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ANTI-AMERICANISM AND THE AUTEUR: CRITICAL DISCOURSE AND THE  
FRENCH FILM INDUSTRY FROM 1946 TO 1965

By  
Madison Elizabeth Gee

A thesis presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for completion  
Of the Bachelor of Arts degree in International Studies  
Croft Institute for International Studies  
Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College  
The University of Mississippi

University, MS  
April 2021

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## ABSTRACT

Cinema is not only a popular form of entertainment but an art through which socio-cultural, economic, and political activities intersect. France's cinematic history, in particular, is characterized by its government's protectionist policies and the enduring popularity of New Wave films. Yet, the end of World War II saw the expansion of American soft power and, consequently, widespread fear that Hollywood's market dominance would push out local producers. In this thesis, I aim to study the impact of Cold War anti-Americanism on the French film industry's development from 1946 to 1965. Through a critical discourse analysis of popular film magazines of the era, I identify the dominant anti-American themes within industry discussions and place their evolution within a broader historical context. When examining publications such as *Cahiers du cinema*, it becomes clear that the sense of a French cinematic "crisis" existed regardless of French filmmakers' success and innovation. Nonetheless, the State's choice to begin quality-based subsidies at the onset of the New Wave was not coincidental. I conclude that the government's cultural policy did not aim to assuage anti-Hollywood fears within the film industry but to exercise soft power over international audiences by solidifying the image of "French cinema."

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## **Introduction**

As an extension of both artists and audiences, movements in cinema can reflect a nation's attitudes. One need not look further than the early Cold War, during which U.S. Senator Joseph McCarthy's onslaught of anti-communist attacks created an environment fraught with paranoia. When the Hollywood Ten were denounced as subversive actors who threatened the United States' democratic institutions, the prosecution could produce no concrete examples of social or political damage inflicted by the American film industry. However, conservative Americans and anti-Stalin liberals alike turned against the filmmakers implicated by McCarthy's blacklist. Film critic Louis Berg explained this bipartisan condemnation as a product of the Cold War, in which "the question of who commands the public forum looms no less large than the possession of airbases and planes in Korea" (quoted in Krutnik et al., 226).

Film, intended to reap profit rather than act as a purely artistic pursuit, is a medium that cannot be divorced from the socio-economic conditions of the environment in which it is produced. As Breen argues, media industries "construct" the concept of nationhood in reproducing the cultural forms that a given group aligns itself with (quoted in Crane, 378). Nonetheless, it remains unclear whether or not the global distribution of media can be considered an imperialist activity. Though Tinseltown has unquestionably dominated global box offices since World War I, implying that American studios monopolize global means of production does not present an accurate picture of the state of world cinema.

While advancements in technology, transportation, and communication continue to reduce gaps between nations, the threat of countries with more political and economic might enforcing a homogenized global culture also increases. This sentiment was especially prevalent in the decades following World War II, when the United States emerged as a superpower with heavy influence on global affairs. As the postwar economic boom afforded consumers with disposable income and increased leisure time, forms of mass-produced culture such as film and television became increasingly lucrative for businesses and governments alike. The production and dissemination of mass entertainment during the 1950s and 1960s were "essential in generating the modes of thought and behavior appropriate to a highly organized and homogenized social order" (Durham and Kellner, xix). Thus, as both a financial powerhouse and an instrument of soft power, Hollywood allows American cultural and political values to permeate global industries and influence American audiences.

Due to the scope of the United States' influence on the global stage, the dissemination of its products is often seen as an omen of an impending Pax Americana. However, anthropologist Arjun Appadurai, a leading figure in globalization studies, argues that such observations fail to consider "that at least as rapidly as forces from various metropolises are brought into new societies, they tend to become indigenized in one or other way" (296). French *auteurs* such as Godard and Truffaut, swept up in the wake of enthusiasm for Hollywood films following censorship under Occupation, explicitly referenced American films while also carving out their own cinematic styles. Yet, what Appadurai would call the "indigenization" of Hollywood tropes within the French socio-

cultural context came to fruition even before the French New Wave's revolutionary movement was set into motion.

During the early 1950s, popular cinema directors borrowed from American genres such as the Western and the film noir both out of the necessity to create a marketable product and the desire to highlight American culture's negative aspects, such as exposing its 'violent tendencies' through reimagined gangster films (Gimello-Mesplomb, 2006). According to Gimello-Mesplomb (2006), the French government was initially indifferent towards the quality of films produced under the automatic aid system it instituted in 1948. Therefore, the state viewed cinema as a purely commercial product before pressure from film magazines and directors alike forced it to act. Quality-based aid was only established once French politicians observed the success of innovative short films abroad. However, the New Wave cannot be separated from popular films during the 1950s, because it was largely due to their financial success that funds were available for the *avances sur recette* after 1959.

Currently, growing engagement in transnational co-productions and adaptation of subject matter to attract foreign audiences implies that the American film industry is not quite (or, at least, no longer) the cultural demagogue that homogenization theories warn against. Nonetheless, the realities of Hollywood's present situation do not negate real, historical concerns over the possible spread of American hegemony. As I will explore in proceeding chapters, the aid mechanisms that French government laid out in an attempt to stimulate postwar production provided directors with funds proportional to their previous film's ticket sales. Filmmakers had little choice but to produce the 'safest' films possible in terms of audience satisfaction and financial viability in order to ensure access to adequate

budgets in the future. Further, due to the Blum-Byrnes Accords' quota provisions which afforded French films with half of the screen time of their American rivals, directors resorted to formulas that combined popular themes with simple editing practices to ensure speedy production (Gimello-Mesplomb, 143).

My study will be confined to an analysis of the French film industry's trials and successes during the two decades following the Second World War. In particular, French cinematic history is inextricable from both its government's protectionist policies and the stereotypical image of intellectually stimulating yet highly stylized films. The primary aim is as follows: From 1946 to 1965, how did aversion to the spread of American cultural hegemony lead to the creation of a French national cinema? I will also address the following sub-questions:

1. Why did the French government shift its cultural policy away from popular, stable films to prioritize experimental projects that were not commercially viable in France?

2. How did this transformation affect the place of French films within the domestic film market?

3. In which ways did private actors such as film critics and directors influence the development of this national cinema?

My first chapter will synthesize scholarly literature surrounding the concepts of national cinema and cultural legitimation to examine how art and identity become inextricably linked. Then, I will provide necessary context to the French and American film industries' socio-economic and political conditions before and during the Second World War. Since legislation often came as a direct result of the social movements I will

examine here, this chapter will also analyze the significant laws enacted by the French government to aid filmmakers and encourage a particular type of cinema. Finally, I will perform a critical discourse analysis of popular film magazines in France (namely the works of André Bazin and Georges Sadoul) to determine how and why two groups of critics divided by opposing ideologies ultimately converged to legitimize a new cinematic identity.

My examination of primary documents reveals that the sense of a cinematic crisis in relation to Hollywood permeated film critics' discourse regardless of the French film industry's domestic success. During the 1950s, Cold War tensions exacerbated disputes between pro- and anti-Hollywood critics. Yet even those who supported French cinema's Americanization on certain technical or aesthetic grounds expressed a sense of intellectual and artistic superiority vis-à-vis Hollywood. Thus, the differences between these parties can be understood as a standoff between those who pushed for a total rejection of American cinema's influence and those who proposed beating it at its own game by assimilating certain stylistic practices. Ultimately, these groups banded together not because one camp organically conceded to the other's arguments, but because the New Wave's global success satisfied both crowds' underlying goal: to reassert French cinematic identity.

## Chapter 1: Literature Review

Scholars have long studied the impact of creative industries on foreign policy due to their competitiveness within the global marketplace. According to Hill and Kawashima, very few studies have examined "the impact that [...] policy discourse has had upon specific cultural forms" (668). Since cinematic production must navigate cultural, political, and economic conditions, analyzing trends that led to the French government instituting a specific artistic tradition also situates this industry within a broader social consciousness.

In order to determine how critical discourse shaped and was shaped by the French film industry, this literature review will encompass the concepts of national cinemas, anti-Americanism, and artistic legitimation. First, I present the most prevalent scholarship related to the concept of 'national cinema' to demonstrate how film and national identity are inextricably linked. Next, I discuss how these national cinemas may respond to external threats (i.e., Hollywood) by reconstructing themselves as a form of cultural resistance. As my thesis focuses specifically on the role film critics played in shaping the national cinema, I then present theories of cultural legitimation to explain how critical discourse affects popular notions of what can be considered 'art.'

First, the concept of a 'national cinema' is somewhat ambiguous. Nonetheless, scholars tend to agree that defining a 'national cinema' purely in terms of the films produced within set geographical boundaries risks simplifying the complex dynamics at play here. Further, a film produced by a country's 'national cinema' may flourish among

international festival circuits or niche audiences yet struggle to achieve popular success in its domestic market. In his 1989 article “The Concept of National Cinema,” Andrew Higson argues that this occurs “partly because of [art cinema’s] modes of address, and partly because of the international hegemony of Hollywood at the level of distribution, exhibition and marketing” (41). Therefore, defining national cinema in terms of the films a country consumes is also problematic.

However, governments occasionally play an active role in financing, promoting, and preserving the nation’s cinematic heritage. Thus, these States institutionalize cinema, affording it with a truly ‘national’ quality. For example, the *Centre national du cinéma et de l’image animée* (CNC) has overseen “l’unité de conception et de mise en œuvre de la politique de l’État [français] dans les domaines du cinéma et des autres arts et industries de l’image animée” since its creation in 1946 (“Missions”). One of its most well-known programs, the *avance sur recette* subsidy instituted at the start of the New Wave, finances films with an ‘artistic quality’ that would otherwise fade into obscurity due to box office underperformance. Nonetheless, only 106 out of 1,116 films receiving an *avance* between 1960 and 1988 have repaid this loan (Hayward, 39). Considering the CNC-mandated Commission’s ability to choose which films receive an advance, Susan Hayward views this paradox as evidence of the State “actively seeking to promote projects that correspond to the French cinema’s cultural heritage as the Seventh Art” (ibid). In doing so, these curated images of French ‘cultural heritage’ can influence both domestic and foreign audiences through their traditional theatrical releases, film festival buzz, and use as pedagogical tools in higher education. Thus, my thesis will employ this notion of the ‘national cinema’ as a

State-sponsored institution. Yet, the reasons why a government may choose to codify a specific 'vision' of the national cinema into its laws must be clarified as well.

Hayward's monograph *French National Cinema* (2005) presents perhaps the most comprehensive review of French film's historical roots as an expression of national identity. According to Hayward, cinema gives voice to a group's "myths" and solidifies its concept of "nation-ness" (328). Mainstream cinema adapts the myths already accepted by the society at large, therefore taking on an "auto-reflexive" quality that "[reveals] the narcissistic trace of its heritage" (Hayward, 15). Arthouse or independent cinema, however, creates "an individuated reflection of, and even upon" its nation of origin (Ibid.). Thus, while mainstream film generalizes the nation's culture from within, *auteur* cinema distinguishes it from "without" (Hayward, 15). Given its capability as a tool of soft power, one can see why the State would eagerly become a stakeholder in 'artistic' film production.

Yet, the 'national myths' employed in either cinematic sphere must not be understood as "pure and simple reflections of history" (Hayward, 15). Instead, they evolve "as the state of the nation changes... according to its position in the world" (Hayward, 16). Accordingly, Howard Saul Becker reports in his book *Art Worlds* that a national cinema will highlight the "elements of [its past] which are most clearly artistic" and erase its "less desirable ancestors" as it reforges its identity (339).

