have to be maybe two camera, I don't care, but I don't want to see another camera in the picture.

By blurring, or inverting the forms of fiction and non-fiction film, the methodology removes expectations the spectator may have of the situations Godard is trying to examine; it also provides a new perspective on the rigid forms he is trying to break. By breaking the stereotypes of film narrative in this way, Godard illustrates the conventional reception of forms the spectator has become accustomed to, and questions the authenticity and veracity that non-fictional films usually aspire to.

The original intention of using black and white film stock for the fictional part of the film goes some way to confirm this. The use of black and white is one of the more obvious signs of reportage or newsreel footage along with documentary. By using the stock for the fictional part, it is one more expectation destroyed. Godard's use of black and white, and his belief that it is a good idea, is due to the separation of function he believes its use will delineate. However, he is also hesitant that the contrast of colour and black and white might separate the functions too much, and thus ameliorate the blurring of form.<sup>182</sup> Clearly separating the different functions of the film by their colour will not give Godard the latitude to blur the line between the reality of the recorded events and the recreations he wishes to experiment with.

*One P.M.* bears very little resemblance to Godard's original concept, or even many of the rudimentary ideas from *One A.M.* It offers none of the inversion of form that Godard's original concept of the film wanted to explore, none of the clarity of purpose in editing, none of the camera guidelines that he wanted followed, and significantly, nothing of the delineation of social hierarchy which lay at the foundation of the film.

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<sup>182</sup> In an interview in 1968, Godard mentions the shooting of the black and white footage for *One AM*, none of which was used by Pennebaker and Leacock for *One PM*. See: Martha Merrill, 'Black Panthers In The New Wave', *Film Culture (U.S.)*, Spring (1972), 145.

If it were not for Robert Leacock's introduction explaining Godard's intentions for the film, the contributions actor Rip Torn makes would be rendered almost totally nonsensical.

*One P.M.* comprises the original interviews with Cleaver, Hayden, and what might be termed a 'guest spot' by the Jefferson Airplane.<sup>183</sup> 'Wall Street Woman' is used in a perfunctory way, and there is an acknowledgement of using the originally conceived speeches being done by an actor (Torn only), but the presentation is so disorganised that the meaning it may have had is all but lost. One of the greatest losses to the film is its emphasis on Godard's interpretation of 'America' and the loss of the hierarchy of oppression Godard wanted to explore. Examining mythology and hierarchies, Godard wanted to use a woman for the Wall Street sequence to break with the expected 'myth,' but he also places the Wall Street Woman's role at the beginning of the film to introduce the top tier of American social class.

Well really it was to find, particularly at the beginning, someone who symbolized America, that is money and imperialism, Wall Street, and especially a woman rather than a man because that's in accordance with the American myth, where the woman has a rather important power, and then to show the people who are trying to struggle against it. Then after that musicians or beatniks who try to escape, who at least have a defense reaction, and then to show the blacks who have the most advanced position, and at the end to show a child, a black child, because he is the most oppressed.<sup>184</sup>

Instead of the five clearly defined sections to the film, the viewer is left with a discordant series of scenes that begin with the two small children skipping along a waterfront industrial area and cutting to actor Rip Torn in native American Indian costume repeating what sounds like Hayden's speech in a wooded area. From this point we get more of Torn in iconic revolutionary costume (black beret and red scarf) repeating more of Hayden's speech in a skyscraper construction site.

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<sup>183</sup> D.A. Pennebaker suggests the scene with Jefferson Airplane was constructed to have them arrested. "And then he had other scenes that were completely documentary, like Jefferson Airplane playing on a roof and getting all of us arrested, which we would film as it happened." D.A. Pennebaker interviewed by Nathan Rabin, *The Onion AV Club*. Internet WWW page, at URL: <<http://avclub.theonion.com/avclub3318/avfeature3318.html>> (Version current at 5 October 2000).

<sup>184</sup> Godard, quoted in Merrill, 144.

The discord between Godard's structured vision of hierarchies for *One A.M.* is entirely destroyed in the film that was eventually released as *One P.M.*

1. Two small girls in industrial area
2. Torn in Native American costume in rural area (Hayden's Speech)
3. Torn in Revolutionary costume in urban area (Hayden's Speech)
4. Tom Hayden discussing revolution and ideas about labour in the U.S. (source for above).
5. Eldridge Cleaver speaking about prison and black experience of prison and society
6. Scene with Black nationalists in Dashikis performing song in street.
7. Tom Hayden listening to earlier speech of himself.
8. Wall Street Woman (Carol)
9. Hayden
10. Torn being directed by Godard about use of voice and tape recorder.
11. Hayden listening to Cleaver's speech
12. Cleaver giving speech
13. Wall Street Woman
14. Torn in Confederate uniform talking to school class using speech of Wall Street Woman
15. Torn changes into a contemporary militaristic uniform.
16. Torn discusses revolution in U.S. while talking to Godard in car around New York streets.
17. Jefferson Airplane and break-up of the concert on the roof.
18. Marching band in street
19. Individual shots of signs and buildings cutting to time-lapse destruction of the building where Jefferson Airplane played.

In part, much of the loss of the original form of the film can be attributed to Pennebaker's camera work. In particular, the sections with Hayden are filled with zooms that are frequently out of focus. He shows Leacock working the other camera numerous times, and there is an enormous number of shots of just about anything else but Hayden.

Given the volume of scenes that reveal Godard to the spectator, it is almost as if Pennebaker and Leacock were so intensely bored by the subjects Godard wanted to shoot, they have made him the central focus or subject of the film. He is either just

one of 'the cast of personalities' they interview; or they believe Godard's presence is one of the prime marketing tools they can use for the film's distribution.

The opening credits of the film seem to reinforce this idea. By identifying the subjects featured in the film in blue script, Pennebaker and Leacock choose individual letters from the subject's names in the credits to spell Godard's name on the vertical axis in red. Accompanying each changing letter with the sound of gun-shots, train horns, and railway crossing bells, the sound continues into the opening image of *One P.M.* revealing a tape recorder sitting on top of a large cannon ball. Thinking metaphorically, this shot can be interpreted as communication being a weapon, a familiar motif throughout Godard's 1968 films. The use of industrial live sound that opens *One P.M.* is also similar to the sound used extensively throughout *One Plus One*, particularly in the junk-yard sequence.

The opening of *One P.M.* sets a similar scene. Two small girls walk and skip with a tape recorder on the banks of an industrial area. The two girls sing along to the tape following the refrain 'Beautiful is Black,' skipping away as the camera stays statically rooted in the industrial area. By having the girls sing the refrain 'Beautiful is Black' Godard provides an attack on bourgeois aesthetics.

After all, if beauty (like language) is one of the arms the ruling class uses to pacify us and 'keep us in our place', then one of our tasks is to turn that weapon around and make it work against the enemy. One way to do this is to demystify beauty and to show how the ruling class uses it against us; another way is to effect a 'transvaluation of values' in which we make a vice of the bourgeois concept of beauty while making a virtue of a different concept (e.g, 'Black is Beautiful') which the bourgeoisie will be unable to recognise or accept.<sup>185</sup>

In his discussion with Martha Merrill in the winter of 1968, Godard makes it clear that the opening of the film, with the two small girls, was intended to be the ending, completing the film by illustrating a class hierarchy.<sup>186</sup>

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<sup>185</sup> Jean-Luc Godard, quoted in James Roy MacBean, 'Vent D'Est: or Godard and Rocha at the crossroads', *Sight and Sound*, 40 (Summer 1971), 147.

<sup>186</sup> "and at the end to show a child, a black child, because he is the most oppressed." Godard talking to Merrill, 144.



The film cuts from the opening scene in the industrial area to an image of a waterfall and Rip Torn in full native American Indian costume, together with a tape recorder, the scene surreally reminiscent of Wiazemsky's 'Eve' in *One Plus One*. As in *One Plus One*, Godard has visualised the *One A.M.* project as illustrating the differences between nature and the civilised urbanity of city life; or technology and nature. By juxtaposing icons of each environment, he projects the contrasts of a pre and post-lapsarian world.

Torn uses the taped speech recording by accentuating different words and phrases in order to create new or different nuances of meaning. The effect is similar in style to the dictation of speech given by the activists in the junkyard in *One Plus One*. Godard extends the typed images of natural vs. urban in the figures of the 'Indian' and the 'Revolutionary' costumes he puts Torn into. Each of these costume changes illustrates Godard's attempts to try to find a uniform, or physical appearance that fits the speech used.

Contrasting the images of nature and city environment with the skyscraper and the country, Godard uses Torn's repetition of Tom Hayden's speech as an illustration of the spread of communication. Noticing sound bites of the speech, Godard provides illustrations that frequently seem literal. When Torn says "action in the streets" the camera pans to show us the street from the lift Torn is in. The fact that Hayden's speech is not recorded until later in the film, illustrates the breaking of the film's linear chronology that Godard had projected for *One A.M.* Instead, the chronology is shattered into a discordant series of fragments for *One P.M.*

Links between scenes usually come from the recordings of the speeches. For example when Torn descends in the lift repeating Hayden's line "It starts with students," the camera cuts to Hayden saying the line in the original footage and shows the machine recording Hayden's speech.

The interesting things that *One P.M.* contributes are a time capsule of the interviewees and their thoughts of America at the time. In 1998, 30 years after the recording of *One P.M.*, Pennebaker says

It always surprises me when I go back and see parts of a film...For instance in *One PM* you forget how almost paralysed the country was with fear..and it was. And you could kind of understand why Nixon was in such a paralysis himself, because there was this overhanging thing that somebody's going to push a button and there'd be some sort of revolution, y'know? And now you look back on it, you can't believe for a minute that anybody thought that. But at the time, a lot of people were very nervous, and conducted their lives in a very nervous way. And that's history too, but it isn't a history that gets passed down easily.<sup>187</sup>

The authoritarian worker on Wall Street who questions Pennebaker and Godard about what it is they're doing in the building with a camera, goes some way in illustrating the paranoia Pennebaker mentions. However, it is Cleaver's nervousness and his hesitancy in contributing to the film at all that illustrates the power of the media and the problems of communication that is most compelling. Pennebaker explains part of Cleaver's motivation in doing the film.

We interviewed [Tom] Hayden and others, including Eldridge Cleaver, who had just written *Soul on Ice*. Cleaver was deciding what to do with the rest of his life at that point. We fell into his clutches and paid him some huge amount of money to interview him.<sup>188</sup> I think this was the money that got him into Mexico and then North Africa.<sup>189</sup>

Cleaver openly discusses the nine years he spent in prison, but also offers theories on state sanctioned killings of black revolutionaries in prisons, or at the very least, state control keeping them in prison. Cleaver is adamant he will not return to prison, saying he would "rather die in the street". However, his experience publishing 'Soul on Ice' had taught him of what he describes as 'Mafias'. Telling Godard that he is part of a Film Mafia reveals Cleaver's suspicion of the media image of himself that may be

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<sup>187</sup> Julian Zelizer, 'Talking History: The War Room', *Talking History*, University of Albany-SUNY (1998). Available from: <<http://www.albany.edu/talkinghistory/archive/pennebaker-hegedus.ram>>

<sup>188</sup> "We paid him a thousand dollars and for him to take that money was correct. His was a political decision—he needed the money to escape America." Jean-Luc Godard quoted in Royal S Brown, *Focus On Godard*, (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1972), p. 62.

