CHAPTER ONE

'All All All'

'I take my desires for reality, for I believe in the reality of my desires'.

— 1968 slogan

'We are still the contemporaries of May '68'.

— Alain Badiou, *The Communist Hypothesis* (2010)

Periodising the 1960s in Cinema

What was the progressive cinema of the 1960s? In the absence of any generally agreed definitions, differing ideas abound, originating from two areas: firstly, the critical/academic histories of 1960s cinema, and secondly the conception of a 'progressive cinema' that is apparent in a number of 1960s films. The initial point of departure for this study is the conflict that arises between these two areas: the progressive cinema of the 1960s, as articulated in its own artefacts, does not always fully support, verify or validate the idea of a progressive cinema of the 1960s to be found in critical/academic histories. This disparity will be used to orientate this study as it seeks to expand the parameters of the critical/academic histories in order to identify and conceptualise, in a sustained way, the progressive cinema of the 1960s.

The first of these overall groupings, the critical/academic histories of 1960s cinema, is always localised and mostly operates within the framework of 'national cinemas' as a methodological structuring device; there are no serious pan-European studies of progressive film of this period. Such an absence is particularly arresting, since the '1960s phase' of European film, in its look and feel,

preoccupations and recurring themes, even colour palettes and sound mixes, could be said to be particularly distinctive. The strength of the identity of a '1960s phase' is such that the term 'period' seems inadequate; more than the terminology of temporal measurements is required. 'Era' – especially in the popular imagination – captures something of the self-contained nature of those years; the exercise of new freedoms within newly expanded limits of artistic expression, often in relation to experimentation and confrontation, a time defined by the results of a paradigm shift – a newness to things that automatically breaks with the old order. The 1960s era remains prominently visible – as much for those elements since assimilated within the language and practices of contemporary culture (the legacy of the era) as those elements that have stubbornly resisted this process (the dated – to be pastiched or satirised, or forgotten).

The strong boundaries of the 1960s era delineate this area, as a whole, as appropriate for critical scrutiny. The era begins decisively with a modernist phase in the arts in metropolitan centres in the late 1950s (particularly popular music, fashion and photography – totemic of the dividend of the end of post-war scarcity; such breakthroughs in theatre and literature can be placed in the mid 1950s) and ends spectacularly with the events of 1968. Questions flowing from the aftermath of 1968 were to define and preoccupy the subsequent period. Cinema was intrinsic to the cultural scene of the 1960s, and often central to the reinvention and reimagining of other art forms at that time. As with many other 1960s artistic endeavours, the 'expanded cinema', to use Gene Youngblood's description (1970), came to be characterised by interdisciplinism. Thus the popular vernacular associated with the reception of artistic endeavours towards the end of the decade (as 'progressive' increasingly turned to 'radical') effectively collapses formal differences between art forms in favour of a totalising subjective expression of the encounter: it would be a 'happening', 'a trip', an 'epiphany', the 'be-in' or 'love-in' as a fusion of music, media and social gathering; it was 'far out', something one would 'dig'. The plundering of the terminology of Eastern traditions of mysticism – a lexicon of 'oneness', 'togetherness', 'karma' and the 'cool', and the mantra of 'tune in, turn on, and drop out' – allowed for an articulation of a sense of art that went way beyond an appreciation qualified by an acknowledgment of the limitations of individual art forms. Artistic expression had edged towards the collective: 'of' all (a mass ownership and mass creation of the 'happening'), with all (the shared experiences of such a 'happening') and for all (experiences as freely available for participants, even as defining their lifestyles). Such a conceptual

expansion, once applied to the idea of cinema, wrested it away – even fancifully – from previous imaginings of individuals positioned in front of a cinema screen, comparatively assessing their individual experiences of the film afterwards. Now the psychologically 'expanded cinema'[1] broke its banks and intermingled with other art forms before, during and after projection. Film, in this respect, comes to be considered as akin to a psychedelic liquid light show – a highly collective experience. This conceptual expansion of cinema substantially complicates critical scrutiny of 1960s-era cinema.

The critical/academic history invariably acknowledges the self-contained nature of the era and the intrinsic position of cinema in relation to this, but fails to find a viewpoint from which the full range of characteristics may be seen in relation to each other. Such a viewpoint cannot be achieved when its subject remains uncertain. That is, the critical/academic history of progressive cinema of the 1960s has not attempted an explicit answer to the question 'what was the progressive cinema of the 1960s?' Clusters of similarities (shared concerns, shared methodological approaches to film, a commonality of preoccupations) can be discerned or even observed, compiled or tabulated, but an underlying structure – the grid of connections upon which the expansion of the idea of cinema is built – remains frustratingly 'just beyond' the reach of these histories.

An earlier period, the Popular Front of the 1930s, presents no such problem. The grid of connections can be found in the overarching anti-fascist concern of a united and inclusive artistic scene of that time. It is possible, when speaking of 'Popular Front-ism', to include the artistic endeavours – such as Jean Renoir's – fashioned to cast the shadow of ascendant European fascism over everyday reality. These connections are 'overground' and represent the essential terrain to be scrutinised in discussing the purposes of the artistic artefacts of this period. The identification of a comparable essential terrain in relation to the 1960s era is not so readily achieved. Often the terrain is manifest only obliquely in its countering of a variety of hegemonic positions (Stalinism, Western consumerism, a countering of the dominant cultural practices) across a wide spectrum (from formal politics and political militancy to individualised, 'biopolitical' concerns).[2] What do the screaming hordes of fans of *A Hard Day's Night* (Richard Lester, 1964) say about the particular dynamic of the times, and/or of the reception of The Beatles? The behaviour, and rapture, of the fans suggests a series of oblique, even unconscious, positions 'for' (this music, their shouting, youth itself) and against (the establishment, its behavioural codes for young people). Clearly there is an agenda of sorts