Thus, artistic movements can be considered byproducts of their home country's political and economic conditions. In her article "Cultural Globalization and the Dominance of the American Film Industry: Cultural Policies, National Film Industries, and Transnational Film," Diana Crane remarks that as film production and distribution become increasingly globalized, fears that the "distinctiveness of national cultures" will disappear

also rise (365). Following World War II, for example, smaller national cinemas feared that Hollywood would force the ‘American way of life’ upon them and engender a cultural genocide. Thus, the intersection of film’s political, economic, and cultural aspects provokes different “power struggles” between domestic artists as well as “between art fields in different countries” (Janssen, Kuipers, and Verboord, 721; *Ibid.*, 735-736).

In the preface to their book *World Cinemas, Transnational Perspectives*, Durovicová and Newman contend that a ‘national cinema’ is therefore a “forthrightly political project” that aims to resist cultural homogenization (xi). Consequently, national cinemas have “almost invariably been mobilised as a strategy of cultural (and economic) resistance,” notably as “a means of asserting national autonomy in the face of (usually) Hollywood's international domination” (37). In other words, indigenous film industries redefine and reassert the characteristics which make them unique compared to mass-produced American cinema. Yet, a nation may also resist Hollywood in lieu of expressing deep-seated political or cultural grievances. In France, for example, Hollywood seamlessly fills the role of the ‘Anglo-Saxon’ invader, an abstract figure that Chabal notes has served “as a mirror for French decline” since the Industrial Revolution (24-25). France, once the center of global culture, wishes to relive its glory days. Hollywood, on the other hand, embodies the spirit of modernization that makes such a past obsolete.

When a State feels its cultural influence begin to wane, one way to reconstruct this identity is through discourse that “[invests the] nation with meaning” (Hayward, 328). In his 2011 article “National Cinema: An Anachronistic Delirium?” JungBong Choi maintains that national cinema and the conversations surrounding it are inextricably linked (184). Beyond its artistic commentary, film discourse intertwines with various social biases

and political goals, making national cinema a “cultural category, social consciousness, and cognitive framework” all at once (Ibid.). Thus, Choi argues that one should examine national cinema in terms of the ‘cultural labor of nationalizing cinema’ that various societal actors play a role in, such as institutions, directors, film critics, and audiences (186-187).

Mechanisms of legitimizing (or assigning value to) different artistic practices vary according to the time period and national context in which they operate. Shyon Baumann’s 2007 article “A general theory of artistic legitimation: How art worlds are like social movements” provides a useful manner of approaching art as it affects the ‘real world’. Baumann states that cultural productions are legitimized through the intellectual and institutional reconstruction of their value. This process allows them to evolve “from merely entertainment, commerce, fad, or cultural experimentation or randomness to culture that is legitimately artistic” (Baumann, 2007, 49). Yet, this artistic value “is not measured according to existing standards but conferred to a work after social consensus allows it” (Kersten, 718). Therefore, when examining cultural products that become institutionalized symbols of the nation, we must view the assignment of value as a social process. Kersten argues that critical discourse on “a cultural genre” plays an important role “in the legitimation of genres or products” (Ibid.; Baumann, 2001).

As cultural intermediaries that bridge the screen and the spectator, film critics possess the unique opportunity to bestow genres, directors, and entire cinemas with a socially meaningful value. Therefore, the ‘cultural labor’ they engage in helps to solidify the image that the indigenous cinema chooses to project. This legitimation process not “only defines hierarchical boundaries within a cultural field but also validates a particular cultural form” (Yaren and Hazir, 612).

To date, scholars have conducted a variety of notable studies which explore the links between film criticism and the construction of nationalized cinemas. In their 2008 study “Cultural Globalization and Arts Journalism,” Janssen, Kuipers, and Verboord conducted a systematic content analysis of French, Dutch, German, and American elite magazines to examine how each nation’s coverage of foreign artforms evolved from 1955 to 2005. Within these ‘elite’ publications, critics use their platform to “publicly confirm, modify, or reject” artistic trends (Janssen, Kuipers, and Verboord, 721). After measuring the ‘international orientation’ (“i.e., the origins of the cultural actors discussed in newspapers”) of each country’s arts journalism across five decades, Janssen, Kuipers, and Verboord discovered that “France’s waning influence in [arts journalism] balanced by such a dramatic rise of the United States that one could perhaps speak of ‘Americanization’,” or a cultural homogenization (735). To resist this Americanization, critics often invented cinematic hierarchies that distinguished between ‘popular’ cinema and ‘auteur’ cinema.

During the 1950s, for example, young film critics at *Cahiers du cinéma* such as François Truffaut and Jean-Luc Godard presented *auteur* theory as a solution to the French national cinema’s stagnation. The *politique des auteurs* offered a stark contrast to ‘collective’ production methods in Hollywood and mainstream French cinema, which brought together various screenwriters, cinematographers, and other technicians who possessed the same amount of influence as the director. As the directors that these *Cahiers* critics consecrated (most notably Alfred Hitchcock) were considered mere popular entertainers, their ideas were initially regarded as ludicrous. Yet, as I will discuss in coming chapters, the *politique des auteurs* was legitimized as the same critics put their theories into practice, becoming international sensations upon their directorial debuts. Thus, the French

New Wave “was a critical cinema born of and resulting in written criticism” (Durovicová and Newman, 82).

In the same vein, Allen and Lincoln explored effect of critics’ stamp of approval on a filmmaker’s success in their 2004 article “Critical Discourse and the Cultural Consecration of American Films.” Their study found that films which critics retroactively labeled as *auteur* cinema were more likely to gain cult followings or inspire a slew of retrospective essays in film magazines. Further, filmmakers already considered *auteurs* were more likely to receive professional recognition (i.e., awards and glowing film reviews) for their current projects. Therefore, those who control film discourse are “reputational entrepreneurs” and possess the power to facilitate “the valorization and retrospective consecration of cultural producers and products” (Allen and Lincoln, 879). Thus, whether contemporaneous or retroactive, affording legitimacy to a small number of auteurs has the power to permanently transform global film industries.

In short, a national cinema reflects the character of the nation-state, evolving as concurrent events shape the attitudes, fears, and tastes of its people. As such, cinematic traditions act as a source of pride by embodying the characteristics that the nation values at a specific moment in time. Where a State finds value in leveraging this ‘image’ of the nation at home or abroad, it imbues certain artistic or technical practices with an institutional value.

However, this link to national identity also makes that when a foreign ‘invader’ like Hollywood threatens the health of the national cinema, domestic agents rally to reassert their sense of identity. Following World War II, the French film industry experienced both a resource scarcity and an existential crisis at the hands of American cinema’s growing

influence. To meet this crisis, various cultural actors participated in this construction and reconstruction of cinematic identity, legitimizing new film practices in an attempt to save the indigenous cinema from American hegemony. Film critics, in particular, acted as cultural intermediaries which advocated for a new artistic cinema and brought the gravity of French cinema's situation to audiences' attention. This activity culminated in the New Wave film movement at the end of the 1950s, in which the French national cinema challenged Hollywood's industrial superficiality with artistic authenticity.

Yet, the same film critics engaged in fierce battles among one another prior to the New Wave's genesis, divided by their pro- or anti-American stances and generational conflicts. Those young critics who would become New Wave directors were particularly controversial due to their obsession with 'commercial' anglophone directors like Alfred Hitchcock and Howard Hawks. Nonetheless, opposing ideological 'camps' banded together to support these *auteurs* by 1959, often contradicting their previous arguments. As I will demonstrate in later chapters, this convergence occurred because the New Wave allowed French cinema to counter Hollywood's power, therefore acting as a source of fierce national pride.

## **Chapter 2: French Cinema during the Interwar Period and Nazi Occupation**

To understand the circumstances that led the French government to accept the United States' asymmetrical treaties, we must first familiarize ourselves with the state of Franco-American cultural diplomacy before the end of World War II. The United States' film policy from 1920 to 1960 involved intense collaboration between State Department officials and the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America (MPPDA). Ulf-Møller (1998) described this collective's approach as "a zero-sum strategy" in which "whatever market share the Europeans gained would be lost to the American film industry" (168). Though the American government quickly regulated commercial activity within the film industry, antiquated laws restricted France's cinemas until the 1930s. French fiscal policy never phased out 'amusement taxes' levied during World War I, which required theaters to obtain a license for screenings. Permanent film house businesses were consequently categorized as temporary forms of entertainment and subject to censorship by local authorities.

Thus, the 3500-4000 French cinemas that operated during the Interwar Period "remained underdeveloped" compared to those in other nations (Ulf-Møller, 170). Provincial exhibitors, who owned approximately two-thirds of these theaters, could only afford low-priced films' royalties. American enterprises capitalized on this lack of funds through block-booking practices, in which small movie houses could screen three to five-year-old Hollywood blockbusters at a low price in exchange for theaters also agreeing to

book large quantities of “mediocre, low-budget movies” (Ulf-Møller, 171). Therefore, American film hegemony “depended less on the quality [of Hollywood’s offerings] than on [their comparatively] low rental prices” (Ulf-Møller, 170). Parisian cinemas were more likely to exhibit locally produced films, but their higher duties (30% on ticket sales versus 15% for their provincial counterparts) constituted 38% of all funds collected by amusement taxes. Consequently, these restrictive measures impeded the French film industry from making “sufficient profits” in the domestic market (Ulf-Møller, 171). French exhibitors and producers were thus pitted against each other by their nation’s laws, even if indirectly.

These amusement taxes were not eliminated until 1928 when film laws were “assimilated... to those of the theater” and France implemented its first film quotas (Ulf-Møller, 175). Nevertheless, the United States refused to purchase a reciprocal number of films demanded by the Commission, feeling that such an agreement would devalue their offerings too much. On May 4 of the same year, the MPPDA’s success with the Herriot-Hays Agreement “ended attempts to protect the French film industry” by allowing studios to export seven American films for every one French film (Ulf-Møller, 176). When sound was introduced into cinema in 1929, the French expected communication barriers to provide filmmakers with additional protection; this hope was thwarted when “hundreds of American films were dubbed into French” (Ulf-Møller, 177).

France continued to lighten its quota requirements to appease the United States throughout the 1930s. In 1936, the Marchandeaup accord established the “foreign dubbed film quota at 188 per year,” requiring 160 of these films to be American (Grantham and Grantham, 57). Though Hollywood experienced a production lull in the wake of the Great Depression, MPPDA members quickly filled each of these slots, giving large Hollywood

studios “access for virtually all of its significant output” (Ibid.). Thus, the MPPDA, The Department of State, and French cinema owners presented a “united front,” winning the “trade war” on film quotas (Ulff-Møller 178).

Despite filmmakers pushing the state to provide their industry with greater protections, the French government did not impose the “principle of state intervention” to create a governing body for its national cinema until the beginning of German occupation in 1940 (Jäckel, 22). Though nationwide production hit an all-time low, with just 220 projects between August 1940 and Liberation in May 1944, the French film industry experienced what Bill Grantham and George Grantham (2000) describe as a “renaissance” (59). Due to Nazi Germany’s censorship and isolationist policies, French films such as Marcel Carné’s *Les Enfants du Paradis* and Robert Bresson’s *Les Dames du Bois de Boulogne* did not suffer at American competitors’ hands (Grantham and Grantham, 59).

Audiences, wishing to escape the horrors of the outside world, used these films to distance themselves from the war. Under the Vichy government, "Ce que les gouvernements successifs des années trente n'avaient pas réussi en huit ans est ainsi fait en moins d'une année, mais imposé à la profession par un régime autoritaire et raciste" (Darré, quoted in Coulangéon, 584).

At the dawn of Liberation, “the fifteen years of the 1930s” caught up with those who had lived under Nazi control (Gimello-Mesplomb, 2006, 141). The desire to consume new forms of entertainment, coupled with rising income, abruptly cut off France’s cinematic renaissance. As audiences sought out the Hollywood productions that they had missed and France struggled to pay its war debts, the United States once again possessed a powerful negotiation tool.