<sup>189</sup> Richard Phillips, *Pennebaker and Hegedus: seminal figures in American documentary film* Internet WWW page, at URL: <<http://www.wsws.org/arts/1998/aug1998/penn-a12.shtml>> (version current at 5 October 2000).

presented, but also reveals the institutionalised hierarchies Cleaver recognises in existence. Cleaver believes the image of the Black Panthers has been stolen and misused by media sources, sources that act as a force of “ethnic imperialism over black communities.”

Much of Cleaver’s speech is not concerned with racial repression by the police, but is more concerned with the ownership and production of black language, ideas and images. Godard’s experience shooting *One A.M.* in the U.S. seems to have shaped his opinion to concur with Cleaver’s, believing that images to counteract ethnic imperialism are going to have to be produced by organisations such as the Black Panthers. In an interview with Martha Merrill, Godard says

As for me, I don’t want to do the things that MGM will accept. Hollywood can do a film on Che Guevara because he isn’t in America, but the idea that they have of doing a film on Malcolm X with a script by Baldwin—that I don’t think they can do.<sup>190</sup> Because, even if they can do it, it won’t be released. The only people that can do it are the Black Panthers or someone like them.<sup>191</sup>

Although *One P.M.* does not illustrate the power and repression of the police upon the Black Panthers, Godard does demonstrate the conservatism and repression by the police after the performance by the Jefferson Airplane. Situated on the rooftop of the building opposite the Leacock-Pennebaker offices, Jefferson Airplane play a song live from the rooftop. Supposedly as part of a larger set of songs the band are to play publicly, police stop the concert, partially due to a perceived disruption in the flow of traffic below the building. Godard is shown operating one of the cameras from the Leacock-Pennebaker offices, while footage is cut in of the scene from the street below. One of the many policemen who arrives on the scene offers the contradictory statement in regard to the band’s efforts, “ I don’t mind, it’s nice believe me, it’s a good change, but the city can’t stand it. I can’t either.” Torn gets arrested, and one of the police officers puts his hand over the camera. The next scene illustrates the double standard as an ‘ideologically sound’ marching band parades through the street.

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<sup>190</sup> Godard's prophetic powers have always been of the highest order. The film about Malcolm X wasn't made using Baldwin's script. See Jonathan Rosenbaum, 'Hollywood Radical (Malcolm X)', *Movies as Politics* (Los Angeles, Berkeley, London: University of California Press, 1997), pp. 145-153.

<sup>191</sup> Merrill, 145.

One of the last shots Pennebaker and Leacock include in the film is a time-lapse shot of the destruction of the building where the Jefferson Airplane played. Metaphorically, the shot has a double meaning. It represents the rapidly changing epoch Pennebaker and Leacock believe they are living in. However, it can also be interpreted to reflect a different, more cynical message—one of disappointment that the impending revolution never happened, and the razing of the old building is representative of its demise.

The ending of the project and its completion under the guidance of Pennebaker is unclear and contradictory. When interviewed by Martha Merrill in the Winter of 1968, Godard gives the impression the project had been completed, but had been 'blocked' by those in charge of the production of the film.

It's associated with people from Channel 13, who won't show it because they are like the New York Times.<sup>192</sup>

Godard's disappointment in the conclusion of the project is obvious, however, he is made acutely aware that the footage is from a different time when he revisited the U.S. in 1970. With only two years passing in between Godard's initial shooting of the project and his return to the United States in October of 1970, there is a clear redefining of Godard's outlook upon filmmaking.

In an interview with Kent E. Carroll for the 'Evergreen Review' (October 1970), Godard states that the project had finally been abandoned by himself with the following explanation.

No, it is dead now. When we first arrived, [Godard and Gorin] we looked at the rushes. I had thought we could do two or three days' editing and finish it, but not at all. It is two years old and completely of a different period. When we shot that I was thinking like a bourgeois artist, that I could just go and do interviews with people like Eldridge Cleaver and Tom Hayden. But I was wrong. And Tom Hayden was wrong to allow me to do that because it was just moviemaking, not political action. When we were in Berkeley I talked to Tom and apologised and told him I thought he was wrong. But Cleaver was correct.

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<sup>192</sup> Merrill, 144.

We paid him a thousand dollars and for him to take that money was correct. His was a political decision—he needed the money to escape America.<sup>193</sup>

Pennebaker offers his own explanation of the final film that became *One PM*.

Of course Godard was very serious about the prospect of revolution in America but towards the end, when he realised that he misjudged everything, he lost interest in the film and abandoned it. At that point I was left with a contract that said 'you will deliver' by a certain date a film by you and Godard. So, I had to finish it. I called it *One PM* or One Perfect Movie. Godard referred to it as One Pennebaker Movie. I think there is a copy of it at the Cinémathèque in Paris but I don't think it is one of Jean-Luc's favourite movies.<sup>194</sup>

Godard was obviously extremely disappointed in the project in numerous ways. Moreover, Godard's naming of *One P.M. as 'One Pennebaker Movie'* makes obvious that he does not perceive any of his own work in the film that was finally produced.

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<sup>193</sup> Kent E. Carroll, 'Film and Revolution: Interview with the Dziga-Vertov Group' In Brown, ed., *Focus on Godard*. p. 62.

<sup>194</sup> Richard Phillips, *Pennebaker and Hegedus: seminal figures in American documentary film* Internet WWW page, at URL: < <http://www.wsws.org/arts/1998/aug1998/penn-a12.shtml>> (version current at 5 October 2000).

# **Un Film Comme les Autres**

Un Film Comme les Autres [1968] (AKA: Une Film Comme les Autres, A Movie Like the Others/ A Film Like All The Others/ A Movie Like Any Other/ A Film Like the Others] 120 Minutes.

"The machine has ground up human language and dispenses it in clean slices, to which no flesh clings. Those "binary digits," perfect segments, have only to be assembled (programmed) in the requisite order. The code triumphs and attains its perfection in the transmission of the *message*. It is a great feast for the syntagmatic mentality."

-Christian Metz 'The Cinema: Language or Language System?'  
in 'Film Language: A Semiotics of the Cinema' 1968.

*A Film Like the Others* [1968] ostensibly represents the final film Godard completed as an individual director before beginning the collaborative projects with the Dziga-Vertov group in 1969. Entirely self-produced by Godard using his Anouchka Films company, the film is indicative of Godard's increased politicisation, an unwillingness to compromise the political message of his work, and representative of the independent filmmaking means which Godard would pursue in his work throughout the early 1970's. Many of the published sources of information on Godard's career throughout 1968 posit *Un Film Comme Les Autres* as being Godard's first project to be shot and completed by the Dziga-Vertov group. However, James Roy MacBean counters this idea by stating that although the film does significantly illustrate a direction the group would move in, it predates the formation of the Dziga-Vertov group by several months.<sup>195</sup>

Whether due to problems the film had with distribution, or possibly because of the public reaction it received, the existence *of* the film is frequently mentioned in the published criticism on Godard's career, but it has rarely been discussed at any length during its period of release or since. Perhaps because of this, a great deal of the information surrounding the production of the film is contradictory and open to speculation. Significantly, it is also somewhat prophetic of the marginal critical and commercial reception Godard's films would receive during the period from 1968 until the demise of the Dziga-Vertov group in 1972-3.<sup>196</sup>

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<sup>195</sup> James Roy MacBean, 'Godard and the Dziga-Vertov Group: Film and Dialectics', *Film Quarterly*, 26 (1972), 31.

<sup>196</sup> Journals such as *Sight and Sound* frequently covered Godard and his films until 1968 where they appear to lessen their coverage throughout the year-- virtually coming to a standstill after *One Plus One*. It is also interesting to note that some critics make no division between *Un film Comme les*

Information about *Un Film Comme Les Autres* including the extent of Gorin's influence (if any) upon the project, the film's running time, and the precise date when the colour material for the film was shot is contradictory. Even in what appears to have been an extremely limited distribution, the film had at least four English titles, and Richard Roud notes that there were rumours that Godard was barely involved in the filming of the project.<sup>197</sup> Something as simple as the date on which the film had its U.S. premiere at the Philharmonic Hall in New York is contradictory depending on the source.<sup>198</sup>

Given that at least two versions of the film were distributed, reported estimations of the film's running time are anywhere between 100 and 120 minutes. The English language VHS video that is being used as the source material is 120 minutes in duration, each half being approximately 60 minutes.<sup>199</sup>

The origin of the black and white footage is contested by many of Godard's published critics. It has been suggested that the material was shot by Godard himself, recycling material that was used as part of the *Ciné-Tracts*<sup>200</sup> or, as noted by Royal S. Brown, it is equally possible that it was provided by the 'Etats Généraux du Cinéma.'<sup>201</sup> Loshitzky and MacCabe offer the most precise date for the film's production by

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*Autres* and *British Sounds/See you at Mao*. See Bruce F. Kawin, *Mindscreen: Bergman, Godard, and First-Person Film* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1978), p. 212.

<sup>197</sup> Richard Roud, *Jean-Luc Godard* (London: Indiana University Press, 1970), p. 147.

<sup>198</sup> Richard Roud says the film screened in "early 1969." Roud, p. 186.

The New York Times article (see Appendix Fig. 3.) reports the film screened on 29 December 1968. Any source of information about successive screenings of the film has been elusive. By winter of 1971-1972, it had still not screened in England. See Christopher Williams, 'Politics and Production', *Screen*, 12 (1971/2), 14.

<sup>199</sup> *Un Film Comme les Autres* was originally distributed by Leacock-Pennebaker Films upon its release. The video copy being used was purchased from Pennebaker's 'Living Archives'.

<sup>200</sup> Wheeler Winston Dixon says the black and white sections are from footage Godard recorded for the *Ciné-Tracts*. Wheeler Winston Dixon, *The Films of Jean-Luc Godard* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), p. 104. There are a great many similarities to the *Ciné-Tracts* material, especially in the first half or reel of the film. However, there is a possibility that Godard has used both material from the *Ciné-Tracts* and the *Etats Généraux du Cinéma*.