animating this activity – and the film's concentration on such activity underlines as much – but the agenda escapes hard definition, and even focuses (on individuals, or the collective fans; on the masses, or even the often absent Beatles themselves), and so 'baffled cultural commentators and alarmed moral guardians' (Goddard, Halligan, Spelman 2013: 3). Such sequences could be said to be about an exuberant non-specificity; but is this activity, as presented, the agenda itself, or evidence of an agenda elsewhere, 'off camera'? Thus the grid of connections is difficult to pin down, and the essential terrain to be scrutinised is seemingly everywhere, in evidence, and nowhere, in detail. Whereas, when an essential terrain is manifest directly in the 1960s – which is often perceived to be the case in semi-totalitarian countries , or police or barrack states – while no less complex in its strategy, a purpose is visible and the oppositionism qualified mostly to that end alone.[3] So in *Lásky Jedné Plavovlásky* (*Loves of a Blonde*, Miloš Forman, (1965)), youth, also in mild rebellion and with such rebellion also finessed by popular music, presents an entirely different proposition – now the connections are unavoidable. Thus this youth is 'a generation', to borrow Wajda's term, and one that comes to figure – even in the idle strumming of a guitar or talk of Picasso – in the liberalism of its time and place (Czechoslovakia's aspirant 'socialism with a human face').

This ability of metamorphosis in the essential terrain, in the former 'oblique' instance, points to a grid of 'deeper' connections, in an underlying, subterranean area. And while critical/academic scrutiny of a structuralist or post-structuralist approach would tend to dismiss the actualité of such a quality, or place it in the area of reception/audience studies for further empirical investigation, many artefacts of the time do not hesitate to present this quality as the foundation for their praxis, despite the obscurity of quality's nature. Julian Beck, of the Living Theatre, resorts to the term 'vibrations' to name such a grid of connections in his 1968 poem 'Paradise Now'. He finds these vibrations running directly from the nodes of social upheaval to his Artaudian-Dionysian theatre work. Beck writes, 'i am a magic realist / i see the adorers of che / i see the black man / forced to accept / violence / i see the pacifists / despair / and accept violence / i see all all all / corrupted / by the vibrations / vibrations of violence of civilization'. The poem then moves to the proposed response: 'we want/ to zap them / with holiness', and 'we want / to levitate them / with joy'. Thereafter 'we want / to make the land and its cities glow / with creation / we want to make it / irresistible / even to racists / we want to change / the demonic character of our opponents / into productive glory' (quoted in Roszek 1971: 150–151).

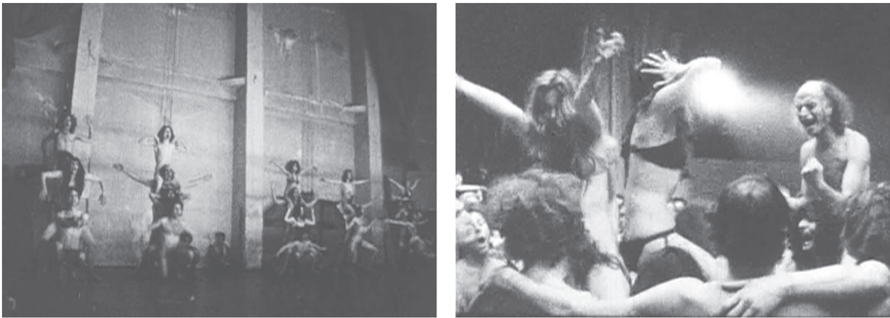

Figure 1.1 Paradisiac aphrodisiacs: the piled up and writhing bodies of the Living Theatre cleanse the 'vibrations of violence of civilization' (*Paradise Now*, Topp, 1968)

The battle over, or for, these vibrations – whether to be turned to good ends (joy, holiness, creation – the 'paradise now' of the poem's title, and of one of Beck's most celebrated countercultural theatre events) – or bad ones (despairing pacifists turning to violence in the face of their demonic opponents, the state and its repressive apparatus) – is for the 'all all all' protesting on the streets, both pacifists and militants. The artist's expanded role, to be of all, with all and for all, is to raise consciousness via and 'along' such vibrations – running the energy from the streets into the good karma zone of the theatre, to the betterment of the streets, the theatre and the masses. At this rarefied level, 'art' and 'revolution', as both in and of the streets, are to become interchangeable, complimentary – or even the same. By 1968 Beck's consciousness-raising ideas were falling out of favour, but this expansive, all-encompassing conception of a 'magic' (and in that respect 'realist') theatre – the area of the meeting and melding of politics and love, hedonism and militant agitation for change; the theatre event as the agent of renewal for a collapsing society – is entirely emblematic of the radical-progressive understanding of the role of art in the latter half of the 1960s. (And 'Paradise Now' was published in *International Times*, aka *IT* – the paper of the radical-progressive counterculture in the United Kingdom.)

The assumed expanded reach of the subterranean grid of connections is apparent in a further facet of interdisciplinism: the ways in which the arts were able to 'speak to' the times, and the times to 'speak to' the arts – indeed, in Beck's case, this interaction was a necessity for the existence of meaningful or positive art. But the identification of such assumed processes, with more specificity than 'vibrations', remains. So while there is a general tendency to posit an ill-defined but uniquely

close relationship between the 1960s artefacts and their era (accepting Beck's 'vibrations' in the then modus operandi of art), a close relationship apparent even now (the artefact, as seen or experienced now, is 'very much of' its time), there remains a reluctance to outline the 'hardwiring' between the artefact and its era, or to identify the osmosis-like processes between the artefact and its era. (And, along with interdisciplinism, or even as part of an interdisciplinism, this close relationship also characterises the arts of this era.) It remains a largely unknown quality.