However, the United States and France both stood to gain from agreeing on a new iteration of the 1926 accords. Though the final settlement still disproportionately favored the American industry, France needed the economic boost that the swift reintroduction of Hollywood into its film market would provide. The United States, on the other hand, used this opportunity to bolster the reputation of acting Prime Minister Léon Blum ahead of France's 1946 elections, "exercised by the possibility of a Communist victory" (Grantham and Grantham, 60). The resulting Blum-Byrnes Accords, named after the Prime Minister and U.S. Secretary of State James Byrnes, replaced the old numerical requirements with screen time quotas. Instead of attempting to negotiate a reciprocal obligation to export a predetermined number of films, movie theaters in France were required to "show French films four weeks per quarter for a period of two years" (Ibid). In exchange for compliance with this provision, Hollywood companies could export as many films as they wished to France.

Yet, French film industry officials did not immediately denounce the Blum-Byrnes Accords. Rather, tensions escalated starting in 1947, culminating in the creation of the first 'automatic aid' subsidies in 1948. This delayed outrage most likely "owed probably more to political changes" at the start of the Cold War (such as Communist ministers' defeat at the 1946 elections, French intellectuals' anti-American discourse, and political polarization), "than to serious concerns about the domestic film industry" (Jäckel, 232). As the film sector became more vocal, the general public began to take notice of their grievances, eventually adopting them as their own. Therefore, while the Blum-Byrnes agreement played a part in creating French cinema's postwar crisis, it cannot be considered

its sole cause. Instead, the French film industry suffered because it “ne s'est pas lancée avec assez d'énergie dans la nécessaire modernisation,” (Portes, 323).

Hence, this agreement retroactively entered the collective consciousness as "the moment when a newly assertive French film sector was crushed by Hollywood, backed by U.S. political muscle" (Grantham and Grantham, 60). To compete with American films' popularity among post-Occupation audiences, preserving French cinema's artistic integrity thus fell behind in importance to economic gain. Under Blum-Byrnes Accords' provisions, theaters could only project French films for a maximum of four weeks per quarter, while American films could remain on screen for eight weeks. Thus, gallic studios pushed quantity over quality to stay afloat. This need to produce the maximum number of films possible marked the advent of popular French cinema as producers began to prioritize “thematic and aesthetic formulas aiming at a fast and viable placement of their products... and produce the desired economic results during [the] crucial first week of exhibition” (Gimello-Mesplomb, 2006, 143-144).

Government subsidies were created in 1948 to work in tandem with the accords by providing filmmakers with stipends based on their last project's success. Nonetheless, tying aid to box-office revenue in this way presented filmmakers with few options but to emulate the most popular, commercially viable films to ensure access to a generous budget in the future (Gimello-Mesplomb, 2006, 144). Thus, pursuits that aimed to shield the French film industry from destruction under the weight of the United States' dominance paradoxically forced directors to emulate Hollywood to stay in business. In a departure from the rifts that amusement taxes created between business owners and creatives, France's film policy

would henceforth be “remarkably consistent in ensuring that both its industrial and cultural goals are realised” (Jäckel 22).

### **Chapter 3: Cold War and Cinematic Crisis—A Critical Discourse Analysis of French Film Magazines**

In this chapter, I will employ a critical discourse analysis of influential film critics to determine how anti-Hollywood rhetoric contributed to the evolution of French cultural policy from the late 1940s to the early 1960s. First, I will present an overview of how various scholars conceptualize critical discourse analysis, its methods, and how applying it to film criticism provides a useful measure of sociocultural processes. Then, I will present the results of my study according to major themes. The first section compares works by Georges Sadoul and Andre Bazin to identify patterns of anti-American discourse immediately following World War II. Then, I examine the younger generation of film critics which rose to prominence at *Cahiers du cinéma* during the mid-1950s and how their film discourse diverged from that of their elders. Since the years 1958-1959 marked the death of Bazin, the passage of the *avance sur recette* subsidies, and the transition of this young *Cahiers du cinema* group from critics to directors, they can be considered a turning point in the French film industry. Thus, my analysis of the succeeding years will focus on the reception of the *avance* system, how feelings towards it evolved, and what both official and unofficial primary sources reveal about this policy's implicit goal.

#### *Methods*

Schiffirin et al. (2003) recognize "three main categories" of discourse: (1) anything beyond the sentence level (i.e., stringing together two sentences), (2) language in use and

the context in which it operates (i.e., a lawyer's use of legal jargon during a court proceeding), and (3) a broader range social practices that may include nonlinguistic expressions of language as well as nonspecific messages (i.e., hand gestures and their various ascribed meanings across cultures) (1). In the same vein, Fairclough (1995) outlines a three-pronged approach called critical discourse analysis (CDA), which considers layers of text, discourse practice, and socio-lingual context. According to Hu, who adopted Fairclough's approach to measure sustainable development practices in the tourism industry through the magazine *Gotland 2016*, CDA's application not only involves a study of the linguistic text, "but also absorbs the idea of social practices so as to critically examine sustainable ideas hidden behind the magazine in a practical manner" (16). I will adopt this three-pronged approach in my own study of French film criticism.

In this chapter, I use Sadoul and Bazin as case studies of the respective political "camps" of French film criticism that shaped Cold War era discourse, notably over the course of the 1950s. Nonetheless, neither critic can be evoked without mentioning their impact on the field of criticism itself. Though I originally planned to focus solely on these men's reviews, factors such as Bazin's death in 1958 and the waning quantity of reviews published by Sadoul from that point on do not allow for a truly representative sample to be obtained. Therefore, I use their reviews to lay the groundwork for general themes of the era's film discourse. These themes are solidified through an examination of industry surveys and theoretical essays by other influential critics, namely François Truffaut.

Using the online French newspaper repository RetroNews, I obtained 92 pieces of media published between 1948 and 1965. Of these, excerpts are pulled from four industry-specific surveys published by *Cahiers du cinéma* which reflect the industry's concerns at

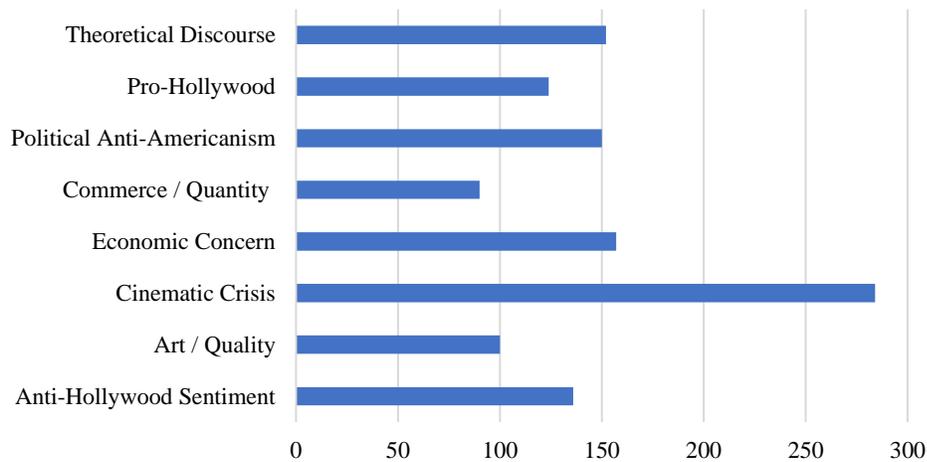
the time: “Enquête sur Hollywood” (in « Situation du cinéma américain,” *Cahiers du cinéma* no. 54, 1954), “Soixante metteurs en scène français” (“Situation du cinéma français,” *Cahiers du cinéma* no. 71, 1957), “Enquête sur la critique” (“La critique,” *Cahiers du cinéma* no. 126, 1961) and “Sept questions aux cinéastes” (“Crise du cinéma français,” *Cahiers du cinéma* no. 161-162, 1965). Further, debates published within two of these editions, “6 Personnages En Quête D’auteurs: Débat Sur Le Cinéma Français” (1957) and “Débat Entre Morvan Lebesque, Pierre Marcabru, Jacques Rivette, Éric Rohmer, Georges Sadoul” (1961), allow insight into Bazin and Sadoul’s positions relative to the issue at hand, respectively. Film reviews or theoretical essays by Bazin, Sadoul, and other notable critics (randomly selected by author and year) and sources which provide topical quotes by each author constitute the remaining excerpts. Primary documents which fall outside of these categories provide vital historical context and fact-check biases; nonetheless, they were not coded alongside the focused content.

### *Theme Co-Occurrences*

As Armbrorst states, it is vital to “identify meaningful clusters of information often referred to as themes, concepts, codes, or categories” (1). Breaking down texts into categories allows one to “address a wide range of research questions with a large repertoire of (qualitative and quantitative) analytical approaches,” such as thematic proximity, or the relation between units (Armbrorst, 2). Thus, I adopted a deductive coding scheme while examining my documents which allowed me to explore thematic patterns that may not have been apparent.

The patterns that I discovered are as follows: Anti-Hollywood Rhetoric, Art/Quality versus Commerce/Quantity,<sup>1</sup> the sense of a French ‘Cinematic Crisis’, Economic Concern, Political Anti-Americanism, Pro-Hollywood Sentiment, and Theoretical Discourse (the “politique des auteurs,” clashes between generations of film critics, legitimizing certain practices or directors, and so on). This yielded 663 total excerpts with 1219 code applications across the media.

*Figure 1: Frequencies of Theme Applications*



A preliminary exploration of each code’s frequency reveals that the idea of a French cinema in “crisis” is by far the most common theme, with 284 applications (followed by Economic Concern with 157 applications, and Political Anti-Americanism with 150).

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<sup>1</sup> While coding, Art/Quality and Commerce/Quantity were divided into two separate categories to determine whether or not one side of this debate was heavily associated with a different field (i.e., Anti-Hollywood sentiments associated with its commercial character, or Pro-Hollywood statements aligned with the artistic merits of certain auteurs). For this purpose, they remain separate in the co-occurrence table provided below, but should be considered as two sides of the same coin.

Thus, I will center my discussion around this crisis to determine how the remaining themes interact with and affect its manifestation.

As shown in the matrix on page 31, the co-occurrences between each theme can offer insight into how authors explained this crisis. Here, we see the sense of urgency most commonly overlaps with Economic Concerns, accounting for 88 co-occurrences across the media. Subsequently, the authors linked the decline of the French film industry to political activity (Political Anti-Americanism) and Hollywood's 'imperialism' (Anti-Hollywood Rhetoric), with 80 and 72 concurrences, respectively.<sup>2</sup>

Nonetheless, more context must be considered when examining this data; for example, the Commerce/Quantity descriptor coincides with 'Crisis' 53 times, yet the former code was only applied 90 times across the media. Similarly, certain themes like Crisis and Economics will overlap frequently solely because they received a higher volume of code applications. When considering the frequency of co-occurrences in relation to each code's individual applications,<sup>3</sup> the most prevalent thematic pairs are Political Anti-Americanism and Economic Concern, Cinematic Crisis and Economic Concern, Cinematic Crisis and Commerce/Quantity, and Cinematic Crisis and Art/Quality, respectively. Interestingly, though, the Anti-Hollywood Rhetoric and Art/Quality pairing occurs less often than one would expect given each individual code's frequency. This is notable considering that critics often cited the artistic inferiority of American cinema as the reason for their grievances, as I will demonstrate later in this chapter. Similarly, neither Art/Quality nor Commerce/Quantity co-occur with Theoretical Discourse as often as expected, though major conversations in film discourse centered around such topics. Thus,

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<sup>2</sup> For a table that provides the frequency of each thematic pairing, see Appendix A.