<sup>201</sup> Royal S Brown, ed., *Focus On Godard*, (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc, 1972), p. 179. The *Etats Généraux du Cinéma* was enormously important immediately after the events of May. Constituted of French Film luminaries and enthusiasts alike, the *Etats Généraux du Cinéma* attempted to reform the entire National Film industry through a series of 'Projects'. Many sources have investigated the group and given excellent accounts of their activities. See Sylvia Harvey, *May '68 and Film Culture* (London: British Film Institute, 1978). In addition, see Simon Hartog, 'The Estates General of the French Cinema, May 1968', *Screen*, 13 (1972), 58-88.



stipulating the film was made throughout August 1968,<sup>202</sup> but other possibly contradictory evidence exists.<sup>203</sup>

What can be verified about the film are two 16mm reels of equal duration composed of two parts: A colour component (which makes up the bulk of the film), illustrating a group of five "students from Vincennes and workers from the Renault plant at Flins".<sup>204</sup> The group sit in a field outside a large tenement block on the outskirts of Paris and discuss politics, the objectives of the May revolt, and the potential steps involved in achieving revolution in France. The second component of the film is comprised of silent black and white 'documentary' footage from the events of May intercut with the colour 'live' action in the field. Each of the black and white sections illustrates the May events that the participants discuss, and acts as a complement to their conversation.

Richard Roud reports that breaking the film into two reels of equal length was not necessarily done for technical reasons, but to force the projectionist to make an arbitrary decision on which reel would screen first. Reportedly, Godard left specific details about the presentation of the picture for its premiere. Legend has it that this was a signed note left inside one of the reels for the projectionist to follow: "one is meant to toss a coin to decide which reel comes first." This would imply that Godard was highly aware of the project's political didacticism by using footage that is shared between each of the reels. However, the sequencing of the reels was not the only thing left to the discretion of those involved at the screening.

In a New York Times article published the day after the film's New York premiere, reporter Donal Henahan writes:

In line with Mr. Godard's wishes, the second half of the 100-minute film was to be shown only if the audience voted to see it.<sup>205</sup>

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<sup>202</sup> It seems conceivable that Loshitzky is quoting MacCabe. Yosefa Loshitzky, *The Radical Faces of Godard and Bertolucci*. (Detroit, Michigan: Wayne State University Press, 1995), p. 28. And: Colin MacCabe, *Godard: Images, Sounds, Politics* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980), p. 21.

<sup>203</sup> In an interview with Godard and Gorin in 1970, Godard says the film was shot "just after the 1968 May-June events in France." Whether this means before August or beyond is unknown. Kent E. Carroll, 'Film and Revolution: Interview with the Dziga-Vertov Group'. In Brown, ed., *Focus On Godard*. p. 53.

<sup>204</sup> Winston Dixon, p. 230.

<sup>205</sup> Donal Henahan, 'Boos Greet Film By Godard Here', *New York Times*, December 30 (1968). See Appendix: Figure 3.

Coming just one month after the controversial premiere of *One Plus One* in London, the premiere of *Un Film Comme Les Autres* in New York was perhaps the most controversial of Godard's films in its reception by the public in 1968. The English audio translation of the dialogue for the film was synchronised with the French dialogue, creating a confusing melange of audio that rendered both languages indecipherable. At several stages during the premiere, the audience reacted with outbursts including demands for their money back. The representative for the film's U.S. distributors (Leacock-Pennebaker) was David McMillan, who defended the version of the screened film, and apparently attempted to soothe the audience.

Possibly sensing a near riot, the Philharmonic Hall house manager attempted to tell the audience that refunds would in all likelihood be given, but McMillan countered by threatening the house manager with legal action if admission charges were refunded. McMillan's compromise was to promise the patrons admittance to a subsequent screening that would include subtitling if they kept their ticket stubs.<sup>206</sup> What began as an audience of one thousand expectant patrons at the beginning of the screening, barely totalled one hundred after an exodus en masse at the end of the first reel.

Partially due to the publicity surrounding the New York premiere, stories began to develop about the content of the film. Richard Roud provides a comprehensive list of the rumours precipitated by the premiere.

Legend has it that there is only one shot in the whole two-hour film, but this is not true. Nor is it true that the camera never moves; there are a few lateral pans now and then.... Legend again has it that the whole film consists of views of tall grass, while on the soundtrack one can hear the discussion of the people hidden by the grass; again, this is not quite true, for we often see the bodies of the group, the man's polka-dot shirt, a girl's hair, her red and green peppermint-striped blouse, and once in a while we even see a face or two. This, reportedly, was pure accident. Legend again has it that Godard was not there during much of the shooting and so was unable to assure that none of the faces would be seen. The truth of this I have not been able to establish.<sup>207</sup>

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<sup>206</sup> I can find no information verifying that this subtitling was ever done. However, the suggestion is quite fantastic given the volume of dialogue in the film; and it would be a disservice to the intentions of the audio techniques, such as overlaps in speech, to ameliorate their effect by the use of subtitles.

<sup>207</sup> Roud, *Jean-Luc Godard*, p. 147.

Roud's description appears to reveal the closeness of the rumours to the reality; yet the description Roud provides is also "not quite true." Roud very cautiously insinuates that the basis for these legends are truthful representations of the film. However, he omits a number of significant details about *Un Film Comme Les Autres*, confining his description to the colour sections, and completely neglecting the black and white footage that is of great significance.

Although each reel of the colour component does contain a great deal of repeated footage that is also shared between the two reels, it is a disservice to the film to ignore the complementary black and white footage of the May events.

It is also a disservice to merely examine the aesthetics of the film and not discuss the content in a more meaningful way. Roud does not reflect on any of the spoken dialogue, which is the main focus of the film's political message; and Roud also neglects to mention that the film's visual techniques are of immense political importance as they break with conventional cinematic techniques by being purposely 'anti-spectacle.'

By positing that the ending is signalled by the politically laden "Italian Communist song," "Bandiera Rossa," the music "[welling] up on the soundtrack to signal the climax of the movie," Roud suggests something far more sentimental than the anti-spectacle provided within the film. Roud immediately follows this description of the ending with what is an obvious oversight-- "Ultimately, it is a very boring film..."<sup>208</sup> A form of conclusion to the film is suggested by an individual voice near the end of the second part or reel of the film that precedes the music Roud mentions. Using silence as a parenthesis for the lone voice on the soundtrack, Godard provides a heavy contrast with the discussion and layering of voices that occupies the majority of the film's content. It also provides a strongly defiant message entreating the viewer to break the traditional hierarchical model of society in favour of a new form of social practice. Roud skips this part of the film, and fails to grasp the anti-climactic purpose of the film's ending by turning it into a spectacle.

The colour footage of the group in the field is dominated by two types of shot. One is of the group in long shot, revealing the group in the grass with the tenement building behind them. The other is a close-up from behind individuals backs, with arms, legs and torso of others in the background. By providing at least one or two blades of grass

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<sup>208</sup> Roud, *Jean-Luc Godard*, p. 147.

in the extreme foreground of these shots, Godard steadfastly prohibits any easy access to seeing the individuals faces in either the fore or middle ground of the frame. By using the two types of shot, there is a slight, potentially fallacious implication, that the close up material of the group may in fact be shot from a distance with a telephoto lens, reinforcing the idea that the camera is an unobtrusive presence.

In contrast to the colour sections, the black and white footage utilises hand-held camera work, and appears to unfetter the footage of the May events. The black and white material uses a number of fast moving pans, different points of view, and also includes the use of a number of close-ups of individuals speaking, but does not include the sound of their speech. Most of this material is shot on the streets of Paris illustrating the public demonstrations. However, a great deal of the black and white footage illustrates the strikes within the car factories and many of the protest activities happening within the universities. The use of post-synchronised sound seems to indicate Godard's desire to magnify or explode the purpose of illustrating the group in the field, not merely as a solitary collection of individuals, but as a microcosmic representation that signifies the breadth of similar discussions, amongst similar groups within France at the time.

Apart from the short *Operation Beton* [1954] and the abandoned *One AM* [1968] project, which was not screened until 1972, *Un Film Comme Les Autres* is Godard's first film that is exclusively a work of documentary. Although the non-fictional content of the *Cine-Tracts* [1968] project revealed Godard's attempt to create direct revolutionary cinema, it certainly falls outside the scope of a full-length project such as *Un Film Comme Les Autres*.

The techniques Godard employs throughout the film defy 'normal' documentary methodology, and in fact strive to alienate the audience by accentuating the differences within the film. It is therefore worth considering that besides the effect of the alienation techniques used, the audience reaction at the premiere possibly came about from their expectation of believing they were about to be watching a fiction film.<sup>209</sup>

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<sup>209</sup> Henahan's article makes it clear that the audience for the film's premiere were "predominantly young" and "booed and hissed" throughout the screening. See Appendix, Figure 3. In Craig Fischer's examination of Godard's commercial film releases in the U.S., Fischer examines the "hissing and snickers" that seemed to be a normal part of the New York Film Festival. Although *Un Film Comme les Autres* didn't appear as part of the festival that year (*One Plus One* was supposed to, but there were problems with getting the print) Fischer's article goes some way in explaining 'normal' audience reactions for the time.

Godard's interest in the documentary form, its various modes of communication and forms of addressing an audience, increases throughout the films of 1968. In particular, Dziga-Vertov's formulation of the newsreel has parallels with both the *Ciné-Tracts* and *Un Film Comme les Autres*. In an article written for *Lef*, Dziga-Vertov states:

Please let's get into life.

This is where we work – we, the masters of vision – organisers of visible life, armed with the ever-present cinema-eye.

This is where the masters of words and sounds work, the most skilful montage-makers of audible life. And I venture to slip in with them the ubiquitous mechanical ear and mouthpiece – the radio-telephone.

It means THE NEWSREEL FILM

and THE RADIO NEWSREEL

I intend to stage a parade of film-makers in Red Square on the occasion of the Futurists' issuing of the first edition of the montaged radio-newsreel. Not the 'Pathé' newsreel-films or Gaumont (a newspaper-type 'newsreel') and not even 'Kino-Pravda' (a political 'newsreel'), but a genuine cinema newsreel – *a swift review of VISUAL events deciphered by the film-camera, pieces of REAL energy* (I distinguish this from theatrical energy), *brought together at intervals to form an accumulatory whole by means of highly skilled montage.*<sup>210</sup>

By using multiple audio sources, and the two types of visual footage, *Un Film Comme les Autres* can be perceived as a critical radio newsreel in contrast with the *Ciné-Tracts'* emphasised critique on the print medium.

Just as Rosenbaum credits Godard's films with being 'global newspapers,'<sup>211</sup> *Un Film Comme les Autres* presents the spectator with a radio newsreel that presents events of the past and a discussion of the possible future of the revolution in France. The film is also illustrative of the contrasting switch in visual emphasis that Godard would attempt to move to later in the year.

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Craig Fischer, 'Films Lost in the Cosmos: Godard and New York Distribution and Exhibition (1961-1973)', *Spectator*, 18 (1998), 47-66. And: Donal Henahan, 'Boos Greet Film By Godard Here', *New York Times*, December 30 (1968). See Appendix. Fig. 3.

<sup>210</sup> Dziga Vertov, 'Film Directors, A Revolution', *Screen*, 12 (1971/2), 57-58.