For example, to return to the question of theatre and a zeitgeist, Lacey questions why George Devine, often identified as the father of the 'Angry Young Man' period, writing in 1959, had been 'evasive' in elucidating exactly how a 'true expression of, or a revelation about, certain deep feelings in a particular society' had, as Devine had claimed, been achieved in various theatres. The explanation Lacey gives is that the acknowledged intention to achieve often rendered unnecessary its actual achievement: it becomes sufficient for work to be solely platitudinal. Two roughly contemporary commentators of the Royal Court of the 'Angry Young Man' phase are used to illustrate this: 'That the house was made to twitter at some titbit of dialectical reasoning was taken as evidence that the wedding of art and social commitment had in fact taken place. That Marx in the process had been made into a bourgeois humorist was either missed or ignored'; 'one only has to go up on a public platform . . . for nine-tenths of the audience immediately to assume that one believes that novels should be simple tracts about factories or strikes or economic injustice' (Lacey 1995: 39). Lacey concludes at the close of his first chapter, in relation to his own methodology: 'With the idea of politics contaminated by its associations with communism and the consensus, and with committed theatre identified with propaganda, it was in the discourse of realism that the project of creating a contemporary and anti-hegemonic theatre was pursued' (Lacey 1995: 39). Such an approach is well-suited to a history mostly determined by a 'soft' and non-aligned left, one for which a system of strategic dissent (rather than a heightened realism) would be perceived to be irrelevant. And Lacey's study covers 1956–1965, a period of innovation of form. Comparable phenomena are apparent in European film of this time too – from 1958/59, and the beginnings of the European New Waves, to circa 1963 and the end of a phase chiefly characterised by experiments with form, as shall be argued.

Where histories of progressive film of the 1960s exhibit a general trend of premature curtailment, then, the suspicion is that it is a resonation of this 'unknown quality', at the very heart of their conceptualisations of 1960s film, that blocks

the way. So, in the shying away from this problematic, in premature curtailments, a completeness of approach and scope in the histories comes to be eclipsed by a sole or exaggerated concentration on the beginnings. This 'era', in the critical/academic histories, now fails to reach its, or a, climax. This results in a concern with revolutionary means, but rarely their projected revolutionary ends.

This curtailing in critical/academic histories is particularly acute in relation to New Wave films. These are easily grouped into a movement or school at the moment of their inception, especially when considered en masse, and represent the most outwardly experimental of progressive films of this period, not least because of the influence exerted on them by 'Brechtian' methods. There is disagreement over the end date of the New Waves; circa 1963 is generally given. The formal beginnings of the New Waves, however, can be incontrovertibly placed as 1958/59, when looking to their arrival in the public consciousness.[4] Yet these films as representative of a new movement or school seem harder to place; it raises a question typically avoided in the critical/academic history: the full identification cannot occur without first specifying what it is that is being identified. Thus Kline notes, of the French cycle of New Wave films: 'I use the term Nouvelle Vague with the usual precautions. By now, most historians have agreed that there was no movement per se, in the sense of a program, but rather a temporal coincidence of reaction' (Kline 1992: 227, footnote 8). The same may be said of Italy, and the films that Lino Micciché terms 'l'operazione "Nouvelle Vague" italiana' (Viano 1993: 50), which: 'failed as an attempt to create a unitary movement with a stylistic and theoretical identity of its own. [Yet] nevertheless launched the autori who, together with the triad of mature auteurs from the previous generation (Antonioni, Visconti, and Fellini) and Bellocchio, who debuted in 1966, contributed to the "decisive decade" of Italian cinema' (Viano 1993: 50–51). This lack of a common agenda is illustrated by the way in which some critics even perceived the Nouvelle Vague to be a 'movement of the right' (Marie 2003: 34), despite a prehistory closely associated with leftist concerns. Douchet finds this possible in the concentration on the images of prosperity over poverty (Douchet 1999: 23). But this reading was achieved by latching on to select comments from Godard and Truffaut (Benayoun does this, for example, in the 1962 *Positif* article 'The King is Naked'; see Benayoun 1968: 174), so that they were seemingly claiming for the disparate results of this 'temporal coincidence' a common goal: attacking the 'poetic realism' of the better films of the 'tradition of quality' on the grounds of their soft leftism and humanism. This attack was mounted so as to

reform French film-making, which could do without such wistful sentiments. In this way, such critics (of the time, but the reading still persists) found no quarrel with the association Chabrol makes with the Nouvelle Vague and regeneration under de Gaulle (Nicholls 1993: 10), converging with the way in which 'A certain French chauvinism sees its own cinema at the root of this international revolution [of the New Waves]' (Marie 2003: 128).[5] And Kline himself lumps Bresson in with the Nouvelle Vague film-makers, indicating that Kline's definition of the Nouvelle Vague is entirely one of 'temporal coincidence'; Bresson's refined, minimalist film form was the very opposite of the messy and cluttered radicalisation of form typical of Nouvelle Vague film.

It is difficult to avoid the impression that in these approaches apparent in this brief review of tendencies in critical literature on the period the films are not comprehended on the biggest of scales (whether they are 'left' or 'right'), or on the smallest (their aesthetic commonalities – Bresson as rubbing shoulders with Varda). From this a conclusion can be made: the New Wave film remains, in essence, unidentified from the point of its inception. And the need for a pseudo-identification in the critical/academic history comes to rest on a discussion of aesthetic innovations – the very visible surface of the wave, not the currents beneath it.