<sup>3</sup> See page 32.

though both were considered to be contributing factors in the Crisis, neither were the main focus the proposed solutions to this dilemma. These divergences lend credence to the idea that the sense of a French cinematic crisis was not primarily based upon the film industry's artistic concerns. Though no single theme is inextricable from the others, observing the points where themes converged will allow me to unearth the cause of the *Crise du cinéma français*. By studying the most relevant excerpts using Fairclough's CDA method, I will examine how the most prevalent themes relate to each other and describe their place within broader historical movements.

*Figure 2: Code Co-Occurrence Matrix*

	Anti-Hollywood Rhetoric	Art/Quality	Cinematic Crisis	Economic Concern	Commerce/Quantity	Political Anti-Americanism	Pro-Hollywood Sentiment	Theoretical Discourse
<i>Anti-Hollywood Rhetoric</i>		23	72	40	32	49	24	30
<i>Art / Quality</i>	23		53	30	24	23	27	32
<i>Cinematic Crisis</i>	72	53		88	56	80	48	70
<i>Economic Concern</i>	40	30	88		39	61	28	42
<i>Commerce / Quantity</i>	32	24	56	39		24	13	18
<i>Political Anti-Americanism</i>	49	23	80	61	24		31	39
<i>Pro-Hollywood Sentiment</i>	24	27	48	28	13	31		34
<i>Theoretical Discourse</i>	30	32	70	42	18	39	34	

**Figure 3: Thematic Proximities**

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	
7.4771	3.7495		8.7009	8.0043	5.1624	1.0038	4.1420	C
-4.5032	-3.9694	2.2911		5.8960	9.3825	-4.4146	-3.4241	D
6.6611	-9.3174	-1.5407	8.9651	-7.4940		0.1618	-4.2150	F
-7.8751	3.0899	-2.9438	-4.5488	-10.173	-4.9230	6.4131		H
	-5.3939	0.3588	-5.7175	4.3295	5.8546	-3.0942	-7.9684	A
-6.2179		-	-	2.26609	-	5.71870	2.1775	B
3.4584	2.2142	1.0317	3.9222		-9.1043	-7.7887	-	E
-4.0005	5.6272	-5.9263	-6.4128	-7.8283	-1.4767		5.4201	G

*Calculations courtesy of Dr. William Schenck.*

- a. This matrix displays the thematic proximity of each pairing relative to each code’s individual applications. Red cells indicate that the relevant themes are paired more often than expected, while blue indicates that they are paired less often than expected.

b. Legend

- A: Anti-Hollywood Rhetoric
- B: Art/Quality
- C: Cinematic Crisis
- D: Economic Concern
- E: Commerce/Quantity
- F: Political Anti-Americanism
- G: Pro-Hollywood Sentiment
- H: Theoretical Discourse

*Critical Foundations: Sadoul and Bazin*

Immediately following Liberation, French film critics enjoyed a brief period of unity. Eager to forget the horrors of war, cinephiles found kindred spirits in one another regardless of any political and artistic disagreements. Though one can generally identify each magazine's stance on topical debates from the 1950s on (*Cahiers du cinéma* as pro-Hollywood and fascinated with technical elements like *mise-en-scène*, *L'Humanité* and *Les Lettres françaises* as pro-Communist and concerned with the ideological messages that directors wished to convey, etc.), these lines were blurred during the mid- to late-1940s. *L'Écran français* and *Les Lettres françaises*, both established as clandestine Resistance magazines under Occupation, published Communists, socialists, Catholics, and Gaullists alongside one another. This diversity of thought allowed "[a] short-lived political and intellectual openness" to flourish (Marie, 2013, 102).

Yet, this sense of community eroded by the turn of the decade, dampened by French studios' resource scarcity, dissatisfaction with the Blum-Byrnes accords' quota provisions, growing resentment towards Hollywood's treatment of communist filmmakers, and fierce artistic debates (Marie, 103). No figures present a better case study of the rise and fall of this harmony than Georges Sadoul and André Bazin, two of the defining voices in France's postwar film industry. Sadoul, a historian and film columnist with ties to the Parti Communiste Français (PCF), and Bazin, a Catholic film critic who sympathized with certain Hollywood directors, maintained a lifelong mutual respect despite their public disputes. Beyond professional interactions, both men frequented in Parisian film clubs and actively engaged in social initiatives like *Travail et Culture*, *Peuple et Culture*, a left-wing

program that aimed to “[make] the world of culture both more accessible to and more aware of the working class” (Marie, 103).

During the mid-1940s, similarities between Sadoul and Bazin become apparent through their mutual disappointment in the filmmakers who had yet to return home after fleeing from Nazi Occupation. This group included icons of the 1930s impressionist cinema movement such as Jean Renoir, Julien Duvivier, and René Clair, who had established prolific careers in Hollywood during the war. Despite their status as some of film’s earliest auteurs, critics expressed sentiments of abandonment or betrayal at their slow homecomings. One *Cinévoque* article lists those who fell into this group:

René Clair, Jacques Feyder, Julien Duvivier, Marcel Carné, Jean Renoir, Jacques Becker, Robert Brenon [sic] sont considérés comme les meilleurs metteurs en scène français... Mais, seul de cette pléiade, Marcel Carné travaille en France. Et encore est-ce pour le compte d'une société presque américaine (*Cinévoque* no. 7, June 11, 1946, 8).

Here, in an article published before the Blum-Byrnes Accords took effect, we see early examples of the anti-Americanism that would increasingly seep into discussions on those who found work in Hollywood. Carné, the only filmmaker still loyal to French cinema, effectively valorized the American film industry over his own by working with “une société presque américaine... certes à l’époque de l’alliance avec la RKO” (Le Forestier, paragraph 9). Yet, this accusation holds little merit. While an American division of Pathé merged with the Old Hollywood production giant RKO in 1928, it did not produce films abroad (“RKO Radio Pictures, Inc.”).

Regardless of the aforementioned directors’ film’s success among postwar audiences, this sense of abandonment weighs down concurrent critiques. Following their Parisian releases in 1944, Duvivier’s *Tales of Manhattan* (1942) and Clair’s *I Married a*

*Witch* (1942) became two of the best-performing films of the post-Liberation box office. Nonetheless, as Le Forestier reports, their commercial successes were met by lukewarm critical responses. Concerning the former, Bazin wrote in *Le Parisien libéré* that “Duvivier nous apparaît ici standardisé, impersonnel...” (October 15, 1954). Upon the director’s return to France, Sadoul’s review of *Untel père et fils*, tepid with regard to the film itself, concludes with a call to action: “Duvivier est de retour en France. Nous fondons sur ce retour des espoirs comparables à ceux que nous exprimerons lorsque Clair ou Renoir s’installeront en France.” Sadoul’s call here is illogical; while Renoir remained in Hollywood, René Clair had already made his way back to France (Le Forestier, paragraph 12).

The frequent grouping of these three directors reveals an interesting pattern. As Le Forestier notes, the manner in which critics hyper-focused on Duvivier, Renoir, and Clair “résume assez bien la position de la critique française face aux cinéastes exilés” (paragraph 6). Many lamented the fact that their artistic abilities had ‘declined’ while living in Hollywood. Concerning Renoir, Bazin declared:

La réalisation technique est au-dessous du médiocre et paraît n’avoir pu utiliser que de très faibles moyens. Rien ne distingue ce film du plus grand metteur en scène français d’une bande de troisième ordre : et la lourdeur même du découpage ajoute à l’évidente pauvreté de cet ouvrage (“*Vivre libre*, La Résistance française à l’usage des Chinois,” *L’Écran français* no. 55, July 17, 1946).

The above article, published just two weeks after the treaty’s provisions took effect, displays a bitterness in Bazin’s critiques that scholars rarely discuss. The “pauvreté” of Renoir’s new films produced within the Hollywood system felt like a betrayal. According to Le Forestier, the aftereffects of the Blum-Byrnes Accords catalyzed a social movement within cinema that sought to find an identity:

En effet, plus qu'un prétexte pour un combat politique, les accords Blum-Byrnes nous apparaissent comme le catalyseur d'une mobilisation, destinée non pas tant à se battre qu'à se retrouver et à se définir. Dans l'immédiat après-guerre, le cinéma français avait sans doute besoin de se trouver un ennemi pour mieux comprendre ce qu'il voulait être.

Thus, French national cinema aimed to rediscover and reaffirm its identity through its struggle against Hollywood. Presenting American cinema as the ultimate menace to its French counterpart allowed filmmakers and critics from various political backgrounds to unite under a single banner.

Yet, neither French film critics nor French moviegoers immediately condemned the Blum-Byrnes Accords as gallic cinema's public enemy number one. Further, despite the saturation of American films and the financial gains they accrued, audiences in Paris and *province* alike favored local films over foreign imports. In a 1947 article for *Les Lettres françaises*, Sadoul relayed the findings of a survey on Parisians' tastes that confirms this idea:

Interrogés, enfin, sur leurs goûts touchant la nationalité des films, 61,3 % des Parisiens ont répondu qu'ils préféraient les films français, et 8,7 % seulement qu'ils aimaient mieux les films étrangers... Ces chiffres ont d'autant plus d'intérêt qu'ils sont publiés par *Le Film Français* ; cet hebdomadaire corporatif qui défend systématiquement les intérêts des monopoles hollywoodiens en France ne conteste pas, sur ce point, les résultats de l'enquête... Si l'enquête avait porté sur tous [sic] le pays, la proportion des partisans du film français aurait été sans doute supérieure, et celles des partisans du film étranger, moindre encore ("Les Parisiens préfèrent les films français").

Notably, Sadoul evokes *Le Film Français*'s pro-American tendencies to demonstrate the validity of the survey's findings. Given that even this 'corporatist' defender Hollywood admitted that moviegoers preferred domestic offerings, he saw little reason to worry over American cinema's influence on French audiences. Furthermore, French films attracted a much higher number of spectators in proportion to the length of

their theatrical runs than American films, with an average of 28% of screen time per quarter and 41% of spectators compared to 56% of films projected with only 50% of spectators, respectively (Portes, note 45).

That is not to say that no economic crisis existed at the time. Indeed, this convergence on monetary grounds is supported by the co-occurrence of the sense of cinematic and economic crises within my study, coming in at 88 crossovers throughout the media. The immediate aftermath of World War II left the French film industry with a severe shortage of technical resources on top of a high national debt. Disparities within trade agreements such as the Blum-Byrnes Accords established high import quotas, while France did not possess the means to produce a reciprocal number of films for export. Nonetheless, the subjects of this study rarely speak about these dilemmas within their industry discourse; when they do, this is usually in abstract terms. Rather, the fact that economics enters so frequently into industry discourse during this era may actually relate to fears that Hollywood's economic might would provoke a cultural genocide in lieu of any reason why financial protection may have been necessary.

Attitudes towards collaboration with other national cinemas seem to confirm this concept. As Royer (2010) notes, France “always considered European co-productions as a useful tool to fight Hollywood hegemony” (144). In 1949, it signed a film co-production treaty with Italy. This partnership proved fruitful, producing 230 films by 1957 (Ibid.). This openness to co-productions, which in a sense ‘diluted’ French cinema with foreign influences, acted as “an economic and financial response to Hollywood domination... [but also as] a cultural and social response to the imposition of a certain [American] way of life and of thinking” (Lacombe, quoted in Jäckel, 2003, 239).

Early convergences in Bazin and Sadoul's film criticism regarding exiled filmmakers reflect this fear in similar ways. Given the relative unity among film magazines following the war, critics united behind their dissatisfaction with Renoir, Duvivier, and Clair, which concerned not only the profits these directors reaped for Hollywood studios, but also the idea that they abandoned French cinema at the moment of an intense existential crisis. Nonetheless, the camaraderie between these and other critics could not escape to the social and political divides engendered by the Cold War.