<sup>211</sup> Jonathan Rosenbaum, 'My Filmgoing in 1968: An Exploration', *That Magic Moment: 1968 and the Cinema* (1998). Internet WWW page, at URL: <<http://www.viennale.or.at/1998/magic/rosenbe.htm>> (version no longer available). Publication (in German) available from Internet WWW Page, at URL: <<http://www.viennale.or.at/english/shop/index.html>> (version current at 7 October 2000).

If it is to be accepted that the film was shot in August, it predates the *One AM* cinema vérité project he would attempt with Leacock and Pennebaker in November of 1968. However, the contrasts between the two projects illustrate lessons Godard learned from *Un Film Comme Les Autres*, and would attempt to apply within *One AM*.

In many respects *Un Film Comme les Autres* is the antithesis of the experimental form of Godard's intentions for the *One AM* project. The *One AM* project was supposed to invert the traditional forms of fiction and non-fiction, by using black and white film stock for the fictional parts, and colour for the documentary. In contrast, *Un Film* uses conventional documentary chromatic forms by organising the colour sections to represent the present moment, while the black and white images are used to provide a context of the past for discussion.

The use of these more conventional documentary modes, especially the effects of the seemingly static placement of the camera, is intended to achieve two goals. Superficially, the first goal of the colour footage is to contrast the reportage style of the black and white images. However, what is more important, is that the colour footage is also representative of something akin to a 'pure' form of cinema vérité. There are none of the usual 'self-conscious' signals of hand held camera movement that can be identified as hallmarks of the Leacock-Pennebaker cinema vérité style: zoom, motion, out of focus images or follow focusing.

The camera remains predominantly static, with the occasional slight pan.<sup>212</sup> However, for the most part, the camera work is frequently supposed to give the impression of having been set up and abandoned by the operator, leaving the subjects to talk uninhibitedly. The majority of the film's action is manipulated through editing and crosscutting between the two types of footage, or through different perspectives of the group. By doing this, and thwarting the spectator's expectation of seeing the identity of the participants in the field, Godard allows the viewer a deceptively objective or unmediated image.

The colour sections achieve the effect of live action by relying, in part, on the use of environmental sounds.<sup>213</sup> Frequently the sound of aeroplanes all but drowns out the

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<sup>212</sup> It should be noted however, whether intentional or not, the camera can be seen almost imperceptibly moving throughout all of the 'static' shots. Whether this is due to a zoom lens being used, or an inexperienced camera operator is unknown.

<sup>213</sup> Similarly, in *One Plus One*, Godard uses three environmental sounds repeatedly.

conversation of the group. Godard also employs other environmental sounds such as children playing in the tenement building behind the group, and the sound of birds and insects in the grass. Alan Williams suggests that this technique is used to contrast the natural with the mechanised, and to illustrate acculturation of mechanised objects in the human landscape.

The sounds that interest him are, almost without exception, mechanical in origin...Two noteworthy aspects of this preference are:

the sounds are recorded at remarkably high levels; and the characters seem peculiarly unresponsive to them—it's as if they are unaware of their sonic environment except to the extent that it assumes culturally rationalised forms. Where as is typical in Godard's "location" recordings, the spectator strains to decipher dialogue (subtitling tends to make this seem easier than it actually is), the characters seem better adapted to urban noise than the film audience is made to feel.<sup>214</sup>

In contrast, environmental sounds are conspicuously absent from the black and white footage. In place of the environmental sounds, classical and orchestral music (with and without vocals) ebbs and flows throughout the black and white scenes until the spectator is returned to the group in the field. The discussion the group engage in within the colour sections continues to run through the black and white fragments, leaving the black and white footage to act as a visual construct, illustrating an event the group are discussing.

This leads us to the second more obvious goal of the colour material. It is utilised to contrast and heighten the effects of the other devices Godard wishes to emphasise. Most notably, the effects accomplished with unsynchronised sound.

Sound is not only language. Sound is everything. A picture can go without any images on the screen for some time—just sound. Or only with silent images. It depends on what you want to tell. It's only a matter of technique.<sup>215</sup>

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<sup>214</sup> Alan Williams, 'Godard's Use of Sound', *Camera Obscura*, Autumn 1982, p. 197.

<sup>215</sup> Jean-Luc Godard, quoted in, Gene Youngblood 'Jean-Luc Godard: No Difference between Life and Cinema'. In David Sterritt, ed., *Jean-Luc Godard: Interviews*. (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1998), p. 37.

By purposely providing a 'simplified' image, the film draws the spectator's attention to the use of sound and the discussion in which the participants are involved. The functionality of the sound is a type of aural palimpsest, whereby, the audio track frequently uses multiple voices talking simultaneously.

Significantly, as the film progresses, the spectator becomes increasingly aware that the voices Godard uses for the dialogue of the film are not necessarily those of the figures the spectator sees. By using multiple overlapping voices on the soundtrack, it is made apparent that many of the voices have been recorded in other locations, and not the outside environment of the field where we see the group.

A great deal of the film's material appears to use an incremental method of timing the cutting of the black and white footage with the colour material. For example, within the first ten minutes of *Un Film Comme les Autres*, Godard contrasts the long takes of the colour material with increasingly faster cutting in of the black and white material as action involved with the protests increases.

(Colour) The film opens with a mid shot of a woman sitting in the field. The spectator sees her back, with her hair obscuring her face. There is a blade of grass which sits conspicuously in the foreground, and the leg and forearm of a man who sits in front of her in the background of the shot. The shot lasts for approximately two minutes.

(Black and White) Shot of protestors marching in a demonstration with a banner that reads: 'Enterrement Non Revolution Qui' 7 seconds.

(Black and White) Long shot of protestors. 16 seconds. Music begins.

(Black and White) Long shot of Champs Elysees and protestors. 8 seconds.

(Colour) Back to medium shot of woman in field revealing more of man in front of her, revealing both of his forearms and the spectator can tell he is wearing a black shirt. The sound of an aeroplane passing overhead is heard. 40 seconds.

(Black and White) Close up of protestors. Camera pans right to extreme close up of the back of someone's head with raised fists of the protestors in the background.



(Colour) Woman in field. Camera slowly pans right revealing the back of a man in a white shirt smoking a cigarette. Significantly, the pan enables the viewer to recognise there are at least 4 participants in the discussion. A figure on the right then moves into the frame revealing the fifth member of the group. A book lies in the centre of the shot. The camera then slowly pans left, stops, then back to its original position with focus on the woman's back. 2 minutes 15 seconds.

(Black and White) Long shot of fire and smoke in the distance. 2 seconds.

(Black and White) Long shot from building rooftop of ambulance and people putting an individual in the back of the ambulance on a stretcher. 14 seconds

(Black and White) Out of focus long shot of trees and fire in distance. 2 seconds.

(Colour) Woman in field, with sound of aeroplane passing overhead. 43 seconds. Camera pans right passing grass onto the back of one of the men until Camera stops. 50 seconds. Camera slowly pans back to the left, stopping when reaching the woman. 2 minutes.

(Black and White) Chaos of silhouetted figures and fire in background. 4 seconds.

(Black and White) Same scene as before, however the spectator is taken closer to the action seen in the previous shot. 1 second.

(Black and White) Even closer to the source of light, but out of focus. 4 seconds.

(Black and White) Long shot of burning car and protestors throwing objects. 12 seconds.

(Black and White) Protestors push the burning car forward. The sound of a car horn is heard. 4 seconds.

(Colour) Man with white shirt in the field. 1 second.

(Black and White) Burning wreckage of the car. 4 seconds

(Colour) Man with white shirt in the field. 1 second.

(Black and White) Long shot of burning in distance and silhouetted figures. 2 seconds.

(Colour) Woman in field. 1 second.

(Black and White) Protestors. 2 seconds.

(Colour) Woman in field. 1 second.

(Black and White) Protestors. Camera pans left and right rapidly. 6 seconds.

By repeating the shot of the woman in the field, the film anchors the black and white material to the ongoing discussion. The group as a whole are never identifiably revealed in their totality, with the exception of the long shot which situates them in front of the tenement building approximately 11 minutes into the film. However, the shot does not reveal any of their faces, and is used to reveal the location of the group, rather than to identify them. The sound of the conversation in the field continues over the top of the black and white images, tying the spectator to the discussion of the events of May. The use of the discussion also keeps the spectator's attention firmly focused on the film's use of sound.

In interviews and public discussions he attended in 1968, Godard frequently espoused the opinion that sound had been under-utilised since its inception in cinema, and positively attempted to expand the boundaries of both silent and sound cinema throughout the year. In Christian Metz' discussion of 'The Cinema: Language or Language System,' Metz questions the underdeveloped nature of verbal language within cinema.

The verbal element is never entirely integrated into the film. It sticks out, necessarily. Speech is always something of a spokesman. It is never altogether *in* the film, but always a little *ahead* of it.<sup>216</sup>

*Un Film Comme les Autres* challenges Metz' notions of speech within cinema and provides another channel of communication that challenges other forms of media. A great deal of the reportage available of the May events illustrates the importance of

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<sup>216</sup> Christian Metz, *Film Language: A Semiotics of the Cinema* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), p. 54.

radio communication as an organisational tool and a means of gathering information, in particular, information about actions led by the state.<sup>217</sup>

Many of the images from May illustrate the antipathy the participants felt for the state controlled Office de la Radiodiffusion-Télévision Française (O.R.T.F.), which controlled the flow of information over radio and television.<sup>218</sup> Like many of Godard's film projects throughout 1968, *Un Film Comme les Autres* attempts to provide an alternative to the conventional media sources. Unlike conventional media sources, Godard emphasises the soundscape and limits the pictorial depiction of the discussion in the field. In part, Godard achieves this emphasis on sound by disembodiment of the voices from the image.

Perhaps what is at stake is that language is thus shown to be *separable* from the people who speak it. It does not merely "express" them but also works through them. "One's own" voice is shown to be simply a particular variety of language use.<sup>219</sup>

Like the visual contrasts between *Un Film Comme les Autres* and *One AM*, the use of sound in *Un Film Comme les Autres* is the antithesis of its conventional use in the collaborative *One AM*. Unlike *One AM*, *Un Film Comme les Autres* does not use synchronised sound, but attempts to use visual techniques to confirm the veracity of what the spectator sees.

Particularly within the first reel, the spectator sees the characters gesticulate during parts of the debate to reinforce their points of view. The attendant sound goes some way to confirming what the spectator sees. However, in the second reel the sound heavily contradicts the images and undermines the spectator's belief that the voices heard on the soundtrack belong to any of the individuals seen speaking in the first reel. It is as if Godard were attempting to present a cautionary message telling the audience to question both what it sees and what it hears. Another possible

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<sup>217</sup> See William Klein's documentary *Grands soirs et petits matins: Mai 68 au Quartier Latin* [1978] to see the significance of communication and the instruments which enabled students and workers to organise demonstrations and protests.