As to the cut-off date of this movement, Neupert's study gives an end date of 1964 (Neupert 2002: xviii, xxix), while Williams's delineation of the Nouvelle Vague, one in which 'French filmmaking after roughly 1962 should be called post-New Wave cinema' (Williams 1992: 328), is more accurate for the British New Wave – the moment at which it abandoned its 'Northern' concerns. Such premature endings are only possible if the Nouvelle Vague is exclusively considered as a period of aesthetic innovation, with any sense of the creation of a wider discourse as tangential – if not accidental. Graham, in his 1968 study *The New Wave*, identified the centrality of the idea of ideology and linked this to the radicalisation of form arising from 'production' methods – the way in which the films were made and why, and the praxis or methodology that had arisen (which itself was a notable aspect of the New Wave 'look'): 'the phenomenon of the Nouvelle Vague was not purely a question of cinematic ideology. It was above all a revolution in *production*, in the attitude of the public and, in particular, producers' (Graham 1968: 8, his italics). Removing this element of ideology from a consideration of the results of this praxis would suggest that the Nouvelle Vague, as a period of aesthetic experimentation, did indeed grind to a halt in the early/mid

'60s, after all the major aesthetic innovations had been achieved. Graham's consideration of ideology in relation to the 'revolution in production' makes sense when confronted by the unavoidable fact of the 'new look' of Nouvelle Vague films. The production – how this look was achieved – is the foremost characteristic only, and is the element that caused such a stir in 1958/59. But the idea of an evolution fired by a certain ideological attitude towards the question of film and film-making persisted well beyond the mid 1960s. So, if one is to see the aesthetic surface as merely a prelude to the real unification of a variety of films into a wave, with such a unification as occurring in relation to the reinvention of film with the creation of a progressive/radical cinema in the 1960s, then the New Wave history is suddenly elongated. After all, after the period of experimentation with form, where is film to go? One does not master a language so as to never speak the language again, safe in the knowledge that it has been mastered. Indeed, many of the speakers of that language (the European auteurs associated with progressive film), active in the early 1960s, remained active through the mid 1960s; even where their films changed, a set of underlying assumptions remained constant – as shall be argued.

A straight empirical history of these figures and their times would find, in the 1960s, an elongation of the New Wave as possible in relation to a shared ideological project then running its course: dissenting, agitational, and allied with leftist Western intellectuals. Even with such a basic methodological approach, the Western European New Waves can be seen to stretch until 1968/69 – or, more precisely, the New Waves ended as a consequence of the failure and fallout of the upheavals of 1968, the culmination of the ideological and agitational activities of leftist Western intellectuals, workers and students.

In the critical/academic histories, the aporia of curtailments, in relation to identification and periodisation, may be said to be a symptom of a canonical impulse: the assembly of a series of texts that illustrate a successful measure of innovation, and the overlooking of texts that extend such innovations and illustrate their logical conclusions at these extended limits. And those films outside the canon fade from view. They remain unseen, their prints ragged or in copyright limbo, or lost altogether, with their restoration – in the physical sense – as offering little or no hope of emotional or intellectual, or indeed financial, recompense.

However, in looking to the conception of a progressive cinema evident in a number of 1960s films (the latter of the two groups mentioned at the outset of this section) two answers to the otherwise shirked question ('what was the

progressive cinema of the 1960s?') are apparent. In a number of 1960s films, the possibility of an identification of this 'unknown quality' is raised.

In the first instance, the 'progressive' element arises from a dialectic with previous films. The end of post-war scarcity, with the reinvigoration of film culture, resulted in a realigning of the idea of the medium of film: it was now not only to be the exclusive preserve of the working classes – as a fillip for their leisure times – but also be of direct interest to white collar workers. (Again, the metropolitan centres figure, now as exerting a centrifugal force in this regard.) This phenomenon can be identified as an 'intellectualisation' of film culture. It is particularly apparent, in its embryonic stage, as a trend in the United Kingdom, arising from the coming together of a number of different artistic and class-based interests and concerns, and with the United Kingdom as a well-positioned optic for directions in wider European film culture. This study will briefly identify and review this intellectual phase as the first answer, arising 'in the field' itself, to the question of a progressive film of the 1960s. It will not be necessary to pass judgement on this area; the possibilities that arose rapidly became unstuck with the wilful sabotage of the project by those involved in it, resulting in a crisis of film culture and practice. This is identified as an impasse, and occurs from 1966.

In the second instance, questions of film culture and practice – purpose and method – were also to become central to another area associated with the 'progressive': a film culture alert to the traumas of fascism (historical and contemporary) and/or aligned with the drift of 'progressive' politics of the left. This drift begins in the mid 1950s, with a number of events that led to the exodus of members from Soviet Russia-affiliated Western European Communist parties (the Suez crisis, the failure of de-Stalinisation in the wake of Stalin's death, the Hungarian October), resulting in the maelstrom in which the New Left was formed and from which the attempts to reform East Bloc states grew.[6] Here the 'politics' ranged from dissenting and liberal, to militant and radical – from CND (Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament) and trade unionism to revolutionary Leninism and Maoism. The clearest expression of crisis – to put it in such a general way – was visible in those metropolitan centres, from May of 1968 onwards. And while an outline of the intellectualised progressive film culture can be promptly assembled (indeed, this strain represents the assimilatable of the era), it is a picture of the film culture aligned with the drift of 'progressive' politics of the left that is lacking in critical/academic histories (so that this strain represents the unassimilatable – the dated or forgotten – of the era). The critical/academic preoccupation has been with the

beginnings of this phase – aesthetic innovations (often associated with European New Waves of film-making), the usurping of previous traditions of film-making and a reengagement with others for a recalibration of film's concerns in relation to the here and now. The high summer that inexorably follows this spring – the crisis phase, on the streets and on the screen, with both as a continuation of the leftist progressive impulses identified above – is passed over in critical/academic histories. This phase, then, requires more than the brief review to be afforded here to the intellectual phase. Its beginnings (the early New Wave years), discussed and analysed in detail elsewhere, are only relevant in this study in relation to the way in which they evolve and develop, holistically, into a revolutionary phase.