In the article "The Oak That Wished It Were a Reed," Laurent Marie states that as Cold War tensions brewed, Bazin challenged three aspects of Sadoul's film critiques: "his emphasis on the primacy of subject-matter and accompanying rejection of formalism," "his unflinching defence of Stalin's Soviet cinema," and, finally, "his near-total rejection of American cinema" (103). Sadoul, on the other hand, took issue with Bazin's openly anti-Communist discourse and 'formalist' approach to measuring a film's artistic value. Nonetheless, Sadoul's stances would shift by the onset of the New Wave in the late 1950s, coming to agree with Bazin on all three points. However, the transformation within Sadoul's articles takes place rapidly, with the critic changing his tune seemingly overnight. Moreover, other Communist writers follow suit, demonstrating that this is not an isolated phenomenon. Thus, as the feud between Bazin and Sadoul mirrors widespread disputes of the era, mapping out their points of contention will allow a more in depth understanding of developments which will emerge as a younger generation of critics-turned-filmmakers comes to power.

First, Bazinian 'formalism' clashed with Sadoul and the PCF's emphasis on subject matter. Though not the most virulent disagreement discussed in this chapter, the 'form-

versus-content' debate marked a major difference between pro- and anti-Hollywood film critics until the late 1950s. As the two camps began to distinguish themselves from one another, those who published professed "favorable opinion[s] of American films" justified their position based on the "formal qualities" of the work, such as its *mise-en-scène* (Marie, 105). Communist critics like Sadoul who reviewed the same films "condemned [them] as vehicles of American ideology," taking issue with their subject matter (Ibid.). According to Marie, Sadoul singlehandedly launched this debate by publishing a conversation between him and Communist director Louis Daquin in February 1949, in which the former attacked the 'film analysis' practiced by Bazin and his followers (105).

During the months that followed Sadoul's article, divisions between Bazin on one hand and Sadoul and Daquin on the other would become more apparent. Daquin accused formalists of using "langage technico-esthétique-philosophique" to distract from the "fictional and dubious values" of the American films that they defended (Daquin, *L'Écran français* no. 193; Ibid, quoted in Marie, 106). He elaborates by stating that the Bazinian 'film analyses' of aesthetics and form helped "a capitalist society intent on destroying every move towards the advent of a free and blissful humanity" grow its influence (Ibid.). Sadoul denounced formalism in a similar manner: filmmakers "[contenting] themselves with purely formal experiment" and embracing capitalist Hollywood's "cosmopolitan subjects without any social dimension" would cause France to lose the battle for its own cinema ("Mettre l'accent sur le sujet," *La Nouvelle Critique* 5, quoted in Marie, 106).

In response, Bazin argued that French cinema had 'exhausted' the literary classics its most popular films adapted, thus necessitating that one look towards techniques like *mise-en-scène* and depth of field for artistic innovation:

Even insofar as cinema has, for the most part, exhausted its characteristic themes, now it has to conquer both sides of the road that it has cleared between the general fields of novelistic and dramatic literature. It is not irrelevant that Jean Renoir's characters learned to leave the shot in a certain manner, and that Orson Welles's camera replaced analytical montage with virtual cutting in a single shot thanks to its depth of field (*L'Écran français* no. 197, quoted in de Baecque, 12).

The form-versus-content debate endured well into the 1950s, only slowing once Bazinians and Sadoul's followers found common ground upon the New Wave's arrival. While a surface-level examination may suggest that these critics fought over filmmaking practices alone, the intensity and nature of their discourse reveal the political undercurrent of this 'battle.' Magazines with ties to specific sociopolitical movements (whether these connections be explicit, i.e., the PCF's financial support of *Les Lettres françaises*, or implicit, i.e., *Cahiers du cinéma* appearing pro-Hollywood and conservative despite its lack of party affiliations) will naturally publish articles which align with publication's 'spirit.' Yet, Sadoul, Daquin, and other Communist critics' focus on 'saving' French cinema from Hollywood's capitalist agendas, the clearly defined stances of each magazine, and the longevity of this debate demonstrate that it concerned far more than critics independently expressing their opinions on film theory. Instead, choosing a side in the form-versus-content was a political statement, in which each 'side' served as a proxy for a far more vicious debate between advocates for Soviet cinema and Hollywood's admirers.

More explicitly political disputes occurred in greater number as time went on, gradually souring the relationships between film critics of different ideological camps. Scholars generally pin the decline of Sadoul and Bazin's friendship on the latter's article "Le cinéma soviétique et le mythe de Staline," published in *Esprit's* August 1950 issue. This piece criticizes Stalin's use of cinema to bolster his cult of personality and cement his place as a 'myth,' or a living legend. Bazin pulls no punches in openly condemning the

Soviet leader, even likening his appearance to "Tarzan des studios hollywoodiens" ("Le cinéma soviétique et le mythe de Staline").

In the essay "André Bazin in Combat," Antoine de Baecque describes Bazin's article on the Stalin myth as "deliberately meant to inflict damage, just for the sake of combat" (12). Eager to prove his opinions correct by any means necessary, he set out to do so even where this would damage his personal or professional relationships. Bearing in mind this goal, Bazin's article was an immense success. Beyond leaving a permanent stain on Sadoul and Bazin's friendship, "Le cinéma soviétique et le mythe de Staline" provoked a widespread "Stalin crisis in French criticism" which compelled each and every critic "to take a stance in relation to Soviet cinema and the French Communist Party" (de Baecque, 12). By extension, it also pushed those who vehemently opposed Hollywood to make their voices heard, especially in defense of Communist cinema or the Soviet Union.

Sadoul became one of the first critics forced to participate in this new, heated debate. As the figurehead of left-wing French film critics, Sadoul made no secret of his allegiance to the PCF. Nonetheless, Bazin crossed a line by making a mockery of Stalin and of Sadoul himself. In a personal letter to Bazin, Sadoul described his reaction to the 'Stalin Myth' article as follows:

You condemn me. You talk of "slander" and "practices of forgery" on my account. My intention is not to demand that you correct yourself, I am writing this because of the sincere friendship that I have for you, and which, I fear, has not entirely withstood the shock of your article "The Stalin Myth." Truly, knowing me as you do, did you believe that I would sit back without reacting, very forcefully, to your article? [...] You know I am a Communist, you must have known that it would be impossible for me to avoid vehemently expressing my disagreement with 'The Stalin Myth.' I was not in Paris when your article fell into my hands. It made me angry, and all the more so because I have held you in such high regard.... You adopted *Parisien Libéré's* Gaullist point of view. This deeply pains and disappoints me. Because I know that you are not a devotee of 'Grand Charles', as you say (quoted in de Baecque, 13).

As evidenced in the letter above, Sadoul felt deeply betrayed by the Stalin Myth article not because of its ideological message, but because he was blindsided by Bazin's blows. Knowing that his prideful friend would feel the need to defend himself and the PCF, Bazin deliberately brought Sadoul's name into a debate on the merits of Soviet cinema. Sadoul's public response, however, launched a "political counter-attack" that accused Bazin of attempting to undermine the only true competitor of Hollywood imperialists. Further, he accuses Bazin of "being afraid of Stalin's power and vitality," also claiming that the Soviet leader had "single-handedly saved Stalingrad, and thereby the Western powers, from German domination" (Marie, 104).

Nonetheless, Sadoul and Bazin did not allow their personal feud to damage their professional respect for one another. Following *Cahiers du cinéma*'s creation in 1953, Bazin frequently invited Sadoul to collaborate with the magazine, having recognized the latter as an important ally in the "strategic plan of the Cahiers editors to turn film into a major art" (Marie, 105). Yet, as McCarthy's crusade against Communist filmmakers in Hollywood polarized global film circles, the two critics fought again over the open admiration for American directors that Bazin's protégés expressed. This clash was not limited to Bazin and Sadoul, however. François Truffaut, in particular, emerged as the "main polemicist" 1950s film criticism under Bazin's guidance due to his biting critiques and controversial opinions (de Baecque, 13).

Upon its release in *Cahiers du cinéma*'s January 1954 issue, Truffaut's "Une certaine tendance du cinéma français" sent shock waves through French filmmaking and criticism circles due to its scathing criticism of the era's accepted conventions. In Truffaut's eyes, the *cinéma du papa* (the mainstream cinema that every young 'wave' of

filmmakers aims to dethrone) had grown too comfortable in adapting literary classics into unimaginative, outdated films (Hayward, 47). Further, this 'tradition of quality' hindered artistic innovation due to the nature of the automatic aid system instituted in 1948. During the early 1950s, "quality" cinema referred to adaptations of French novels that were both commercial successes and "academic [films] populated by stars," (Gimello-Mesplomb, 2006, 145). In a global film industry weighed down by Hollywood, journalist Jean-Pierre Barrot enthusiastically discussed how these adaptations merged "popular cinema and the cinema of quality," therefore becoming competitive in foreign markets and contributing to the "general good health of the French film industry" (Ibid, 146). However, this idea of 'quality' as a measure of both artistic and commercial success quickly disappeared as younger critics set these two traits against each other.

Truffaut and his peers challenged their elders' authority by adopting controversial stances in relation to Hollywood and the avant-garde filmmakers of the 1930s and 1940s ("Une certaine tendance du cinéma français," *Cahiers du cinéma* no. 31; Sorin 63). Essays praising Alfred Hitchcock and Howard Hawks quickly flooded *Cahiers du cinéma*'s pages, with the magazine's youngest critics arguing that these men were not merely 'popular' directors, but true artists. Hence, Bazin and other members of film criticism's 'old guard' referred to these critics as the 'Young Turks,' a term which broadly refers to "one advocating changes within a usually established group" ("Young Turk").

### *The Hitchcocko-Hawksiens and Hollywood*

The backlash to these controversial 'Hitchcocko-Hawksien' dogmas forced Bazin into a difficult situation. On one hand, openly condemning his protégés would risk

alienating a substantial portion of *Cahiers du cinéma*'s regular audience, whose fascination with the Hitchcocko-Hawksien group was a "vital force" in the journal's success (de Baecque, 14). On the other, failure to take a firm stance against certain polarizing doctrines could damage Bazin's credibility among older audiences, who viewed Truffaut and his peers' ideas as extreme or childish. For example, one letter to the *Cahiers du cinéma* editors describes critics such as Truffaut, Chabrol and Rivette as "grotesques," whose "ton prétentieux et typiquement 'jeune Turc' (l'accent étant mis sur le mot 'jeune')" made a mockery of film criticism (Courrier des lecteurs, *Cahiers du cinéma* no. 59, 56-57). Thus, Bazin needed to avoid severing ties with the Hitchcocko-Hawksien critics while also managing to contain their "political and formalist drifting" (de Baecque, 13).

In the 1955 article "Comment peut-on être Hitchcocko-Hawksien?", he accomplishes this task by openly stating that while he disagrees with 'Hitchcocko-Hawksien' rhetoric, he also values his young critics' enthusiasm:

Ceux qui nous font l'honneur de nous lire avec assez d'attention ont certainement pu s'apercevoir qu'aucun des responsables de cette revue ne partage les enthousiasmes de Schérer, de Truffaut, de Rivette, de Chabrol ou de Lachenay à l'égard des metteurs en scène en question... [Mais] ils parlent de ce qu'ils connaissent et il y a toujours profit à écouter les spécialistes. C'est pourquoi aussi leur parti-pris est fécond. Je ne crois guère en matière de critique à l'existence de vérités objectives ou plus exacerpent ("Comment peut-on être Hitchcocko-Hawksien ?").