<sup>218</sup> For many of the posters created by students and the Atelier Populaire throughout the May events, see: Burn Collective. *Paris 1968 - Table of Contents*. Internet WWW page at URL: <<http://burn.ucsd.edu/paristab.htm>> (version current at 7 October 2000).

<sup>219</sup> Alan Williams, 'Godard's Use of Sound,' *Camera Obscura* (1982), 194.

interpretation is that this simple technique of unsynchronising the image from the sound is employed to alienate the spectator even further from the image.

In a 1970 interview, Godard made clear his desire to reduce filmmaking to a more simplified process. Part of his desire was to make films independently of the commercial methods of production. Within this process of reducing cinema to its raw basics was a desire to strip the technicalities of the sound process.

We made a step forward when we tried to reduce all those so-called technical problems to their utmost simplicity. [...] So we are trying to make only a few images, work with no more than two tracks, so the mixing is simple. For the moment, most movie makers, except some underground movie makers, work with ten to twelve sound tracks and mixing lasts one week. The mixing is only three or four hours for us. We just work with two tracks and possibly later with one track, because with one track, we can really have simple sound again.<sup>220</sup>

Godard believed that the use of sound is itself political.

But for the moment, we have not the political capacity of working with one track. This is the political stage, not simply a problem of techniques.<sup>221</sup>

Godard's seemingly simple use of both black and white, and colour film stock, heightens the contrast when the sound meets the image. Although the recording of the sound may be simple, the application of unsynchronised sound within *Un Film Comme les Autres* is complex and an effective tool in alienating the spectator.

By using these techniques, the black and white footage examines the May revolt as an event, or as a precisely fixed point that has passed. In contrast, the colour section depicts a 'present time'. The sound techniques attempt to alienate the spectator and create a sense of uncertainty that is shared by the subjects of the film, as they explore the question of what happens next.

Many of the texts written in the aftermath of the May revolt have attempted to confine its participants to two possible political extremes. The first is a representation of a unified front between students and workers as a homogeneous mass. The other is

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<sup>220</sup> Godard, in Carroll, p. 52.

<sup>221</sup> Godard, in Carroll, p. 52.

a sociological representation, a mass movement that had its basis amongst a far greater section of the French population than it really had. Perhaps more controversial than these two arguments, are the apolitical posturings that have arisen recently, eviscerating any political ideas the May revolt had.

In Arthur Marwick's large and extensive tome 'The Sixties,' he opines

It will be a major theme of this book that it is a mistake to concentrate on politics and changes of government: the social and cultural movements I am concerned with continued largely irrespective of the political complexions of governments.<sup>222</sup>

Contrary to Marwick's position is Charles Posner's compilation of works about the events of May 'Reflections on the Revolution in France: 1968'. Posner illustrates the basis for the May events being a struggle for power, and the investigation of new forms of democracy.

It also unveiled possible solutions to the problems of democracy, democratic control, and the purpose and meaning of work which plague all industrial societies. Hitherto these solutions have been discussed in the abstract; the May events put them to the test for the first time.

All of the contributors to this volume feel that if May was not a fully-fledged revolution, it was, at the very least, 'a dress rehearsal...The May events herald profound changes not only in who exerts power but how power is to be exerted and for what ends.'<sup>223</sup>

From the Gaullists to the P.C.F.<sup>224</sup> (Communist party) leaders chastised students and young workers for their refusal to make the traditional demands of the consumer in the traditional way. When they discovered to their horror that

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<sup>222</sup> Arthur Marwick, *The Sixties* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 9. One of the 'social and cultural movements' Marwick is interested in investigating, judging from the large photo of the Latin Quarter on the back cover, is France in May of 1968.

<sup>223</sup> Charles Posner, 'Introduction'. In *Reflections on the Revolution in France: 1968*. ed., Charles Posner. (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd, 1970), pp. 13-14.

<sup>224</sup> P.C.F.: Parti Communiste Français

their ideological presuppositions were not accepted and inadequate to the task, they resorted to less subtle means of persuasion.<sup>225</sup>

In the case of the Gaullists, the "less subtle means" were acts of violence perpetrated by the C.R.S.,<sup>226</sup> the national riot squad. The P.C.F. used political tools, albeit through less conventional channels: media sources such as 'L' Humanité', the communist newspaper, and through the CGT.<sup>227</sup>

The C.G.T., a Communist party controlled confederation, advocated conventional means of strike negotiation for the workers. They also attempted to keep students out of discussions surrounding workers' rights and worker objectives, making their disapproval of the greater goals of the May revolt well known. The predominant reason the C.G.T. was against the student revolt was for self-preservation.

The students threatened a total democratising of the workers, which of course would remove the power that the C.G.T. held. Of course, a consequence of successful student led revolution would of necessity be the loss of Communist Party power and influence.

On May 5, the C.G.T. issued the following statement:

Wherever the essential claims have been satisfied it is in the workers' interest to pronounce themselves overwhelmingly in favour of a return to work.<sup>228</sup>

As Harvey points out, there were those on the left who believed this was 'orchestrated with an indecent haste.' Student activists accused the C.G.T. of not only behaving like American Liberals, but also of being 'reformist' by not supporting the revolution beyond their established role as negotiators.<sup>229</sup>

The C.G.T. also appeared to miss the point of the workers general strike. Particularly within the automotive factories, the strike action was about a number of issues, the

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<sup>225</sup> Posner, p. 16.

<sup>226</sup> C.R.S.: Compagnies Républicaines de Sécurité

<sup>227</sup> C.G.T.: Confédération Générale du Travail

<sup>228</sup> Sylvia Harvey, *May '68 and Film Culture* (London: British Film Institute, 1978), p. 10.

<sup>229</sup> F. Perlman, 'Workers Occupy Their Factories'. In *Worker-Student Action Committees: France May '68*. eds., R. Gregoire and F. Perlman. (Detroit, Michigan: Black and Red, 1991), p. 9.

least of these were workers' wages. Amongst the many reasons for the strikes was a call for foreign workers' rights.

Particularly within the Renault and Citroen factories, the workers from such diverse places as Portugal, Spain, Yugoslavia and North Africa lived under appalling conditions.

The Communist Party union (the C.G.T.) did not make special efforts to equalize the conditions of the foreigners with those of the French workers. This is largely because the work contracts of most of the foreigners were temporary, and the foreign workers could not vote, which means that the foreign workers did not represent a power base for the Communist Party. And some union spokesmen contributed to a further worsening of the foreign workers' situation by collaborating with the police repression of the foreigners, and even by publicly defining foreigners as the greatest threat to the French working class.<sup>230</sup>

The major cause of union between the students and workers, as Posner perceives it, was due to demography, coupled with the influence of a society that treated youth as an apprenticeship into adulthood. Society placed all the accoutrements and responsibilities of adult consumerism at the feet of youth, without any of the rights experienced by adults. The student and worker revolts are therefore, according to Posner, primarily a youth revolt that rejects consumerism.

...but for the consumer society youth was an apprenticeship in how to adjust to hierarchical control whether in the factory, the lycée, or the university... Youth's normal propensity to reject parental values grew into a rejection of parental society with its ideas of hierarchy masking as democracy.<sup>231</sup>

There is no doubt that Godard is attempting to unify the students and workers to advance the revolt that the events of May began. Far from being a roundtable discussion of both ideological sides of the argument, representatives of the pro-Gaullist, C.G.T. and P.C.F. factions are omitted from the discussion in the field. Godard had tried to unite students and workers with the *Ciné-Tracts*, but whereas the 'voice' of the *Ciné-Tracts* was undoubtedly authorial, *Un Film Comme les Autres* allows the

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<sup>230</sup> Perlman, p. 8.

<sup>231</sup> Posner, p. 40.

participants in the revolt their chance to speak for themselves. It also allows them to speak outside of any organised media response from spokespersons and leaders such as Daniel Cohn-Bendit or René Riesel. The age demographic of the speakers is also highly significant. Using workers and students who appear to be in their twenties, Godard illustrates the politicised youth that Posner had detailed as being the basis of the revolution. By bringing the individuals together in a group, Godard emphasises the unification that must happen if the revolution is to advance.

In an interview with Kent E. Carroll in October of 1970, Carroll asked Godard if it was a necessity to work in a group to make films politically. Godard suggests that after independently moving away from bourgeois ideology and attaining a revolutionary consciousness, there is a natural progression towards working with groups.

That means you have to try to work as a group, as an organisation, to organize in order to unite. The movies are simply a way to help build unity. Making movies is just a little screw in building a new concept of politics.<sup>232</sup>

In other words, 'true' revolution requires the unity of groups in order to achieve revolutionary goals. *Un Film Comme les Autres* is Godard's first attempt at building unity by directly addressing the student and worker populations, and spreading the ideas from the discussion to increase unity along revolutionary lines. Moreover, many of the techniques employed within the film, and Godard's changing focus from auteur filmmaker to collaborative partner, are a paradigmatic shift in methodology.

However, there is also the danger of collective discussion not achieving revolutionary aims due to passivity. Godard wants to achieve unity followed by revolutionary action.

A first step might be to simply gather people. At least then you can have a free discussion. But if you don't go on and organize on a political basis, you have nothing more than a free discussion. Then collective creation is really no more than collective eating in a restaurant.<sup>233</sup>

René Viénet, a member of the Situationist International [SI], believed what was missing from the May revolt was the type of active commitment Godard suggests.

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<sup>232</sup> Godard, in Carroll, p. 51.

<sup>233</sup> Godard, in Carroll, p. 51.



What was lacking was consciousness of a real revolutionary perspective and its practical organisation. Never did an agitation by so few individuals lead in so short a time to such consequences.<sup>234</sup>

This is not to suggest that the Situationists were in agreement with Godard. Both Viénet and Guy Debord, the leader of the SI, were vehemently against Godard's films, frequently making attacks that were personal as well as professional. Yet, both share similar techniques in their films, and a similar ideology, raising the question of what could account for such wrath on Debord's part. In a review of *Le Gai Savoir*, the Situationists appear to target Godard as a filmmaker of unoriginal, even plagiarised, content and technique. Plagiarism being one of many techniques that the Situationists frequently encouraged in others.

Godard was in fact immediately outmoded by the May 1968 movement, which caused him to be recognized as a spectacular manufacturer of a superficial, pseudocritical, cooptive art rummaged out of the trashcans of the past (see *The Role of Godard in Internationale Situationniste #10*). At that point Godard's career as a filmmaker was essentially over, and he was personally insulted and ridiculed on several occasions by revolutionaries who happened to cross his path.<sup>235</sup>

Like Godard, Debord is also influenced by avant garde film practice, and displays sensitivity to the lineage of commercial and experimental cinema. Beginning his cinematic career while with the Lettrists in the early 50's, Debord's films, like Godard's, are often characterised as "hard to watch."<sup>236</sup> The Lettrist cinema led by artists such as Isidore Isou and Gil J. Wolman were early influences on Debord's work.