To be specific: a sustained study of film as self-reflexively akin to and a facet of the revolutionary sensibility and activity on the streets of this period, rather than just coinciding with and being 'like' such activity, has not been published. In the periodisation of a progressive 1960s cinema that relies on surface similarities and formal aesthetic innovations, there is a sleight of hand that obscures the usual methodological lacuna in respect to such studies. The absent element is a consideration of the relationship – rather than the shared concerns – between text (or artefact or film) and context (or time or sociopolitical background). In his own study of films specifically about 1968, Bates says as much, though in different words, when he writes: 'recent historical accounts have ordered the events of May [1968] in predictable ways, making a study such as this, which [Bates claims] correlates revolutionary and artistic insight, sound almost mystical' (Bates 1985: 28). The present study will attempt to remove the mystification of such a correlation through identifying the relationship between text and context.

Avoiding this sleight of hand presents a clear task in this regard: to attempt to uncover such subterranean connections rather than noting a simple 'likeness'. However, the attempt arises from more than simple housekeeping (that is, attempting to revise and expand the idea of a progressive 1960s cinema). It is also a matter of the recovery of this period of film history; many of the films, invariably those lost in the curtailment of the critical/academic histories, now appear, long after their time, as singular and peculiar – even nonsensical or cryptic – and their concerns archaic and obscure. This marginalised quarter of the progressive cinema of the 1960s illustrates the reason why a consideration of the 'hardwiring' between text and context, of this time, has remained unexplored. In assembling a canonical narrative of directions in film from this time, this marginalised quarter suggests the potential to problematise, or undermine, or even give the lie to,

the scope of that narrative. The corollary of the avoidance of such a disruptive intrusion, then, is a limitation of the scope of the critical/academic narrative of this period. Small steps can be taken – following the way in which film-maker A reworked literary source B so as to make film C, where C represents a break with previous films drawn from literary sources (or autobiographies, or film genres, or specific locales, or film actors, and so on). Large steps, however, call into question the very parameters of this narrative. In film-maker X's methods, the possibility of film as existing outside conception Y is glimpsed – a direction that reaches fruition in film Z, where Z evidences the failure (or limitations, or misunderstandings, or degeneration) of such a direction in its entirety. In the final analysis, the marginalised body of work calls into question the veracity of the critical/academic history. From this vantage point, the critical/academic history seems to be revisionist, and effectively renders the artefacts innocuous (that is, depoliticising them) – unconsciously falling into that trope identified by Raymond Williams as the 'selective tradition' (Williams 1973: 9).

What, then, is the thread through progressive 1960s cinema, which runs from beginnings to fruitions, and so offers the possibility of an entry into, and full engagement with, the marginalised final stages of this period? My approach concerns a conception of film realism, its understood relationship with the world from which it is drawn (which presupposes a position on the nature of film itself), and its relationship with the reality film is then 'thrown back into'. If this is difficult to name, it is because this approach is coloured by the series of difficult outcomes noted above: the failures or limitations or misunderstandings or degenerations of this conception of film realism. And these difficult outcomes are only partially rooted in the more orthodox conceptions of film realism apparent at their beginnings. However, a body of original assumptions and understandings pertaining to film and film realism is prominent: the confluence of a tradition of realism in which the progressive films place themselves, as outlined and discussed by André Bazin. This represents the starting point of this study but it must be preceded, here, by a consideration of how best to approach this unifying conception.

Methodological Approach

Moving beyond a tendency of noting likenesses between text and context introduces a series of methodological questions. To ask where to look in

searching for the 'unknown quality' – the subterranean 'hardwiring' between artefact and time – is also to ask how to look. While a straight post-structuralist approach will prove to be useful in so far as differentiating the various 'avant-gardisms' on display within the field at hand, such 'textual' readings of the artefacts potentially wrenches them from their specific contexts. The existence of the film culture to which they belonged and of which they were a part, in its interdisciplinarian leanings and revolutionary aspirations, requires a wider consideration if the analysis is to be more than partial. And it is just such a limited close textual analysis that – even though rarely enacted in critical/academic histories – tends to lock the considerations of progressive 1960s film into the 'beginnings' phase: a formalist consideration of aesthetic innovations in themselves.

To go to the other extreme: an approach allied with new historicism (reception theory, audience studies) offers the possibility of assessing how the artefacts were understood at the time, but in so doing overrides the artefacts' own assumed context (which can be identified through a textual consideration) as moments in the revolutionary struggle. Irrespective of reactions to film Z, film Z's ambitions historically remain unrealised. Films at the service of a revolution that did not occur exist as a lost vanguard, not as texts that fully demand a consideration of their reception at the time.

So there is an impetus to return to the texts themselves as the loci of their own revolutionary conceptions, and offer close aesthetic readings of the texts that draw on a contextualisation of gestures, concerns and images within the wider discourses of the 1960s. And there is an impetus to identify film form as the prime focus of this analysis – to move beyond the modishness and the noting of instances of 'likeness', and to see in the practices of film-making the conceptualisation of film itself as a newly revolutionary medium. This approach is one of a deconstructionist bent, where the system of original signification is drawn from that tradition of film realism outlined and discussed by Bazin. I do not wish to 'free' the texts of retrospectively imposed meanings, again via post-structural approaches – a methodology typical of a project to recover forgotten or marginalised periods of cultural history. A deconstructionist approach seeks to allow a wider consideration of the film language that is evident – a wider consideration that then extends into areas of revolutionary practice, linking film form directly with revolutionary practice; a locating of the language that united the two. This methodology offers the best path in the endeavour of exposing the subterranean

connection, and so revealing something of the nature of the revolutionary phase of European 1960s film.