Despite recognizing the value in presenting diverse opinions, Bazin further separates himself from the Hitchcocko-Hawksiens by stating that he, like 'many others,' deploras "la stérilisation idéologique" that Hollywood imposes, in which "*Les hommes préfèrent les blondes* me fait regretter *Scarface* ou *Seuls les anges ont des ailes*" (Ibid.). In the same article, he recognizes that the essays in question "heurtenant... l'opinion généralement reçue" within film criticism circles. Here, Bazin's use of the verb "heurter"

reveals that such validation was not merely unconventional in 1955, but shocking or scandalous. Further, by evoking Hollywood's 'ideological sterilization' to separate himself from his young employees, Bazin contradicts his own stance in the form-versus-content debate, which, as discussed earlier in this chapter, rested staunchly on the side of 'formalism.'

Sadoul, on the other hand, praised Hitchcock well before *Cahiers du cinema* published its first issue:

Je souscris pleinement à cette opinion d'un homme de métier. La présence de quelqu'un est, en art, chose rare, et elle est la marque d'une forte personnalité. On la retrouve chez un autre spécialiste du film policier, l'anglais Hitchcock, qui a su mieux qu'aucun autre faire de l'art avec des sujets médiocres. On peut regretter le mépris du contenu qui caractérise Hitchcock—et Clouzot— mais on doit rendre hommage à leur style, à leur goût plastique, à leur sens du cinéma, à leur autorité dans la direction des acteurs ("L'homme quelconque était évidemment Jésus Christ," 1947).

Though he somewhat objects to the subject matter Hitchcock adapts, Sadoul views Hitchcock's films as "art," indicating that his willingness to accept certain New Wave ideas years later was not wholly uncharacteristic. Instead, his intense aversion to the pro-Hollywood discourse found in *Cahiers du cinéma* concerned such rhetoric's political implications, as many Communist film critics believed that Hitchcocko-Hawksiens harbored extreme right-wing sentiments. Thus, Sadoul's initial wariness regarding Bazin's associates concerns far more than an aesthetic disagreement or a refusal to accept their 'pro-Hollywood' stances.

After *Cahiers du cinéma* published Truffaut's "Une certaine tendance," Sadoul chastised the editors for providing "a young anti-Communist and right-wing critic – a formalist and lampoonist, a 'McCarthyite' and propagandist" with such prominent platform (quoted in de Baecque, 13). While Bazin admitted that certain Hitchcocko-

Hawksiens possessed “a certain taste for impertinence” that made them “muse somewhat resentfully upon what we call, in a very vague sense, right-wing literature,” he assured Sadoul that their criticism was exclusively concerned with aesthetics, no matter how politically charged it may have appeared (Ibid., 14).

Thus, arguing that the ‘Young Turks’ were contrarian youths and not the ‘McCarthyites’ the PCF claimed, the magazine’s senior staff adopted a relaxed approach to managing the controversy. Despite their public disapproval of the ‘Hitchcocko-Hawksien’ discourse, Bazin and his co-editor Doniol-Valcroze continued to stop short of condemning their young critics. In a letter to Sadoul, Bazin projects himself as a mentor exasperated by his students’ rebellious tendencies: “God knows we don’t encourage them, but what can we do!” (de Baecque, 14). Thus, he both separates himself from their more extreme viewpoints and portrays their criticism as reactionary, not to be taken seriously. This paternalistic tone also manifested in “Comment peut-on être Hitchcocko-Hawksien?”, where Bazin reassures readers that the Hitchcocko-Hawksiens were periodically roped into discussions on the avant-garde to temper their more controversial tendencies. He forgives Renoir for the ‘spiritual poverty’ of his postwar films, now using the director’s cinematic masterpieces to defend neorealist cinema from the younger generation’s attacks.

Essentially, the editorial staff’s dismissal of the younger generation was little more than a slap on the wrist, which angered Sadoul. Thus, this conflict provoked the second major break between him and Bazin. While the latter acknowledged that Sadoul’s expertise as a historian could help carry out *Cahiers du cinéma*’s goal of establishing cinema as an art, he and his fellow editors did not view this as “a sufficient reason to accept his anti-

American dogmatism and to censure Bazin's own protégés” (Marie, 105). Therefore, Sadoul ceased to write essays for *Cahiers du cinéma*.

Thus, Truffaut’s essay and the rise of the Hitchcocko-Hawksiens’ careers at *Cahiers du cinéma* produced an even greater schism between the respective camps of film criticism. Of note, though, is the generational element that henceforth applies to the form-versus-content debate discussed earlier in this chapter. While *Cahiers du cinéma*’s ‘young Turks’ shared André Bazin’s formalist approach to film criticism, they took their aesthetic analyses to a new extreme. While their mentor proposed reviving stale narratives (such as the literary adaptations that belonged to the ‘tradition of quality’) by inventing new ways to tell a story through *mise-en-scène*, the ‘neo-formalist’ Hitchcocko-Hawksiens completely rejected screenplays’ importance to place supreme importance on the director’s vision.

Yet, while the Young Turks minimized screenwriters’ role in favor of installing directors as the supreme auteurs of cinema, their critiques of the *cinéma du papa* occasionally contradict this desire. For instance, Marcel Carné’s realistic depiction of a war-torn France in his 1946 film *Les Portes de la nuit* depressed audiences and critics alike, leading to a major critical and commercial failure. In addition to permanently damaging Carné’s reputation, it also spelled the end of his professional association with screenwriter Jacques Prévert. Throughout the 1940s, the Carné-Prévert duo produced some of French cinema’s highest-praised works, including *Les Enfants du Paradis* (1945), which is “widely regarded as a masterpiece and the most critically acclaimed, most popular French film of all time” (Canby). In 1956, Truffaut’s retrospective on Carné a decade after *Les Portes de la nuit*’s release not only questions Carné’s status as an auteur, but attributes his success

entirely to Prévert's scenarios: "On nous a offert des films de Jacques Prévert mis en images par Marcel Carné" (quoted in Waintrop). Here, Truffaut states that the artistic elements in the Carné-Prévert partnership related solely on to Prévert's screenplays, contradicting his own principle of the director as the supreme *auteur*.

Despite the controversies that endangered *Cahiers du cinéma*'s success soon after its creation, the magazine did not shy away from frequently discussing American cinema. Christmas 1955 saw the release of its special edition dedicated to exploring the current 'Situation du cinéma américain.' From the first page, we see Bazin's admiration for his preferred American auteur shine through: "CE NUMÉRO DES CAHIERS DU CINÉMA EST DÉDIÉ À ORSON WELLES SANS QUI LE NOUVEAU CINÉMA AMÉRICAIN NE SERAIT PAS CE QU'IL EST" (*Cahiers du cinéma* no. 54, 1).

Although the Hitchcocko-Hawksiens were the most ardent supporters of American cinema, some of their predecessors also expressed a begrudging respect for Hollywood beyond auteurs such as Welles and Chaplin. Despite denouncing his protégés' admiration for Hollywood and its 'ideological sterilization,' Bazin notes in this issue that he viewed American cinema's 'reflective quality' as a strength:

Le conflit mondial n'a pas seulement fourni à Hollywood des thèmes spectaculaires, il lui a aussi et surtout imposé, pendant quelques années au moins, des sujets de réflexion (*Cahiers* no. 54, pg. 22).

He elaborated on this argument in 1957, presenting cinema as the 'mouthpiece' of the nation in line with Hayward's conception of a 'national cinema':

Le cinéma américain a su traduire d'une façon prodigieusement adéquate l'image que la société américaine voulait d'elle-même. Non point passivement, comme une simple activité de satisfaction et d'évasion, mais dynamiquement, c'est-à-dire en participant avec ses moyens propres à la constitution de cette société (*Cahiers du cinéma* no. 71).

Throughout the first half of the twentieth century, Hollywood and Western European cinemas like those of Germany and Italy actively worked towards modernizing their “electronic artforms” (i.e., cinema and television), therefore allowing them to respond to domestic audiences’ new “popular cultural demands” as they arose (Hayward, 74). On the other hand, French reluctance to modernize left the gallic national cinema incapable of doing the same. Here, Bazin’s quote reflects this idea. He theorizes Hollywood became so strong not only because of its economic and technical might, but because it could actively remold itself to exhibit the society that American audiences wished to build.

Similarly, Truffaut found that even the “brutality” of commercialized Hollywood related to attitudes which “[correspondent] chez eux à quelque chose” (*Cahiers* no. 138, 37). He therefore calls upon his native cinema to find the French equivalent of this authenticity:

Il faut donc trouver ce qui, en France, correspond à quelque chose. Trouver la situation française comme ils ont trouvé la situation américaine. Pour cela, il faut commencer par parler de ce qu'on connaît. Le reproche qu'on nous a fait, c'est de ne parler que de certaines choses, mais nous parlions de ce que nous connaissions, nous cherchions ce qui nous correspondait. (Ibid.).

Amidst Hollywood’s industrial superficiality, a small number of American filmmakers stood out to the Hitchcocko-Hawksiens as beacons of artistic innovation. Yet, insofar that few directors measured up to the group’s heroes, this mythologization of Hollywood also contains anti-American elements. Truffaut also contradicts his enthusiasm for Hollywood’s auteurs:

Par rapport aux cinéastes américains, je crois que nous sommes tous des intellectuels, même moi qui le suis moins que les autres. Il ne faut pas tricher. On ne doit pas faire semblant d’être fustes et simplistes, si l'on se pose des questions, si l’on raffine sur un scénario. Il ne faut pas se forcer... il ne faut pas imiter la brutalité, la rusticité américaine. Mais si l’on pense que le cinéma est un art populaire — et nous le pensons tous, car nous sommes nourris de cinéma américain

— nous pouvons partir sur une autre idée : celle d'une discipline dans le travail qui fasse que nos films soient complets, aient plusieurs aspects. Ce sont trois films superposés qu'on a chez Hitchcock ("François Truffaut," *Cahiers* no 138, 57).

"Nourished" by Hollywood, yet conscious of its negative aspects, in this passage Truffaut expresses a sense of intellectual superiority vis-à-vis American filmmakers. Even when explicitly stating that some of Hollywood is worthy of homage, critiques and theoretical essays take on the same nationalistic tone: If Americans can produce films that marry artistry with financial gain despite being intellectually and artistically inferior to French cinema, why not us?

His fellow 'Young Turk' Éric Rohmer, however, argues that Hollywood's "caractère universel," or the ability to create a cinematic experience that audiences could enjoy in diverse environments, provided it with the cultural capital needed to reign over the global film market. Herein lies the distinction between the Hollywood demagogue and the French cultural industry:

Le cinéma américain fait école. Ce que l'on doit déplorer, ce n'est pas tellement que le cinéma français ne produise pas des œuvres dignes d'estime, mais que ces œuvres soient fermées, c'est-à-dire n'influent pas sur celles des autres pays. Il n'y a pas ou plus d'école française, alors qu'il y a une école américaine et une école italienne (*Cahiers* no. 71, 23.)

Thus, the crisis facing the septième art becomes clear through comparison with the American and Italian film industries, its biggest rival and closest collaborator, respectively. French films did not suffer due to their competition, but because they did not influence other nations' productions.

That is not to say that critics reacted to every 'invading' influence upon French cinema with an equal amount of resistance. For instance, critics often panned American films by virtue of their nationality, while Italian films comparable in subject matter and

technical aspects received high praise. Roger Leenhardt explained that his peers expressed so much loyalty to the 1940s' Italian neorealist filmmakers because they viewed it as a way of resisting Hollywood:

[...] le jugement porté sur le néo-réalisme italien. On le présente communément comme une réaction originale dirigée contre Hollywood. Or, vu avec plus de hauteur, le renouveau italien d'après-guerre fut le rejet d'une esthétique latine traditionnelle sous les influences modernistes où l'Amérique avait une part certaine. Cela éclate dans la littérature, si liée actuellement en Italie au cinéma, où personne ne s'étonne qu'on évoque Hemingway à propos de Vittorini où de Pavese. (*Cahiers* no. 58, 78).