This early '50's cinema found its roots in the avant-garde work of the dadaists and expanded into an avant-garde film practice imbued with the Lettrists own unique

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<sup>234</sup> René Viénet, *Enragés and Situationists in the Occupation Movement, France, May '68* (Brooklyn, New York: Autonomedia, 1992), p.19.

<sup>235</sup> Ken Knabb, (Trans.) Situationist International. *Cinema and Revolution*. Internet WWW page, at URL: <<http://www.slip.net/~knabb/SI/12.cinema.htm>> (version current at 7 October 2000).

<sup>236</sup> Elizabeth Sussman, 'Dismantling the Spectacle: The Films of Guy Debord'. *On the passage of a few people through a rather brief moment in time: The Situationist International 1957-1972*. ed., Peter Wollen. (Boston: Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, 1989), p. 78.

perspective. Elizabeth Sussman describes some of the techniques the Lettrists and Debord introduced in the 1950's.

These practices include, just to take a few examples, the use of flicker, radical sound-image discontinuity, negative sequences, multiple simultaneous acoustic inputs, direct manipulation of the celluloid surface through tearing, writing, and scratching, and an active engagement of the spectator a la "expanded cinema".<sup>237</sup>

The founder of the Lettrists, Isidore Isou, outlined the development of the cinema as an art form with the literary work *Esthétique du cinéma* in 1953. Illustrating two practices involved with the cinema's development, Isou created two formal divisions. The 'amplic phase' denoted the development of cinematic syntax and style. The 'chiseling phase' refers to the subsequent development of the form, whereby the form becomes exhausted "or of bloated, decadent excess."<sup>238</sup> When this occurs, Isou believes the form becomes reflexive, and a radical investigation of its basic formal and technical means takes place. Each of these examples can be found in Godard's 1968 cinema.

Several key techniques of the Lettrists mirror *Un Film Comme les Autres*, for example, their use of sound, its suspension from the image, and the inclusion of newsreel footage. Debord's *Hurlements en faveur de Sade [1952]* used these techniques; and many of the textual inscriptions used mirror those Godard would use in *Le Gai Savoir [1968]* and the *Cine-Tracts* project. The soundtrack for *Hurlements en faveur de Sade* consisted of

...dialogue spoken without expression...when one of the five voices is speaking, the screen is white....The dialogue consists primarily of phrases that have been detoured from journals, works by James Joyce, the French *code civil*, Isou's *Esthétique du cinéma*, and from John Ford's *Rio Grande [1950]*, supplemented by quotidian banalities.<sup>239</sup>

Like *Un Film Comme les Autres*, Debord's *Hurlements* had a running time of 120 minutes. However, Debord's film inverts Godard's extreme use of speech by featuring

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<sup>237</sup> Sussman, p. 79.

<sup>238</sup> Sussman, p. 80.

<sup>239</sup> Sussman, p. 82.

only 20 minutes of spoken dialogue. The audience, like that of Godard's, was apparently provoked into, at first boredom and then violent outrage demanding admission refunds. It is also worthy of note that many of the Lettrist projects encouraged a radical foregrounding of sound rather than image.

Like *Un Film*, Debord's *Hurlements* is supposed to engage the viewer in a critical, more active participation. Sussman explains

....the lack of images in *Hurlements* – is employed as the essential ingredient in a recipe of provocation intended to "radically transform" the cinematic "situation" from a shrine of passive consumption into an arena of active discussion, a shift away from the spectacular and *toward* critical engagement.<sup>240</sup>

In *Made in USA* [1966], Godard began to develop and extend his interest in revolutionary cinema to envelop third world politics, actively encouraging and supporting 'Third World' political filmmakers and their initiatives. In 1968, and beginning with *Le Gai Savoir*, many of the ideas espoused by third world filmmakers became a regular touchstone of reference in Godard's films.

In Argentina, filmmakers such as Solanas and Getino were attempting to encourage new forms of filmmaking that would counteract the spread of imperialist Hollywood cinema. Significantly, their goal, like that of Godard's throughout 1968, was to break free of the stranglehold that they felt had been imposed by neocolonialist cinema and the mass media wherein "Mass communications are more effective for neocolonialism than napalm".<sup>241</sup>

By countering the limitations of form in neocolonialist cinema that were being made contemporaneously, Solanas and Getino believed theirs were the first steps in raising or fomenting a national revolutionary consciousness. Promoting forms that were akin to the 'Direct Cinema' movement, and adopting many of the anti-spectacle techniques proposed by the Situationist International and Debord, Solanas and Getino's *La Hora De Los Hornos/The Hour Of The Furnaces* [Solanas and Getino, 1968] creates a number of ideological and metaphoric links. The cinema was being transformed into a

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<sup>240</sup> Sussman, p. 84.

<sup>241</sup> Solanas and Getino. 'Towards A Third Cinema'. In Bill Nichols, ed., *Movies and Methods: Volume One*. (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1976), p. 49.

weapon of guerrilla warfare by linking anti-spectacle ideological struggles with physical combat.<sup>242</sup>

Solanas and Getino emphasise the need for the intellectual to find their core competency to achieve "and perform the most efficient work," something Godard would espouse in his later work with Gorin in the Dziga-Vertov collaborations. Perhaps most important, is the work Solanas and Getino were conducting with the exhibition of their films.

The screenings of *La Hora De Los Hornos* were accompanied by open forum discussions. Using the film screening as a "detonator or pretext," the filmmakers organised events at the screening to precipitate discussion. At the beginning of the second part of *La Hora De Los Hornos* entitled *Acto para la liberacion*, the directors would introduce a dialogue with the audience as a means of dispelling any notions of spectacle.

Comrades, this is not just a film showing, nor is it a show; rather, it is, above all, A MEETING – an act of anti-imperialist unity; this is a place only for those who feel identified with this struggle, because here there is no room for spectators or for accomplices of the enemy; here there is room only for the authors and protagonists of the process to which the film attempts to bear witness and to deepen. The film is the pretext for dialogue, for the seeking and finding of wills. It is a report that we place before you for your consideration, to be debated after the showing.<sup>243</sup>

Although *Un Film Comme les Autres* is missing the explicit instruction of Solanas and Getino's film, it does implicitly ask the spectator to engage the film outside the parameters of the theatrical experience. Whether Godard credited his audience with too much intelligence, or lacked the foresight to provide explicit instruction is open to question.

Like Godard, Solanas and Getino's work is also attempting to escape the aesthetics of idealism, and the cult-like view that "Beauty in itself is revolutionary." Instead, Solanas and Getino provide a means of understanding the art of cinema outside of the 19th Century bourgeois form they wish to eliminate.

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<sup>242</sup> Solanas and Getino, p. 44.

<sup>243</sup> Solanas and Getino, p. 62.

Man is accepted only as a passive and consuming object; *rather than having his ability to make history recognized, he is only permitted to read history, contemplate it, listen to it, and undergo it.* The cinema as a spectacle aimed at a digesting object is the highest point that can be reached by bourgeois filmmaking. The world, experience, and the historic process are enclosed within the frame of a painting, the same stage of a theater, and the movie screen; man is viewed as a *consumer of ideology*, and not as the creator of ideology.<sup>244</sup>

This statement is comparable to what appear to be Godard's own thoughts on history and ideology. Near the end of the second reel of *Un Film Comme les Autres*, an extended period of silence is heard on the soundtrack. Illustrating what Alan Williams describes as

...the ultimate sound effect: *silence*, which when it arrives—abruptly, as do most of Godard's sounds—is eerily soothing.<sup>245</sup>

The silence is followed by a solitary voice on the soundtrack, and informs the spectator that

According to Shakespeare, men are involved in history in three ways: Some create history and are its victims. Others think they create history, and are its victims also. Others yet do not create history, but they too are its victims. The first are the Kings, the second are their assistants who carry out their orders, the third are the simple citizens of the kingdom.

The speech that the individual gives provides a more potent ending for *Un Film Comme les Autres* than the one posited by Roud, and importantly signals the direction the Dziga Vertov group would take in directly addressing the political struggles of individuals and groups throughout 1969 to the early 1970's. The prevailing message from *Un Film Comme les Autres* is therefore one of attempting to escape the shackles of passively consuming ideology; but also of becoming actively involved in rejecting bourgeois culture in order to be an active participant in the making of history. For this to be accomplished through the film medium, Godard

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<sup>244</sup> Solanas and Getino, p. 51.

<sup>245</sup> Alan Williams, 'Godard's Use of Sound,' *Camera Obscura* (1982), 197.

requires the audience to communicate with each other to achieve the ideological ideas he raises.

Although he later rejected the film as a "complete failure,"<sup>246</sup> he also affirms a belief that it marks the departure from quantity to quality. This departure marks a transition in the targeting of his audience as a potential collective cadre, as opposed to merely a collection of individuals and signified his desire to expand the role of cinema.

At a certain point you go from quantity to quality. Until *A Movie Like the Others* I was a moviemaker and an author. I was only progressing from a quantity point of view. Then I saw the job to be done, and that I had the possibility of doing this job only with the help of the masses. For me this was a major advancement. You can't do it as an individual. You can't do it alone, even if you are an advanced element of the good militant. Because being a good militant means being related, one way or another with the masses.<sup>247</sup>

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<sup>246</sup> Godard, in Carroll, p. 53. In the Summer of 1972, Richard Roud states "Gorin admits that the possible public for *Un Film comme les Autres* was of the order of 5". Richard Roud, 'Godard is Dead, Long Live Godard/Gorin: Tout Va Bien!', *Sight and Sound*, 41 (1972), 123.

<sup>247</sup> Godard, in Carroll, p. 54.

# Conclusion

Francois Albera argues that during 1968 there was a continuation of the process of ontologically examining the way images and text are related in Godard's films.

Godard questions the notion of representation and strives to rearticulate these oppositions that exclude each other in Bergson [...] namely "matter and "memory", "recollection" and "perception", "subjective" and "objective, etc. The present is thus haunted by a past and a future, the image-perception interrogated by itself as image-souvenir.<sup>248</sup>

With the nascent growth of varying forms of visual technology, Godard reinforces the idea that any image is transitory in meaning, and is open to ideological manipulation. This becomes a double-edged sword. The media which were largely operated by the state in France during 1968 were able to reinforce the status quo of bourgeois ideological images, but with the growth of technology, and especially consumer technology, the means of countering the media were increasingly put in the hands of the public, who in turn, were able to produce their own representations of themselves. *Le Gai Savoir* goes some way in demonstrating this, with Patricia and Emile's own collection of images, their experiments with meaning using everyday images and sounds.

The characters within the films from 1968 do share some similarities with characters from Godard's earlier films. The most significant of these similarities is their isolation. The figures in the junkyard in *One Plus One* may be part of a united guerrilla organisation, but communication between the individuals seems to be impossible without the presence of the tape recorder to give speech a purpose.

Patricia and Emile in *Le Gai Savoir* have similar difficulties in communication. Although their purpose in learning about their environment through images and sounds unites them in their ideological struggle, the spectator is left with a feeling that any relationship outside the confines of the darkened studio space is impossible.

