

Published the year after the May '68 revolts, Jean-Louis Comolli and Jean Narboni's editorial for *Cahiers du cinéma*, "Cinema/Ideologie/Critique" (Cinema/Ideology/Criticism) landed like a bombshell in the French film criticism landscape. Inciting heated polemics with rival journals such as *Cinéthique* and *Positif*, the manifesto-like text proclaimed that "every film is political" and proposed reading films according to their ability to provoke formal "discrepancies and ruptures" with the dominant, capitalist economic and ideological system, allowing for a "critical de-construction with the system of representation." Initiating a furious half-decade of politically engaged critical activity within the journal, "Cinema/Ideology/Criticism" passed into the film studies canon, both in France and internationally. If it has long been viewed through a historical lens, as a product of its time both in its political stridency and its Althusser-inspired theoretical framework, the impending 50th anniversary of Comolli/Narboni's editorial prompts us to re-read and interrogate the article both within a contemporary cultural context, and in the framework of a longer, transnational tradition of political aesthetics.

The text, and the conditions in which it was produced, indeed prompt many questions for scholars, critics, filmmakers and activists. What was the nature of the resonance this text had for film theory in the years following its publication? What effects did it have on the later activity of the journal's editors themselves, who have continued to think about, write on and make cinema up to today? How can we insert Comolli/Narboni's ideas into other national or theoretical contexts? What is the relevance for the present day, with its markedly different ideological contours, of the intertwining of political engagement and formal experimentation advocated by *Cahiers*? At a time when the function of the critic, and the very definition of the visual image itself, are

coming increasingly into question, what lessons can this period of radical insurgency have for the making and critical analysis of films and other audiovisual texts? How much can its lessons be applied not only to the cinema, but also to the vast field of audiovisual media production, whose omnipresence in 21st century societies could only be faintly divined in 1969?

This conference will bring together an international selection of scholars to collectively revisit one of the landmark texts in the history of film theory.

Venue:

**Aula der Städelschule
Dürerstraße 10
60596 Frankfurt am Main**

**Organised by the
Institut für Theater-, Film- und
Medienwissenschaft,
Goethe-Universität Frankfurt**

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**More information on our website
www.cinema-ideology-criticism.de**

"CINEMA / IDEOLOGY / CRITICISM"

**1969–2019:
Politics of Form,
Forms of Politics**

An International Symposium

Presenters:

**Jean-Louis Comolli (by video)
Thomas Elsaesser
Philip Rosen
Jane Gaines
Francesco Casetti
Dudley Andrew
and many more**

**Aula der Städelschule
Frankfurt am Main
28–30 November, 2019**

Conference Schedule

Thursday, November 28

2:00pm–2:15pm

Conference Welcome

Daniel Fairfax (Goethe-Universität Frankfurt) and
Vinzenz Hediger (Goethe-Universität Frankfurt)

2:15pm–4:00pm

Session 1: Cinema and Spectacle

Video presentation:

Jean-Louis Comolli,

“‘Cinema/Ideology/Criticism’: Yesterday and Today”

Keynote address:

Thomas Elsaesser (Columbia University),
“Spectacle: Making the Visible Invisible”

4:30pm–6:00pm

Screening

*À voir absolument (si possible): Dix années aux Cahiers
du cinéma 1963-1973* (dir. Jean-Louis Comolli and Jean
Narboni, 2011, 80min)

Friday, November 29

9:30am–12:30pm

Session 2: History and Ideology

Moderator:

Vinzenz Hediger (Goethe-Universität Frankfurt)

Panellists:

– Marco Grosoli (Habib University),
“The Unaccomplished Divorce: Comolli’s Writings in the
First Half of the 1960s”

– Sam di Iorio (Hunter College, CUNY),
“Detour #2: Jazz Direct & Indirect”

– Elif Sendur (SUNY Binghamton),
“Neither Singular nor Collective: *Cahiers du Cinéma’s*
Experimentation with Young Mr. Lincoln”

1:30pm–4:30pm

Session 3: Theory and Textuality

Moderator:

Sonia Campanini (Goethe-Universität Frankfurt)

Panellists:

– Daniel Fairfax (Goethe-Universität Frankfurt),
“The Insights and the Oversights:
‘Cinema/Ideology/Criticism’ Viewed from 2019”
– Philip Rosen (Brown University),
“Textual Disruption and Film Theory, Then and Now”
– Jane Gaines (Columbia University),
“If Reality is Nothing More Than the Prevailing Ideology”

5:00pm–7:00pm

Session 4: Language and Ontology

Moderator:

Rembert Hüser (Goethe-Universität Frankfurt)

Panellists:

– Pierre Eugène (Université Paris-Nanterre),
“Serge Daney from 1968 to 1972: In and Out of *Cahiers
du cinéma*”
– Dudley Andrew (Yale University), “The Persistence of
Rohmer at *Cahiers du cinéma*, 1968–1972”

7:00pm–8:00pm

Screening

*Une partie de campagne: Les Cahiers du cinéma face au
film* (dir. Bernard Eisenschitz, 1969, 52min).

Saturday, November 30

9:30am–12:30pm

Session 5: Critique and Practice

Moderator:

Daniel Fairfax (Goethe-Universität Frankfurt)

Panellists:

– Volker Pantenburg (Freie Universität Berlin),
“Repercussions of a Debate: *Cahiers* vs. *Cinéthique* in
Filmkritik”
– Christa Blümlinger (Université Paris-VIII),
“Critical Activity as Utopia: Alexander Kluge”
– Sulgi Lie (Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität Bonn),
“Political Modernism or Late Modernism? Film Criticism,
Jameson and Aesthetic Historicity”.

1:30pm–3:30pm

Session 6: Cinephilia and the Apparatus

Moderator:

Philipp Dominik Keidl (Goethe-Universität Frankfurt)

Panellists:

Vinzenz Hediger (Goethe-Universität Frankfurt),
“The Repentant Cinephile: On Film Criticism as Self-
Criticism”
Francesco Casetti (Yale University),
“Lost in the Apparatus: The Last Revival of the Fear of
Cinema”

4:00pm–5:00pm

Closing Discussion