But the nature of the historical context demands another prerequisite for my approach. The study moves towards the revolution that failed, with its imaginings and calls to action, despite initial appearances, coming to little or no long-term achievement. This is the study, therefore, of oversight and overreach, wishful thinking and a lack of rigour in respect to the most important tactical and analytical questions made in the heat of the moment. Such retrospective thinking sheds a new light on the nature of any common language of revolutionary practice and film form. The osmosis-like connection actively sought by these films 'of' the revolution comes to be one in which the films come to function as a mirror to their revolutionary times rather than, or as much as, vehicles for the extension of the revolutionary struggle. Thus the condition of failure is as present in the artefacts as surely as in the times; it is immanent to both. Therefore the methodology must be one that seeks out and analyses what does not occur, the failure of their revolutionism, as founded on their blind spots and assumptions – the absences, or the state of absence, in the evolving revolutionary film form. The film texts can be said to be 'delicate'– therefore they may not survive deconstruction, so to speak; their cryptic nature is a token of their original lightness of touch, their obscure status is a returning of them to a precise moment in which their resonances and concerns spoke loudly, only to be rapidly silenced thereafter. The method of deepest, and most sympathetic, penetration into their workings is a deconstruction from an oblique angle: to examine the aporias (to use Derrida's term) of film form.

Brunette and Wills, in their importing of Derrida to film theory for their 1989 study, are hostile to Bazin's formulation of film realism. Through an analysis of the same Bazin texts discussed below, they diagnose an unthinking 'logocentric position' (Brunette and Wills 1989: 68), and so conclude 'the cinema . . . is no longer to be considered as the means by which a privileged visual medium controls and guarantees reality's "fall" into language and representation, with minimum loss of its original integrity . . . the screen becomes not the site of the consecration of that . . . metaphysically orientated or motivated operation but rather its marginal or liminal support' (Brunette and Wills 1989: 79). And so, thereafter, they can dismiss Bazin's reading of film realism as predicated on critically unsatisfactory assumptions – indeed, the dismissal is necessary to then enable their deconstruction of film language per se. A similarly forthright and totalising deconstruction is

inappropriate for my subject matter, since the nature of the 'failure' mentioned above is clearly generative. I am not concerned with the discourse of film realism, but with the conception of film realism, as evident in the discourse of a precise period. Furthermore, as I shall argue, there is a discernible reconceptualisation of the progressive European film after 1968 – that is, I will suggest, the field eventually, and to a far-reaching degree, 'corrects' itself anyhow. So it is through an aporetic analysis that this study will attempt to isolate and interrogate the limit of the progressive European film before 1968. And this limit becomes visible at the moments of impasse or suspension: the aporias. I am not accusing Brunette and Wills of throwing the baby out with the bath water, but I am returning to a process in which the bath water had its use – a process that reveals the explanation for the eventual discarding of the bath water (as the field 'corrects' itself).

Such an aporetic analysis is one that looks to Derrida's use of the term 'aporia', the 'barred passage' as he puts it (Derrida and Attridge 1992: 399) – a term fully developed towards the latter half of his academic life. In a different context (roughly, the question of the possibility of one's own death, as the 'passage' of oneself from life to death), Derrida writes, when he first encounters the possibility of aporia:

> *the difficult or the impracticable, here the impossible, passage, the refused, denied, or prohibited passage, indeed the nonpassage, which can in fact be something else, the event of a coming of a future advent [*événement de venue ou d'avenir*], which no longer has the form of the movement that consists in passing, traversing, or transiting. It would be the "coming to pass" of an event that would no longer have the form or the appearance of a* pas*: in sum, a coming without pas. (Derrida 1993: 8)*

The aporetic analysis is applied by Derrida and by subsequent post-structuralists, and with a characteristic looseness (breaking with 'scientific' dogma of structuralism), to the fields of ethics, politics, law, and philosophy itself. The aporia highlights the point, or nodes, of the unqualified assumptions in such discourses, so corroding the total readings seemingly, or potentially, possible with structuralism (or earlier structuralism). The aporetic analysis prompts a search for the irreducible underpinnings of the argument, the area that remains in a state of being unaccounted for by – or within or, finally, as – the parameters of the argument.

The aporia is quite other to the structuring thought that determines the field – in Derridean terms, a ghost to the live text, or the uncanny to the canny; the impossible, uninvited, undesired agent that then casts doubt on the entire enterprise. And this other world is revealed through a close textual examination of that which is as often as not, in the text itself, fudged, circumnavigated, overlooked or dissolved into strategies of avoidance. In the aporetic analysis of Derrida's *Aporias*, the aporias multiply – auto-engender, so to speak – until a climax is reached; it is more apparent here than in Derrida's earlier writing that the aporia is not a minor or accidental appendage to the text. It is, rather, the very condition that engulfs the text – that enables it, in the sense of allowing it to be created, and then providing a motor or conceptual foundation for that creation. The aporia is the very condition of the text. In this respect, an aporetic analysis allows for a radical rereading of the text – a '*negative form*' (Derrida 1993: 19, Derrida's italics) that splits the text asunder and reveals the workings of the conceptual foundation.