Even in the non-fiction film *Un Film Comme les Autres*, it seems unlikely that the students and workers in the field would gather to discuss the issues of May of their own volition. Instead, Godard forces the situation in an attempt to unite the two. The often quoted statement "There is only one way to be an intellectual revolutionary,

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<sup>248</sup> Francois Albera, 'Matter and Memory', Scope Magazine, Issue One (1992), 18.



and that is to give up being an intellectual” quoted in *One Plus One* is countered in *Un Film Comme les Autres* with the bringing together of students and workers, and is representative of one of the last transitions in Godard’s thinking until his final embrace of being both an intellectual and a worker. Part of this is due to what was the increasing influence of Louis Althusser’s work. Althusser writes

...the ‘spontaneous’ ideology of the workers, if left to itself, could only produce utopian socialism, trade-unionism, anarchism and anarcho-syndicalism; on the other hand, Marxist socialism,...could only be the work of men with a thorough historical, scientific and philosophical formation, intellectuals of a very high quality.<sup>249</sup>

This final transition in thought also reflects Godard’s own change from individual director to collaborative partner, believing that the only way for the revolution to progress is through unity with others.

Colin MacCabe posits Godard’s readiness for the events of May 1968 with the release of *Made in USA* [1966] and *La Chinoise* [1967].<sup>250</sup> Although *La Chinoise* is representative of the beginnings of the overt politicisation which had gained momentum within Godard’s films before 1968, both films, though significant, do not illustrate the total precedents of Godard’s political work in 1968. Arguably, Godard’s political essay *Deux ou trois choses que je sais d’elle* [1966] shares a number of significant similarities with *Le Gai Savoir*. In particular, the use of the narrative voice-over began with *Deux ou trois choses que je sais d’elle*, and arguably the accentuation of some of the semiotic analysis of images also began in 1966 with both *Deux ou trois choses que je sais d’elle* and *Made in U.S.A.*

However, the films from 1968 can also be perceived contemporaneously as representative of a much larger critical and cultural movement of the time.

Given that many scholars were increasingly moving away from a “historically relative” method of examining literature as an arbiter of culture, Godard’s 1968 work on the *Ciné-Tracts* complements these changing perspectives of literature by including a critique of the mass media.

<sup>249</sup> Louis Althusser, *For Marx* (London and New York: Verso, 1997), p. 24.

<sup>250</sup> Colin MacCabe, *Godard: Images, Sounds, Politics* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980), p. 54.

Tony Bennett notes the changing attitudes to the very notions of "Literature" within academia at the time.

These sorts of questions are increasingly being asked by both Marxist and non-Marxist scholars, who feel that the historically relative way of viewing culture that is embodied in the concept of 'literature' is both unhelpful and outdated. Unhelpful, because from the point of view of historical studies it artificially separates the study of 'literary' texts from adjacent areas of cultural practice induced by the reorganisation of cultural production associated with the development of the mass media.<sup>251</sup>

Perhaps the most ambiguous and often repeated concepts within Godard's 1968 films is the concept of 'Zero' and the desire to destroy language. In part, the history of the term 'Zero' can be found in the work of Roland Barthes, whose book *Writing Degree Zero* was written in 1953.

In Barthes' examination of literature and language, he isolates language forms and examines their creation and destruction.

For we know that the whole effort of Mallarmé was exerted towards the destruction of language, with Literature reduced, so to speak, to being its carcass.<sup>252</sup>

One of the many misunderstood features of Godard's films from 1968 is their use of a highly codified textual and verbal language, including the ambiguous use of rhetoric. A part of this ambiguity is due to Godard's use of clichéd 'revolutionary' language. For example, in *One Plus One* [1968] the spectator is obviously supposed to reject the artificial or falsely contrived speech of the two Hippies in the bookstore. However, the danger in totally rejecting the political language Godard employs to create political discussion is obvious. One of the principal failings of the 1968 films for the politically uninitiated, is their uncompromising use of language systems that the spectator may not be equipped to understand. In a discussion of Marxist language, Barthes defines Marxist writing to be the language of knowledge, and reveals the breadth of meaning that can be contained in individual words.

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<sup>251</sup> Tony Bennett, *Formalism and Marxism* (London and New York: Methuen & Co Ltd, 1979), p. 11.

<sup>252</sup> Roland Barthes, *Writing Degree Zero* (New York: Hill and Wang), p. 5.

...it is only in the light of its whole linguistic system that Marxism is perceived in all its political implications. Marxist writing is as much given to understatement as revolutionary writing is to grandiloquence...For instance, the word 'imply', frequently encountered in Marxist writing, does not there have its neutral dictionary meaning; it always refers to a precise historical process, and is like an algebraical sign representing a whole bracketed set of previous postulates.<sup>253</sup>

If 1968 is Year Zero, it seems as if Godard believes that the past has not been properly acknowledged or dealt with from a politically alternative perspective. The spectator is therefore given a renewed counter cultural perspective of the past, frequently by way of bourgeois images. But there is also an acknowledgement of the repeatability of history and the image. Like Barthes' examination of writing, Godard postulates that images and art are not created in a vacuum, they have significant historical precedents in a number of social and cultural events which create the possibilities of their development. This artistic inheritance is also likened in the films from 1968 with an inheritance of history.

Therefore, the recording of history from a counter cultural perspective is a major responsibility which Godard attempts to fulfil. If the 1960's were actually a time where there was a possibility that anything might happen, Godard exaggerates this further by the concept of Zero. It becomes a point of departure from the history that has been recognised to the present, and a point where anything might happen to create an entirely different future. In his visit to the United States in 1968 to film *One AM*, Godard certainly seems to have convinced D.A. Pennebaker that he believed a revolution may have been about to begin in the U.S.

As was mentioned at the beginning of this paper, there is an obvious revisionism of the 1960's concurrently at work that denies a great deal of the politics involved. In part, this is exacerbated by mass media images that use the icons of the 1960's as advertising fodder for anything that might gain some credibility from having a small amount of rebellion attached to it. Part of Godard's anger directed against Iain Quarrier for the change in the ending of *One Plus One* must surely have been directed against Quarrier's attempt to change the meaning of the film's content into populist entertainment.

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<sup>253</sup> Barthes, p. 23.

In part, the episodes such as the fight with Quarrier and the stand-off with Polanski at Cannes have made Godard into something of a 'cause celebre,' that has certainly created a great many more myths about his life and career than truths. Interestingly, the spectator is supposed to believe (if they note most of the published criticism on Godard) that Godard's 'political films' were unsuccessful esoteric examples of his having 'lost it'. Wheeler Winston-Dixon notes that in 1967 *La Chinoise* was Godard's most successful film at the U.S. box office with the exception of 1959's *A bout de Souffle*.<sup>254</sup>

Part of the resistance to the films is obviously the anti-narrative style Godard adopted throughout his experiments in 1968. Moreover, much of the films' content is openly directed at individuals who are either sympathetic to certain causes, or directed outside the experiences of many, which, in turn, can explain the alienation from the subject matter that many must have felt. However, the films do explain contemporary events in such a way as to challenge spectators, but also invite them to examine the political and social environment around them.

1968 is frequently given enormous significance as a year that would forever indicate world-changing events that were both politically and socially irrevocable. If Godard's frequent citing of a growing technological influence upon society in 1968 is given any credence, his films undoubtedly help examine the global benefits and dangers of technological expediency at the cost of human liberty and interaction. From the black revolutionaries in the junkyard of *One Plus One*, to Patricia and Emile in the Television Studio of *Le Gai Savoir*, each of the films from 1968, in some way, attempts to reconcile or reclaim technological advances from the forces of the status quo for personal or radical purposes.

Usually this manifests itself in the films of 1968 in order to illustrate methods to educate or enable the reclaiming of a revolutionary political purpose, frequently using technology to defy the hegemony of the media they perceive around them, media which utilise, and (periodically, subtly) reinforce the bourgeois status quo.

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<sup>254</sup> Wheeler Winston Dixon, *The Films of Jean-Luc Godard* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), p. 83.

It can therefore be perceived that the films from 1968 attempt to break the ideological coding of the mass media in favour of the historical beginnings of revolutionary cinema, a revolution Godard anticipates becoming a reality.

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# Filmography

*A Bout de souffle AKA: Breathless (1963)*

Running Time: 89 minutes

Production Company: Impéria Films, Société Nouvelle de Cinéma (S.N.C.)

Director: Jean-Luc Godard

Assistant Director: Pierre Rissient

Screenplay: Jean-Luc Godard

Director of Photography: Raoul Coutard

Editor: Cécile Decugis

Music: Martial Solal, Mozart's Clarinet Concerto, K.622

Sound: Jacque Maumont

Cast: Jean Seberg (Patricia Franchini), Jean-Paul Belmondo (Michel Poiccard, alias Laszlo Kovacs).

*Les Carabiniers AKA: The Soldiers (1963)*

Running Time: 80 minutes

Production Company: Marceau Films, Cocinor Films, Rome-Paris Films, Laetitia (Rome)

Director: Jean-Luc Godard

Assistant Director: Charles Bitsch, Jean-Paul Savignac

Screenplay: Jean-Luc Godard

Director of Photography: Raoul Coutard

Editor: Agnès Gullemot

Music: Philippe Arthuys

Sound: Jacque Maumont, Hortion

Cast: Marino Mase (Ulysse), Albert Juross (Michel-ange), Genevieve Galéa (Vénus), Catherine Ribeiro (Cléopâtra).

*Le Mepris AKA: Contempt (1963)*

Running Time: 100 minutes (France), 103 minutes (USA), 84 minutes (Italy)

Production Company: Rome-Paris Films, Films Concordia, Compagnia Cinematografica  
Champion

Director: Jean-Luc Godard

Assistant Director: Charles Bitsch

Screenplay: Jean-Luc Godard

Director of Photography: Raoul Coutard

Editor: Agnès Guillemot

Music: Georges Delerue (Italian version, Piero Piccioni)

Sound: William Sivel

Cast: Brigitte Bardot (Camille Javal), Michel Piccoli (Paul Javal), Jack Palance (Jeremy  
Prokosch), Fritz Lang (Himself).

*Masculin-Féminin (1966)*

Running Time: 110 minutes (103 minutes in USA)

Production Company: Anouchka Films, Argos Films (Paris), Svensk Filmindustrie,  
Sandrews (Stockholm)

Director: Jean-Luc Godard

Assistant Directors: Bernard Toublanc-Michel, Jacques Barratier

Screenplay: Jean-Luc Godard

Director of Photography: Willy Kurant

Editor: Agnès Guillemot, Marguerite Renoir

Music: Francis Lai, J.J. Debout, Mozart's Clarinet Concerto, K. 622

Sound: René Levert

Cast: Jean-Pierre Léaud (Paul), Chantal Goya (Madeleine), Marlène Jobert (Elisabeth),  
Michel Debord (Robert), Catherine-Isabelle Duport (Catherine-Isabelle).

