

New Approaches in Film Studies

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This special edition of *Anarchist Developments in Cultural Studies* takes on an ambitious endeavour: to showcase new contributions to the field of Film Studies. Until recently there has been a dearth of anarchist scholarship concerned with cinema, a situation attributable, in part, to anarchism's historic marginalization in academia, but the situation is rapidly changing, thanks to the scholarship of Richard Porton, Susan White, and Nathan Jun, to name a few. Thus, as anarchist scholarship makes an impact, it seemed timely to assemble a special issue focussing on film.

The issue begins with “Mobilizing Passions: Ideology, Incoherence, and Fascism in Cinema,” in which Jesse Cohn argues fascism is as protean and self-contradictory as it is toxic, and that this presents a unique challenge to political analysis. Cohn critiques conceptions of “ideology” in film theory which prove especially inadequate to the challenge of accounting for the phenomena of fascism, past and present. He suggests ideological canons in contemporary film theory must give way to theories of *affects* and *affordances* that can account for the unstable polysemy of fascistic cultural production. Kristoffer Noheden’s “The Wild Medium: Anarchism and Surrealist Cinema,” adopts an approach that treats film as a ‘wild’ medium akin to Claude Lévi-Strauss’s concept of ‘wild thought’. Noheden points to “As in a Wood” (1951), in which André Breton lamented that, following its transition to sound, film had settled into “a theatrical type of action” and thus become ‘domesticated’. Noheden looks to surrealist film makers who cleaved to film’s ‘wild’ potential. Narratives of revolt,

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montage employed to subvert the conventional order of the world, and filmic allusions to magic and occultism, he argues, ally their productions with broader anarchist tendencies.

In “Propagating Tactical Media in Anarchist Movement Cultures,” Kim Crosswell asks where, within a media ecosystem dominated by profitability algorithms, can activists find politically critical resources online? She demonstrates how the anarchist sub.Media collective successfully propagates radical video content, independently distributed across multiple online platforms, to foster communities of resistance and transformation that are mirrored in their own infrastructure, and the rebellious aesthetics they procreate. Following Crosswell, James Newton wrestles with relationships between anarchist theory and the history of film, drawing on the work of Jun and others. Newton’s article is not only a postscript reflecting on his 2019 study, *The Anarchist Cinema*: it advances the importance of a constructive approach that looks to build up rather than critique, an approach that embraces a love of cinematic history, even when that history fails to live up to anarchism’s ideals. Closing out this issue, my own contribution, “Toward an Anarchist-Apocalypse Cinema Analysis,” offers a new analytical methodology for film analysis situated at the intersections of anarchism and apocalyptic change. Tracking apocalyptic thinking in anarchist theory and practice, I draw on this current to examine late twentieth century avant-garde films that propagated anarchistic conceptions, thus countering conservative narratives in Hollywood’s film industry. My project is to recover lost and/or displaced notions of the apocalypse and put them in the service of developing an anarcho-apocalyptic analytical paradigm for film studies.