To invoke Derrida at this early stage is to suggest that a dense post-structuralist encounter with the outer reaches of the extremes of progressive and countercultural film is to come. Certainly, post-structuralists of the late 1960s onwards favoured just such film-making; Films that flaunted their awareness of and undermining of the expectation to which they were to adhere (that is, that invited the viewer to deconstruct normative film language) achieved a progressive status in such circles. And, as Derrida insisted, aporia are ultimately the enabling factor in themselves, not, or not merely, the transgressing of norms: in the aporia is the ability to articulate, with the aporia as first presupposing and finally containing the existence of such articulations. And this enabling – the 'to' – leads me to the wider supposed revolutionary moment rather than the countering of non-revolutionary norms; the movement in and for which the films functioned. Thus an instinctive contention was, from the outset of this study, that the revolutionary cinema shared aporia with the revolutionary movement (or, rather, with 'revolutionism'): the revolutionary aesthetic strategies were built upon a foundation that itself was shaky to begin with – lacking, it later seemed, historical analysis and theoretical rigour. The sympathetic reading that would therefore be required necessitates creating a framework for an aporetic analysis rather than any 'Derridean' or Derrida-derived programmatic aporetic analysis (if, indeed, such a thing can be said to exist; Brunette and Wills, despite their explicitly Derridean analyses of film texts, go to great lengths to cast their attempt as anything other than 'an explicit model of how deconstructive analysis was to be "done"' (Brunette and Wills 1989:

139)). And such a framework for an aporetic analysis prompts a critical lexicon: the examination of film form compels me to reach for (or warmly recognise in other critical writing) terms such as 'blind spot', 'lacuna', 'impasse', 'suspension of meaning', 'cul-de-sac', 'problematisation', 'vacuum' and 'lack'.

Positing Post-Bazinian Realism

The impetus behind the revolutionary phase of European 1960s film is grounded in the nature of the films themselves at the point at which a common denominator can be seen to stretch across this period – a consistency, or thread, that can be tracked from the beginnings to the fruitions, linking the formal aesthetic innovations of the early years to the messy failures of the later years. This common denominator, the existence of which is already and most immediately suggested in the shared characteristics of the films of this era, is the 'unknown quality' particular to progressive European film of the 1960s. The characteristics derive from the praxis, and the praxis speaks of a shared belief in realism as the quality that validates the film as a potentially serious endeavour (film as a non-frivolous, non-trivial reflection of the world at large). Or, more precisely, that still validated film as a potentially serious endeavour; this was no new idea but the bolstering of an old one – a furthering of the tradition of European film realism. Film realism, and the elements of film realism, becomes the vehicle with which a connection with found reality can occur, and be reproduced as the film is then shown. That connection transfigures film; the technology of film-making is rendered as little more than utilitarian in enabling an encounter with 'the real' – and the consciousness-raising potential of that encounter for the film viewers once reproduced. This suggests a clear path through the first phase of the New Wave films – to put to one side all other considerations so as to follow the evolution of a specific form of film realism in these, as well as other, progressive films of the 1960s.

Such a conception of film realism can be found in Bazin's early writing. However, it would be ahistorical to claim that, despite some anecdotal evidence, Bazin was the progenitor of this idea, as it flourished after his death in 1958. Indeed, in this early writing, as shall be argued, Bazin was only observing, and putting shape to, observable trends in film culture. His role was that of journalist and theorist, not manifesto writer or guiding intelligence; he championed a tradition of film realism by importing conceptual frameworks with which to first identify

and then – to put it at its simplest – 'tell the story' of the art of film. Elevating Bazin to the position of creator rather than chronicler would be erroneous. And any sense of a 'Bazin tradition' or 'Bazin school' is, in itself, inappropriate for the directions in film realism, as evident in progressive European film in the late 1960s; these directions were a far cry from the realism identified and championed by Bazin.

And yet the body of thought associated with Bazin sheds the most light on films from the 1960s. It reveals – that is, enables the identification of – the common denominator that stretches across the era in its entirety. Bazin's initial identification of film realism – which is done in religious and mystical terms – articulates a 'real connection' between found reality and reproduced reality. From this articulation arises an entire reading of the essence of film. And a sense of such a 'real connection', which may be called a Bazinian conception or understanding of film, remains as the basis of the development of revolutionary film in the 1960s. The milieu of this development was therefore 'Bazinian', and the development itself occurred within or against a heritage, with an orthodox and non-orthodox wing, of the Bazinian conception or understanding of film. For the purposes of this study, then, the period under scrutiny can best be revealed, examined and organised when identified as that of a post-Bazinian realism. The points of connection between Bazin and the films of this period remain loose, even tenuous at times, and so a post-Bazinian realism can be discerned as arising without adherence to an orthodoxy, and with Bazin's writing demoted to a mythical rather than prescriptive or programmatic theory of film realism. Therefore, following a brief consideration of Bazin's relevant writings, the situation in which a post-Bazinian realism could evolve, and the background of such an evolution, will be summarised.

It is more than an afterthought to note the scope of Bazin's own project, which MacCabe describes as the attempt at 'gaining control of a certain section of the French [film] industry' (MacCabe 2003: 60) through the cultivation of 'an educated taste' (MacCabe 2003: 72). 'This is a political programme in itself' notes MacCabe (MacCabe 2003: 72), and the merging of politics and aesthetics into one critical discourse occurs outside orthodox political affiliation, in the way in which Bazin's co-founded journal, *Cahiers du Cinéma*, 'was thus conceived as a project which rejected both the culture of the state and the culture of the Communist left' (MacCabe 2003: 71). In this way, Bazin saw himself as the forger of new traditions, and not as a lowly film reviewer. And the raison d'être for Bazin's

activity might be said to be in his own political line – an anti-Stalinist of the left; that is, a Western intellectual outside an orthodox Communist party, radicalised by the events of the 1950s, and seeking to find a progressive path outside the Stalinist hegemony. Film, as a serious artistic endeavour, was to be a part of the building of that path (and it had its own Stalinist apologists 'in house'; figures such as Guido Aristarco and Georges Sadoul). In this respect, the progressive films of the 1960s, in their heady revolutionary phase, recall the scale of the cultural-political ambitions associated with the figure of Bazin.