Therefore, cinematic traditions were rarely the 'pure' creations of a single national cinema. Nonetheless, French critics readily accepted American cinema's influence where it had been indigenized by Italian neorealist filmmakers, but tended to reject anything explicitly 'Hollywood.' Thus, early hesitance on both sides to accept Hitchcocko-Hawksien rhetoric falls in line with this trend. Even those of the older generation who were open to assimilating certain American filmmaking tropes did so because they thought such practices would help French cinema reassert its identity.

Yet, the 'reflective subjects' and dynamism that Rohmer and Bazin cite above were accompanied by what Jacques Becker considered American films' decline in quality. This decline, Becker notes, manifested because the Hollywood production machine stripped directors of their power. As American studios became greedy, a class of 'yes-men' emerged to meet the demands of producers who prized financial returns above all. To ensure that films remained commercially viable, directors relinquished a large part of their artistic control to writers and cinematographers. Due to these "méthodes abominables," the majority of American films "finirent par perdre tout ce qui fait la valeur d'une œuvre : la marque d'un seul homme" (*Cahiers du cinéma* no. 54, 75). This 'decline in quality' directly

led to the proliferation of anti-American sentiments among the French public: "...privé des bonnes 'sensations américaines' qu'Hollywood lui prodiguait jadis avec générosité et fraîcheur d'âme, ait fini par en concevoir une sorte de rancune à l'endroit du peuple américain lui-même" (Ibid.).

While Hollywood lost its ability to respond to foreign audiences' tastes, anti-American sentiments also spread as French cinema's successes at home and abroad became apparent. Gene Moskowitz's February 1958 *New York Times* piece "Observations on the Gallic Screen Scene" discusses how, despite augmented ticket prices, theater admissions had stayed relatively stable. This inspired an optimistic outlook among cinephiles and resulted in "a toughening attitude toward American films, more co-productions with Western as well as Eastern (both European and Asian) countries, plus a spurt in French film production." Invigorated by this success, the confidence that this afforded the French film sector was further strengthened by new provisions to the film quota system that swayed aid more towards France's interests:

France has allowed American major companies their 110 annual dubbing visas again. But the Government specified that in the second year of the agreement, the Centre du Cinema, the official film body, would hand out forty visas itself to reward those American companies that aid French film distribution and production. There also was an increase in dubbing taxes and on gross receipts which brought in about \$350,000 more to the French Film Aid Fund. This money will be used to acquire or lease more than twenty theatres in the United States in an effort to catapult French films into the general market in America. (Moskowitz, 322).

As such, as tensions between film critics escalated over the younger generation's Hitchcocko-Hawksien rhetoric, French cinema enjoyed renewed economic prosperity abroad. Rather than indicating artistic or economic developments, this success among international film markets may be related to the efficacious use of government programs.

When pressed by Andre Bazin in an interview for *Cahiers du cinéma*'s May 1957 special issue on the 'Situation du cinéma français,' then-CNC Director Jacques Flaud stated the following:

A. B. : Si je comprends bien ce que vous voulez dire, vous pensez que cette prospérité économique et surtout cet accroissement du marché du film français à l'étranger ne vient pas d'une augmentation de la qualité par rapport à ce qui se passait il y a quelques années, mais simplement d'une meilleure façon d'exporter nos produits et des facilités données aux producteurs pour intégrer à leurs films des éléments susceptibles de rendre ces produits plus vendables à l'étranger.

*JACQUES FLAUD* : Oui, c'est ma pensée. Il y a certes des exceptions et certains films sont excellents absolument, en soi. Mais le plus souvent, la présentation de films à l'étranger, explique mieux que leur contenu, le succès des productions françaises. Il faut aussi souligner le rôle d'une organisation comme Unifrance-Film qui, avec ses semaines du cinéma français présente les films d'une façon attrayante, avec une publicité et des patronages qui attirent sur notre production l'attention des spectateurs étrangers.

Throughout his tenure at the agency, Jacques Flaud's policies aimed to enhance the artistic qualities of French cinema. Notably, Flaud came to the vital conclusion that "les films français — dont la valeur distinctive ne pourra jamais concurrencer Hollywood — ne pouvaient intéresser les marchés étrangers que s'ils témoignaient d'un minimum d'ambition" (*Cahiers* no. 161-162, pg. 59). Truffaut credited Flaud with the birth of the New Wave, citing the international success of Bresson's 1958 film *Condamné à mort s'est échappé*, which "bénéficia d'une avance du C.N.C. de 50 millions d'anciens francs remboursables sur l'aide et ce film fit le tour du monde" :

A partir de 1958, grâce aux dispositions prises, grâce au prestige du *Condamné à mort s'est échappé*, grâce à l'immense succès américain de *Et Dieu créa la femme*, la qualité a été améliorée et 200 (oui, deux cents) réalisateurs nouveaux ont pu tourner un ou plusieurs films entre le début 1958 et la fin 1964. C'était le déferlement massif d'une troisième génération dans un métier qui, depuis soixante ans, n'en tolérait que deux, c'était la Nouvelle Vague dont la réussite quantitative a dépassé la réussite qualitative et aussi la réussite financière (*Cahiers* no. 161-162, 59).

Flaud, who vowed to eliminate “la 'médiocrité artistique’” by bringing new directors into the fold, thus facilitated the structural transformations which allowed Truffaut and his compatriots to launch their movement. While previous generations reached critical acclaim, the New Wave merged artistic quality with commercial success in France and abroad. The film Truffaut mentioned above, Roger Vadim’s first film, *Et Dieu créa la femme*, enjoyed a surprising amount of popularity upon its American release in 1958. Grossing \$4 million, it permanently transformed the United States’ foreign film market and launched Brigitte Bardot’s global stardom (“And God Created Woman”). Thus, Flaud placing importance on “publicité et des patronages qui attirent sur notre production l’attention des spectateurs étrangers” was judicious.

Bearing in mind the game-changing success of Vadim’s directorial debut, the French government now possessed a unique opportunity to capitalize on the growing audience for ‘French’ films in the United States. Following the installation of the Cinquième République, the newly formed Ministry of Culture subsumed jurisdiction over the CNC and began to institute reforms that subsidized French films capable of meeting this goal. On June 18, 1959, the *Journal Officiel de la République Française* published decree n°59-733 pertaining to state financial support of the film industry. With this mandate came the announcement that, at the discretion of a committee comprised of industry officials, government loans to filmmakers would henceforth be:

... accordées après la réalisation du film, en fonction notamment de la nature du sujet, des caractéristiques et des qualités de l’œuvre cinématographique et des conditions de la réalisation... (Décret N°59-733, Article 7, 6019).

The French state’s legal definition of quality as a means of allocating loans to filmmakers marks a distinct shift from the United States’ indirect support of Hollywood

through Free Trade Agreements. With the enactment of this decree and other similar motions, the "state of hermeticism in relation to her recent past," which characterized the French film industry from the late 1940s to the mid-1950s, transitioned into the internationally acclaimed New Wave (Hayward, 151). Thus, the mission that André Malraux outlined in his first declaration as Minister of Culture, to "assurer la plus vaste audience à notre patrimoine culturel, et de favoriser la création des œuvres de l'art et de l'esprit qui l'enrichissent," was successfully implemented (JORF n° 0171 du 26/07/1959).

### *Rise and Fall of the New Wave*

The international popular and critical acclaim for New Wave directors like Truffaut, Godard, and Vadim bridged the gap between Bazinian and Communist film critics. By 1959, Sadoul welcomed films made by *Cahiers du cinéma*'s 'Young Turks' with open arms, with the vast majority of the PCF's critics sharing his enthusiasm for the New Wave's developments. Albert Cervoni, a young Communist and the Truffaut to Sadoul's Bazin, viewed the New Wave as undoubtedly superior to the 'Old Wave' of avant-garde and neo-realist cinema:

S'il faut opter, le doute n'est pas permis. Entre Duvivier et Chabrol, entre Jeanson et Truffaut, c'est Chabrol et Truffaut que nous choisissons et même, sans aller jusqu'aux condamnations abusives et catégoriques que portent facilement les jeunes Turcs, il faut bien admettre que le métier d'un Autant-Lara, que le confort d'un Carné finissent par se charger d'une matière dangereuse de « bel ouvrage » trop bien assis sur des combinaisons algébriques rodées, certes, mais peut-être proches de l'usure (*La France nouvelle* no. 716, pg. 30).

In the highly polarized atmosphere just a decade earlier, Cervoni's enthusiasm for a director who made no effort to hide his admiration for Hollywood's auteurs would have been unthinkable for a Communist critic. As Marie notes, Cervoni even argues that

Truffaut “did not go far enough in his pursuit of what Bazin considered a quintessential film quality, namely ambiguity,” demonstrating how PCF film criticism in 1959 vastly differed from that of 1949 (110).

Similarly, Sadoul’s response to Alain Resnais’ *Hiroshima, mon amour* (1959) serves as a testament to Communist critics’ rapid change of heart regarding Bazin and his successors’ arguments. In an uncharacteristic departure from his pre-New Wave criticism, Sadoul’s review of the film in *Les Lettres françaises* praises the form of Resnais’s film while openly disapproving of portions of its content. Particularly, his “reservations about the validity of the [film’s] Nevers episode” do not overshadow his appreciation of its *mise-en-scène* and overall artistic value (Marie, 110).

If it remains unclear whether or not critics on all sides of the political spectrum set party differences aside in the name of national pride, the influence of the film critic and the professional journalist certainly converged. Critics such as those at *Cahiers du cinéma* forged and fine-tuned “attitude[s] toward the new cinema,” which then spread among mainstream columnists who “had up until then been more sensitive to audience opinion than they were to a film’s capacity for artistic innovation” (Sellier, 2008, note 3). Thus, the role of criticism itself gained a new importance:

Les différentes revues (Cahiers, Cinéma 60), certains hebdos (France Observateur lorsqu’il veut bien rester sérieux, Le Figaro Littéraire, L’Express en ce qui concerne les interviews) ont accru les moyens de la critique. Alors, je me dis que les Cahiers ont publié la lettre de Rivette sur Voyage en Italie, l’admirable « Bergmanorama » de Jean-Luc Godard et la préface de Bazin à l’entretien avec Orson Welles, c’est-à-dire l’illumination soudaine : le Balzac de Rodin. Les Cahiers ont souvent apporté au terme d’un itinéraire obscur l’illumination, la révélation soudaine d’un « quod erat demonstrandum » éclatant. Ce qui suffit à leur gloire. Dans cette révélation est le cinéma. Tout le reste est littérature. (*Cahiers* no. 126).

This description of the *Cahiers* facilitating an “illumination soudaine” within film criticism demonstrates the importance that critics accord to its power. While the columnists surveyed for the special edition on *La Critique* disagreed on whether or not their discourse influenced directors themselves (beyond those like Truffaut and Godard who, had operated in both professions), many expressed the view that their work had had a profound impact on audience tastes. As these critics popularized new auteurs, cinephiles sought new spaces to convene and talk about cinema. Thus, the cultural climate that critics helped to spread led directly to the creation of Art et Essai salles, or an “établissement cinématographique qui expose une proportion conséquente de films recommandés Art et Essai et qui soutient ces films souvent difficiles par une politique d'animation adaptée” (“Questions courantes”). Now, even the most ‘difficult’ French films to market and distribute in regular cinemas could find audiences in every corner of the *province*.