*Made in USA* (1966)

Running Time: 90 minutes

Production Company: Rome-Paris Films, Anouchka Films, S.E.P.I.C. (Paris)

Director: Jean-Luc Godard

Assistant Directors: Charles Bitsch, Claude Bakka, Jean-Pierre Léaud, Philippe Pouzenc

Screenplay: Jean-Luc Godard

Director of Photography: Raoul Coutard

Editor: Agnès Guillemot

Music: Robert Schumann, Symphony No. 3; Ludwig von Beethoven, Symphony No. 5, and Piano Trio, "As Tears Go By" by Mick Jagger and Keith Richards.

Sound: René Levert

Cast: Anna Karina (Paula Nelson), Laszlo Szabo (Richard Widmark), Yves Alfonso (David Goodis), Jean-Pierre Léaud (Donald Siegel).

*Deux ou Trois Choses Que Je Sais D'Elle* (1966)

Running Time: 95 minutes

Production Company: Anouchka Films, Argo films, Les Films du carosse, Parc Films (Paris)

Director: Jean-Luc Godard

Assistant Directors: Charles Bitsch, Isabel Pons, Robert Chevassu

Screenplay: Jean-Luc Godard

Director of Photography: Raoul Coutard

Editor: Françoise Collin, Chantal Delattre

Music: Beethoven Quartet No. 16

Sound: René Levert

Cast: Marina Vlady (Juliette Jeanson), Roger Monsoret (Robert Jeanson), Anna Dupery (Marianne), Jean Narboni (Roger, the friend), Raoul Lévy (John Bogus, the American), Jean-Luc Godard (Narrator, voice off).

*La Chinoise, Ou Plutôt À La Chinoise (1967)*

Running Time: 90 minutes

Production Company: Productions de la Guéville, Parc Films, Simar Films, Anouchka Films, Athos Films

Director: Jean-Luc Godard

Assistant Director: Charles Bitsch

Screenplay: Jean-Luc Godard

Director of Photography: Raoul Coutard

Editor: Agnès Guillemot

Music: Karl-Heinz Stockhausen; Schubert, Piano Sonata, Opus 120; Vivaldi

Sound: René Levert

Cast: Anne Wiazemsky (Véronique), Jean-Pierre Léaud (Gullaume), Michel Semeniako (Henri), Lex de Bruijn (Kirilov), Juliet Berto (Yvonne).

*Caméra-Oeil (sketch in Loin Du Viêt-nam) (1967)*

Running Time: 115 minutes (Caméra-Oeil is 15 minutes)

Production Company: Groupe S.L.O.N.

Director: Jean-Luc Godard

Assistant Director: unknown

Screenplay: Jean-Luc Godard

Director of Photography: Alain Levant

Editor: Jacques Meppiel

Music: Michel Fano, Michel Capdenat, Georges Aperghis

Sound: Antoine Bonfanti, Harold Mauri

Filmed: USA, Vietnam, Cuba, and France

*Weekend* (1967)

Running Time: 95 minutes

Production Company: Films Copernic, Comacico, Lira Films (France); Ascot-Cineraïd (Rome)

Director: Jean-Luc Godard

Assistant Director: Claude Milar

Screenplay: Jean-Luc Godard

Director of Photography: Raoul Coutard

Editor: Agnès Gullemot

Music: Antoine Duhamel; Mozart, Piano Sonata, K. 576. Song: "Allô, allô, tu m'entends?" by Guy Béart

Sound: René Levert

Cast: Mireille Darc (Corinne), Jean Yanne (Roland), Jean-Pierre Léaud (Saint-Just, and man in phone booth), Anne Wiazemsky (Woman in farmyard/F.L.S.O. member), Juliet Berto (Woman in car crash/F.L.S.O. member).

*Le Gai Savoir* (1968)

Running Time: 91/96 minutes

Production Company: Originally O.R.T.F. (French Radio-Television), later Anouchka Films, Gambit, Bavaria Ateliar (Munich), Kestrel Films, and Suddeutschen Rundfunk.

Director: Jean-Luc Godard

Assistant Director: Unknown

Screenplay: Jean-Luc Godard

Director of Photography: Jean Leclerc

Editor: Germaine Cohen

Music: Cuban Revolutionary songs

Sound: Unknown

Cast: Jean-Pierre Léaud (Emile Rousseau), Juliet Berto (Patricia Lamumba)



*Cinétracts* (multiple sketches) (1968)

Running Time: three-four minutes

Production Company: Individual director

Director: Jean-Luc Godard

Assistant Director: N/A

Script: Jean-Luc Godard

Director of Photography: Jean-Luc Godard

Editor: Edited in camera

Sound: N/A (Silent)

Cast: People in Paris throughout the May '68 events

*Un Film Comme Les Autres* AKA: *A Film Like Any Other* (1968)

Running Time: 100/120 Minutes

Production Company: self-produced by Jean-Luc Godard

Director: Jean-Luc Godard/ the Dziga-Vertov Group

Cast: Militant Students from Nanterre and workers from the Renault auto factory

*One Plus One* AKA: *Sympathy for the Devil* (1968)

Running Time: 99 minutes

Production Company: Cupid productions, Ltd.

Director: Jean-Luc Godard

Assistant Directors: Tim Van Rellim and John Stoneman

Screenplay: Jean-Luc Godard

Director of Photography: Anthony Richmond

Editors: Ken Rowles and Agnès Guillemot

Music: Mick Jagger and Keith Richards

Sound: Arthur Bradburn and Derek Ball

Cast: Rolling Stones, Anne Wiazemsky (Eve Democracy), Ian Quarrier (Fascist pornographic book seller), Frankie Dymon, Jr. (Himself), Bernard Boston (Himself), Sean Lynch (Narrator).

*One AM AKA: One American Movie, (1968) One PM (1971)*

Running Time: 90 Minutes

Production Company: Leacock-Pennebaker, Inc.

Director: Jean-Luc Godard, throughout the shooting. D.A. Pennebaker and Richard Leacock for the final film

Screenplay: Jean-Luc Godard/ D.A. Pennebaker

Director of Photography: Richard Leacock and D.A. Pennebaker

Editor: D.A. Pennebaker

Music: Jefferson Airplane

Cast: Rip Torn, Tom Hayden, LeRoi Jones, Jefferson Airplane, Eldridge Cleaver and Black Panthers, Anne Wiazemsky, Jean-Luc Godard, Richard Leacock, Tom Luddy, Paula Madder.

*British Sounds AKA: See You at Mao [1969]*

Running Time: 52 minutes

Production Company: Kestrel productions for London Weekend Television

Director: Jean-Luc Godard with Jean-Henri Roger in the name of the Dziga Vertov Group.

Screenplay: Jean-Luc Godard

Director of Photography: Charles Stewart

Editor: Elizabeth Kozmian

Sound: Fred Sharp

Cast: Production line of MG sports car, British Motor Co. Students from Oxford; Students from Essex.

*Vent d'Est* [1969]

Running Time: 100 minutes

Production Company: CCC (Berlin), Polifilm (Rome), Anouchka Films, Film Kunst (Berlin)

Director: Dziga-Vertov Group

Screenplay: Jean-Luc Godard, Daniel Cohn-Bendit, Jean-Pierre Gorin, Gianni Barcelloni, Sergio Bazzini

Director of Photography: Mario Vulpiani

Editing: Jean-Pierre Gorin and Enzo Micarelli

Sound: Antoino Ventura and Carlo Diotalevi

Cast: Gian Maria Volonte (Cavalryman), Anne Wiazemsky (Woman in petticoat), Glauber Rocha (Himself), Vanessa Redgrave (Woman with movie camera), Daniel Cohn-Bendit (Himself).

Grands soirs et petits matins: Mai 68 au Quartier Latin [1978]

Running Time: 98 minutes

Production Company: Films Paris New York

Director: William Klein

# Appendix

Figure 1.

Mireille Darc (Corinne) [on right] held at gunpoint by Juliet Berto (Revolutionary),  
from *Weekend* [1967].



Figure 2.

Jean-Luc Godard shooting the Ciné-Tracts in the Latin Quarter – May, 1968.





Figure 3.

Donal Henahan's report on the Premiere of *A Movie Like Any Other* [1968]  
*The New York Times*, December 30, 1968.

THE NEW YORK TIMES, MONDAY, DECEMBER 30, 1968

## BOOS GREET FILM BY GODARD HERE

English Soundtrack Added  
to French Irks Audience

By DONAL HENAHAN

"A Movie Like Any Other" was the title, but it was anything but that, in its first United States showing last night at Philharmonic Hall.

The film, directed by Jean-Luc Godard, portrays and comments on the French students' rioting last May in Paris. It was booed and hissed by the predominantly young audience, most of whom demanded their money back and were promised refunds by a Philharmonic Hall official. At several points, the film had to be interrupted in hopes of calming the dissent.

Of the approximately 1,000 members in the audience, no more than 100 stayed to see the second half of the film—which was actually the first reel, because, in line with Mr. Godard's wishes, a coin had been flipped to decide on the order of the two reels to be shown.

David McMillan, chairman of Leacock Pennebaker, faced the mutinous audience twice from the stage and defended his version of the film. Hundreds of patrons also swarmed around him and Lincoln Center employees in the lobby, demanding explanations and refunds.

During the first reel, Delmar D. Hendricks, house manager of Philharmonic Hall, also took to the stage and told the cat-calling film enthusiasts that "anyone who leaves at this time" could have his ticket stub initialed and get his \$3.50 ticket price back.

### Simultaneous Sound Tracks

Mr. McMillan told an interviewer afterward that "if Philharmonic Hall gives back any money, we'll probably sue." He said officials of the hall had seen the Godard film in its original form and had agreed it needed a translation. He said they had not viewed the final form, in which the translation—by a "United Nations translator" he would not name—was mixed with the French.

Mr. McMillan promised the audience that anyone holding a stub could see the film again free "in a few weeks or months" when it would be available with English subtitles. This premiere was the only scheduled performance.

Again in line with Mr. Godard's wishes, the second half of the 100-minute film was to be shown only if the audience voted to see it. However, after a desultory attempt to discover the wishes of the remaining 100-odd patrons, Mr. McMillan simply signaled for continuation.

The movie itself—oh, yes, that—is another of Mr. Godard's recent steps toward revolutionary consciousness as an artist. Much of it is taken up with full-color shots of knees and backs of several young persons as they sit in a field one month later discussing the Paris rioting. In black and white, and in startling contrast to the staged discussion, newsreel pictures of charging police, parades and rebel students and workers flash by. It was possibly a significant comment on the merits of action over discussion that during the black-and-white scenes most of the boos and screamers fell silent.

Except that the showing of "A Movie Like Any Other" gave one a rare opportunity to witness what might be called audience vérité as produced by Leacock Pennebaker, one of the pioneers of the cinéma vérité techniques.

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