Notes

1. For a brief summation of differing interpretations of the notion of 'expanded cinema' and/or 'expanded screen', a tendency of the late 1960s of 'projections and activities that exploded the framework of the cinema' (Michalka 2004: 10, note 4), see (Michalka 2004: 7 and ff, and 85 note 16).
2. For Hardt and Negri on the biopolitical, see Hardt and Negri (2001: 22 and ff).
3. For this reason, this book concentrates on national film cultures where auteurs had 'less' to complain about – predominantly Italy, France, West Germany and the United Kingdom. Radicalism in these film cultures was mostly unreconstructed and rarely tactical; the persistence of Stalinism was not detrimental to the physical or mental well-being of the populace (a sentiment forcibly driven home in the films of the Czech New Wave, and true too of the Yugoslav New Wave), and bureaucratic state censorship did not draw their fire in terms of liberalism and freedom of expression (as with Spain and the German Democratic Republic, where the film industries were monitored at the point of distribution as well as production). In short, this study engages with Western European left film culture. Indeed, this culture was rarely parochial and tended to consider its targets (either bourgeois or Communist-party affiliated) as European rather than specific to French, Italian, British or West German societies. Comparable studies to this that have tended to country-specific discussions and demarcations have often therefore imposed unhelpful categories that are bound up to nation states rather than classes, and local governance rather than ideology.

   This consideration of areas of concentration in this book is also made pragmatically in terms of the existence of a substantial, national film culture per se, which was not active in some Western European countries in the 1960s.
4. Truffaut's *Les Quatre Cents Coups* premiered in France on 3 June 1959 and Godard's *A Bout de Souffle* was released on 16 March 1960 (and in New York in February 1961). Chabrol's *Le Beau Serge* was released slightly earlier (11 February 1959; filming on it began in December 1957), as was his *Les Cousins* (11 March 1959), but these films

failed to generate the international attention soon afforded to Truffaut and Godard (despite their success; see Neupert 2002: 125, 129). Although the surrounding publicity saw in these two releases the 'arrival' of the Nouvelle Vague proper, Houston notes that in 1959 twenty-four film-makers presented debut features, and a further forty-three in 1960 (Houston and Roud 1968: 100). Perhaps Cannes 1959 is a more appropriate choice for the moment of arrival: Marcel Camus' *Orfeu Negro* was awarded the Grand Prix, *Les Quatre Cents Coups* the prize for direction and *Hiroshima, Mon Amour* (Alain Resnais, 1959) the International Critics' prize. Truffaut had gone from persona non grata at the festival (for his inflammatory journalism) to its toast. In 1959 Godard defiantly defined the new in relation to the old; the Nouvelle Vague was a breaking with the 'tradition of quality' and a filmic equivalent of the dissenting 'MacMahonist' sensibility:

> All we have to say to you is this. Your pan shots are ugly because your subjects are poor, your actors act badly because your dialogue is lousy; to sum up, you cannot shoot films because you do not know what cinema is. Today we have won the day. It is our films that will prove at Cannes that France looks good, cinematographically speaking. And next year it will be the same. Let there be no doubt about that! Fifteen new brave, sincere, lucid, beautiful films will again stand in the way of conventional productions. We may have won a battle, but the war is not yet over. (quoted in de Baecque 1997: 155)

In fact, Godard's estimations were conservative; French and Jacob tally 170 debut films from French film-makers between 1959 and 1963, the majority of which have long since been forgotten (French 1993: xii; Jacob 1964/65: 5). In more general terms, and with a number of exceptions, the term 'New Wave' films, in relation to 1960s European cinema, denotes films characterised by an 'immediacy' via their inclusion of contemporary reality and a 'freedom' of film form (unbound by the rules or norms of 'good' film grammar).

5. Chabrol notes a certain irony in the subsequent association of the term Nouvelle Vague with opposition to bourgeois society and mores:

> For, let there be no mistake about this, if the press talked about us so much, it was because they wished to establish the equation: de Gaulle equals Renewal. In the cinema as well as everything else. The General arrives, the Republic changes, France is reborn. Look at this flowering of talent. The intellect blossoms in the shadow of the cross of Lorraine. Make way for the young! (Nicholls 1993: 10)

Benayoun agreed and uses this as grounds for criticism; that the Nouvelle Vague was intrinsically Gaullist: 'it is quite clear that Gaullist France, with its raucous demagogy and its blindness to realities, was ideal ground for a school of ultra-bourgeois expression' (Benayoun 1968: 158), noting too the export of the films for the purposes of 'French propaganda' (Benayoun 1968: 157).

6. In this study the terms 'Left' and 'orthodox Left' denote the Communist parties, and their members, formally associated with the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU); 'radical', 'dissident', 'dissenting', 'progressive', 'non-orthodox Left' and 'left' denote leftists outside or critical of these parties. Radical, here, is often aspirational: to break with the conventions of political discourse and articulate a fuller and even subjective response to what was, as the 1960s progressed, an evermore unpredictable and vibrant political and cultural scene. But the radical critique, as discussed in this book, often stopped short of proposing or demanding a radical change. That step, promoting or even catalysing revolution, was also aspirational, or arose from a reading of the social situation as truly pre-revolutionary, and hence the deployment, here, of the term 'revolutionism'. That term denotes excising in a state of revolutionariness, or aspirant revolution, articulating in a revolutionary manner, but all without the existence of an actual revolution, in the classically understood sense.

   Years later, two film-makers who feature prominently in this study, Bernardo Bertolucci and Philippe Garrel, would revisit 1968. *The Dreamers* (2003) and *Les Amant Réguliers* (*Regular Lovers*, 2005), respectively, evoked the rich countercultural and revolutionary ambience of the times, even at the point of violent resistance to the provocations of the armed security forces of the state: just such a 'revolutionism'. By contrast, Chris Marker's *A Grin without a Cat* (1977,1993) would follow the trajectory from revolutionary aspirations of 1968 to one-issue matters and the early years of identity politics in the 1970s, tracing revolutionism back through radicalism and then to reformism.