Nonetheless, gaps between programming in Parisian theaters and Art et Essai organizations throughout France also contributed to New Wave films’ lackluster French box office performance relative to its international popularity. In multiple instances, the directors surveyed in *La Critique* blame audiences for the continued popularity of the “Vieux Vague” and American films, despite a domestic option that brought together the best elements of the two. Further, New Wave filmmakers also heavily criticized the Ministry of Culture’s decision to install a new director at the CNC. Considering Jacques Flaud’s popularity among the New Wave directors, this choice proved controversial. Truffaut, one of his most ardent supporters, blamed the difficulties the industry faced on Flaud’s dismissal:

Il y a eu beaucoup de bons films, beaucoup de films moyens, beaucoup de mauvais, trop peu de films rentables, et forcément beaucoup de chômage parmi les deux

générations précédemment en place et maintenant parmi la nouvelle. Cette situation, stimulante par la qualité et la diversité des films mais périlleuse, par son caractère d'inflation, posait toutes sortes de problèmes que Jacques Flaud aurait peut-être résolus, ou qu'en tout cas il aurait affrontés en face. Malheureusement, quelques mois après son arrivée au ministère de la Culture en 1960, André Malraux a commis une erreur demeurée inexplicable en déchargeant Jacques Flaud de ses fonctions et en lui donnant pour successeur... son prédécesseur.

Indeed, Flaud's successor, Michel Fourré-Cormeray, served as the first General Director of the *Centre national de la cinématographie* from 1946 to 1952. His first term ended in turmoil, having been accused of taking bribes from production and distribution companies. According to one article, "Cet étrange conseiller à la Cour des Comptes admettait même que certains de ses fonctionnaires fussent rétribués par des producteurs ou des distributeurs" (Le Bourre, 1960). Further, rightwing publications accused Fourré-Cormeray of collaborating with the PCF. Due to these developments, many consider Fourré-Cormeray as responsible for the crisis of the *court métrage* during the early 1950s. Quickly after taking up the mantle of CNC Director, Flaud succeeded in establishing the French film industry's first quality-based subsidies to meet short filmmakers and critics' outcry. Therefore, we can understand the reasoning behind Truffaut's statement that Malraux had made an 'inexplicable' error by replacing a champion of quality-based aid with the man who, from his point of view, allowed mediocre products to thrive. However, it is important to note that, regardless of Michel Fourré-Cormeray's merit as the CNC's leader, factors which contributed to the 'crisis' may have endured even if Flaud remained in office. The policy that Truffaut praised for allowing 200 new directors to enter into the film market between 1958 and 1964 also saturated the market with competitors; as the *avances* continued this practice of prioritizing up-and-coming talent, those already established within the industry did not receive aid often. Thus, despite the *Cahiers* group's

nearly exclusive hold on the New Wave, the *avance sur recette* commission rarely accorded them with loans beyond their first features.

Censors further impeded the success of both applicants for advances upon script and some films which did receive the funds. As Truffaut notes, the commission's pre-censorship screening was optional on paper, yet "elle est parfois exigée insidieusement sous peine de ne pouvoir solliciter l'avance sur recettes. (Exemple: Jules et Jim, qui fut chocolat.)" (*Cahiers* no. 161-162, 75). However, films that were both artistic and popular like Truffaut's *Jules et Jim* were retroactively granted *avances* funds for their distribution. This implies that the (often undisclosed) qualities that prompted the Commission to reject their initial aid applications proved inconsequential in the name of promoting French culture (Ibid.).

Even though the majority of critics and filmmakers acknowledged the power of an *avance sur recette* to allow projects with unconventional artistic techniques or sensitive subject matter to see the light of day, this praise was often accompanied with an expression of disappointment over how the CNC handled the allocation of such funds. Jacques Doniol-Valcroze, one of the co-founders of *Cahiers du cinéma* alongside Bazin, accused the French government of using these subsidies to directly play into the hands of American studios:

Il n'est pas douteux que ces nouvelles dispositions ont été prises sous la pression de "la grosse production traditionnelle", contre les petites productions indépendantes... on dit même que cette mesure a été prise contre l'Anouchka films de J.-L. Godard, productrice de *Bande à part* et de *La femme mariée*, suspecte en plus vocation d'avoir utilisé des capitaux américains de la Columbia, dont la vocation naturelle est d'aller aux grosses sociétés et pas aux petits voyous de la N.V. Et si l'État prête la main à la manœuvre, c'est peut-être justement à cause de ces capitaux américains (Washington delenda est) pour une fois bien employés. On voit à quoi peuvent conduire l'imbécillité et le gaullisme réunis (*Cahiers* no. 161-162, 64).

Here, Doniol-Valcroze engages in one of the most common critiques of the Hollywood system, the suppression of small, independent studios by production giants such as Paramount and Columbia Pictures. This ‘natural’ inclination of Hollywood to suppress rivals, even when the latter did not have the means to realistically threaten the former’s market dominance, provided another point of convergence for diverse opinions. While the *avance sur recette* system promised to promote artistic works that would otherwise have no chance of receiving wide theatrical releases, the CNC also outlined a different goal: the promotion of French culture at home and abroad. Thus, ‘commercial’ films like Vierne’s *Tintin et le mystère de la Toison d’or* also received subsidies.

As the New Wave lost steam and concerns metastasized throughout the film industry technicians, directors, actors, screenwriters, and other players within the sector reached a consensus: French cinema faced an existential crisis. Once magnified by film magazines, the sense of emergency permeated the film scenes who constituted a loyal readership base. In 1965, *Cahiers du cinéma* devoted two issues of its magazine (no. 161-162) to discussing this ‘Crise du cinéma français.’ Within these issues, critics and directors attribute this crisis to a variety of political, economic, and artistic phenomena.

Politically, figures like Doniol-Valcroze criticized ‘l’imbécillité’ of Gaullist foreign policy (*Cahiers* no. 161-162, 64). Yet, Doniol-Valcroze’s image of “gaullisme” as ambivalent or welcoming towards the United States may not be an accurate representation of his foreign policy. When one considers de Gaulle himself, the context for such a contradictory rise in anti- and pro-American sentiments becomes clearer. During the early twentieth century, Catholic priests in France presented the image of the “Anglo-Saxon” as

the “most advanced incarnation of a frightening capitalist dystopia” (Chabal, 25). De Gaulle, raised Catholic and aware of the powerful nature of the term, found that “evoking the image of the Anglo-Saxon became a useful way for him to capture both a historical and a contemporary geopolitical rivalry” (Ibid). According to Hayward, de Gaulle viewed “Britain’s perfidy and America’s hegemonizing practices” as the cause of France’s decline in global influence (137). Thus, anti-American and anti-British currents “strongly inflected” Gaullist foreign policy, which aimed to rehabilitate France’s image abroad (Ibid.).

On the economic front, critics cited Hollywood imposing film quotas and monopolizing new production technologies left French filmmakers with no chance of overcoming its power. Yet, Biesse’s treatise “Qu’est-ce que l’Art et Essai?” offers some indication that Hollywood’s grasp on the public was not as strong as critics claimed. Citing audiences’ top twenty directors in and outside of Paris, Biesse reveals that despite sweeping changes to legal and theoretical practices within the industry, film consumers remained relatively constant:

Toujours parmi les vingt réalisateurs, la comparaison Paris-Province à propos de la vieille et de la nouvelle vague, donne : en « ancien », 3 à 7 ; en « nouveau », 3 à 6. C’est-à-dire que, proportionnellement, la N.V. est autant représentée que la V.V., tant à Paris qu’en province. L’américanisation n’a pas détruit l’équilibre. (*Cahiers* no. 161-162, 123).

The fact that high numbers of American films infiltrated French cinemas cannot be questioned. Yet, the idea that economic imperialism necessitated saving the French film industry does not hold, as American films did not dominate French box offices during this period. Rather, in terms of the success of French films within the domestic market, the 1950s can actually be considered a ‘Golden Age’ in French cinema. Between 1947 and

1959, Hollywood's market share steadily fell at an annual rate of 2%. As Kuisel (2000) demonstrates, French films accounted for "50 percent of total receipts with only 30 percent of the movies in circulation" (121). Thus, even where 'blockbusters' dominated the French film market, "Hollywood finished second" (Kuisel, 122). Upon the *avance* system's creation at the end of the decade, this 50:30 ratio remained constant (ibid).

Thus, at all levels of both the French film industry and government, one can observe a sense of grasping for a sense of identity, using Hollywood's success to exemplify both a threat and a rival to surpass. An unyielding border was erected to 'purify' the industry of both outsiders and insiders who did not 'resist'. Contrary the industrial "usine à rêves" that is Hollywood, French cinema evolved in order to remain "pour le monde entier une machine à rêves" (Hatchondo, 50).

## CONCLUSION

Over the course of the 1950s, a clique of young film critics at Cahiers (most notably Francois Truffaut, Jean-Luc Godard, Eric Rohmer, and Claude Chabrol) “became the guardians of the journal's quasi-official policy of foregrounding the essential role of the director in film production,” or the *politique des auteurs* (Tweedie, 45). The group’s open admiration for directors that both American and French critics dismissed as merely ‘commercial’ (including Alfred Hitchcock, Howard Hawks, and Sam Huston) transgressed the era’s conception of artistry in cinema. Yet, these ‘Young Turks’ transitioned from film criticism to filmmaking by the end of the decade, rapidly gaining popularity among domestic and international audiences. As films such as Truffaut’s *Les Quatre Cents Coups* and Godard’s *A bout de souffle* were heralded as the new standard-bearers of artistic cinema, foreign admirers sought out translated versions of their Cahiers du cinema manifestos and assimilated the ideas therein expressed. Hence, skeptics were forced to reexamine la *politique des auteurs* in addition to the filmographies of Hitchcock, Hawks, and other New Wave idols.

The paradox of these young cinephiles electing American directors (or those anglophones who, like Hitchcock and ‘Charlot’, directed American films) as their idols while also advocating for a more innovative French film industry may be explained through simple acts of youthful rebellion. Before the *Cahiers* group praised Hitchcock, Hawks, Huston, and similar directors as *grands auteurs*, no intellectual discourse surrounded these figures or their films. In much the same manner as the State affording ‘art’ cinema with an institutionalized value, the New Wave pioneers consecrated the status of these men and their places in the broader artistic consciousness through their discourse. Once *Cahiers du*

*cinéma*, *Positif*, and other film quarterlies that flooded Paris' film scenes facilitated this "captation d'objet," filmmakers that had been cast aside as 'commercial' were now discussed using "des mots auparavant réservés aux artistes et aux intellectuels de renom" (De Baecque and Frémaux, 138).

As Truffaut, Godard, and other New Wave directors' fame penetrated international markets, translations of their manifestos transformed foreign cinemas by forcing audiences to reexamine the filmmakers previously seen as "des artisans sans personnalité" (De Baecque and Frémaux, 141). In setting the intellectual discourse and artistic values of the era, French New Wave filmmakers not only outlined the enduring image of their national cinema (and, indeed, personal filmographic legacies), but also permanently reshaped the global conception of what it means to be an 'auteur.' As the French State began to take notice of the sway that "French" films could hold within international markets and film festivals, it took advantage of this opportunity in an attempt to reassert France's place at the center of global culture.

## Appendix A: Theme Co-Occurrences by Frequency

<i>Co-Occurring Themes</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Crisis / Economic	88
Crisis / Political	80
Crisis / Anti-Hollywood	72
Crisis / Theory	70
Economic / Political	61
Crisis / Commerce	56
Crisis / Art	53
Political / Anti-Hollywood	49
Crisis / Pro-Hollywood	48
Economic / Theory	42
Economic / Anti-Hollywood	40
Economic / Commerce	39
Political / Theory	39
Pro-Hollywood / Theory	34
Commerce / Anti-Hollywood	32
Art / Theory	32
Political / Pro-Hollywood	31
Theory / Anti-Hollywood	30
Art / Economic	30
Economic / Pro-Hollywood	28
Art / Pro-Hollywood	27
Pro-Hollywood / Anti-Hollywood	24
Art / Commerce	24
Commerce / Political	24
Commerce / Anti-Hollywood	23
Art / Political	23
Theory / Commerce	18
Commerce / Pro-Hollywood	13

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