

Cinema is paradoxical in its volatile state as being an art and commerce, constantly redefining the present and archiving the past. Like a body of water, cinema flows in the direction of time. It's surface, where one would drink from, is made up of the works that have garnered the most attention from the system which contains it. Underneath are the heteroglossia of voices which are either unexpressed or unheard. One may think of a Wave of cinema as a literal wave which builds up energy beneath in its rejection of the system which contains it. By utilizing both the context of the surface (economic structure, technology, stylistic influence) and multiplicity of ideas beneath (non-dominant ideology), the Wave rises and crashes, disrupting flow momentarily and forever altering the surface pattern.

Baudrillard predicted that "the revolution of our time is the uncertainty revolution".¹ The works of Adorno, Horkheimer, and Jameson all corroborate this proliferation of images with developments in technology under late-Capitalism has disembodied object-meaning relations. Particularly since the American election in 2016, the mass media has discombobulated audiences' grasp on ideas of truth and falsity, in fact and perception. This calls into question the power of media over a system and society, and how "cinema is playing its role... in contributing to a deepening (and often seemingly intolerable) uncertainty?".² Would a Wave ever even be possible under our postmodern Capitalist system?

The economic conditions in Hollywood have entered another major shift, similar to as in the fifties as it did with the advent of television. Networks are scrambling now to tap into the market of streaming where content is becoming indistinguishable from the personal and corporate. With the rise of social media, every participant is now both a content creator and consumer.

While independent cinema has made a resurgence through companies such as A24, Annapurna, and Magnolia Pictures, they are dependent on distribution deals with streaming networks to stay afloat. Marketing themselves with a commitment to popularizing independent counter-culture content, just like in the 60s, their filmmakers are inextricably bound to their Capitalist funding conditions. This means that although they have certain creative liberties to experiment with form, especially with the lower cost of the digital age, they are still in the competitive market with studio Hollywood blockbusters. Accessibility to audiences depends on their limited distribution in cinemas and streaming networks, which is strategized down to a science. With this top-down approach, from the corporate level indistinguishable from that of the studios, it seems impossible for filmmakers to team together and make ideologically unified content. These independent production companies are still deeply rooted within the Capitalist system as they are only supporting filmmakers, albeit both financially and intellectually, who can promise a diversity of topical content. Conversely, the big Hollywood studios have found themselves in competition with the content value of these smaller independent pictures and are rewiring their politics to become more inclusive of neo-liberal audiences.

The seemingly endless amount of money that companies such as Netflix, Hulu, and Amazon are pouring into new shows is unsustainable. Though the consumer base is hungry for content and willing to pay a premium for it, the amount of it that is gearing up to be produced far

¹Jean Baudrillard, *The Transparency of Evil*. Translated by James Benedict (London and New York: Verso, 1990).

² Dr. Jeanne S.M. Willette, "Jean Baudrillard and the System of Objects" Art History Unstuffed. Accessed April 15, 2019. <https://arthistoryunstuffed.com/jean-baudrillard-system-of-objects/>.

exceeds the consumers' realistic budgets. Now with Apple Streaming spending money without seeing a return on that capital just to have their foot in the door, there is becoming an excess of content which will force consumers to choose between these services.³ Though, the choice is indeterminate because they all advertise themselves as offering the most "relevant" content, and no one service offers everything.

While there are provoking, innovative films reaching more audiences than ever before, it is difficult for consumers to discern between ideologies, or how the "mainstream" impacts their image-meaning relations. Baudrillard would call this living in a simulation of Capitalist society where media is the simulacra, or copy (of a copy, of a copy) of a moral and value system which is no longer grounded in ideal.⁴ Consumers are ever accepting that the basis of reality is formed through notions of image-meaning relationships propagated by the media.

Cinematic Waves expose viewers to the multitude of fractured, heteroglossic realities which shape our postmodern world and confront our rigid ideologies. Reexaminations of our individuality initiate the reconstruction of society. For a Wave to occur, there must be a demand from the consumer base and a group of people who will stand to reject the proliferation of image. The only possibility of a Wave happening is if American audiences can recognize their entrapment in our postmodernist, advanced Capitalist system. This would begin with a growing disaffection for the American political system. Are we not there already? It is now in the hands of the artists to recognize their own culpability and band together to wield creative agency in revolt.

³ Spectator, "Apple Unveiled Its New Television Streaming Platform, Apple TV+, for Which Programmes Would Be Commissioned" (2019).

⁴ Coulter "Jean Baudrillard and Cinema," 2010.