
The Politicization of Film Criticism in France after May 68: Costa-Gavras Films *Z* and *The Confession*, a Dialogue between France, Greece and Czechoslovakia

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Abstract

The events of May 68 in France have left a deep impression on French cinema and the marriage of cinema and politics became a central axis of reflection in the world of French filmmaking.

The creation and projection of films *Z* and *The Confession*, in France, took place during the post-May period 68. These two films denounce the repression exerted by political regimes, on the right (Regime of the Colonels in Greece) and on the left (Slansky trial in Czechoslovakia orchestrated by the Stalinist regime).

By studying the journalistic criticism of these films during their first release in France, I will show how political engagement as a receiving component changed the criteria for film evaluation after May 68. I will question how the labeling of a film as "political" is conditioned at this time by socio-political criteria that go beyond the cinematographic codes. I will show that there has been an emergence of import of political criteria as classificatory elements in the cinema, criteria that are revealed through the politicization of film criticism. The intention of this paper is, ultimately, to advance the reflection on the ways in which protest engagements in the world of cinema in May '68 disturbed the social, political and symbolic order of film criticism, through an empirical and comparative analysis based on unpublished documents.

Keywords: political fiction, art sociology, visual sociology, criticism, May 68

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