

15x4

What Would a Socialist Cinema Look Like?

A Retrospective on Hollywood and Godard

Naman Kumar, 7 May 2026

A Starting Point — *Breathless* (1960)



“Modern movies begin here, with Jean-Luc Godard's "Breathless" in 1960. No debut film since "Citizen Kane" in 1942 has been as influential.”

— Roger Ebert

A Starting Point — *Breathless* (1960)



“Modern movies begin here, with Jean-Luc Godard's "Breathless" in 1960. No debut film since "Citizen Kane" in 1942 has been as influential.”

— Roger Ebert



“Modern?”

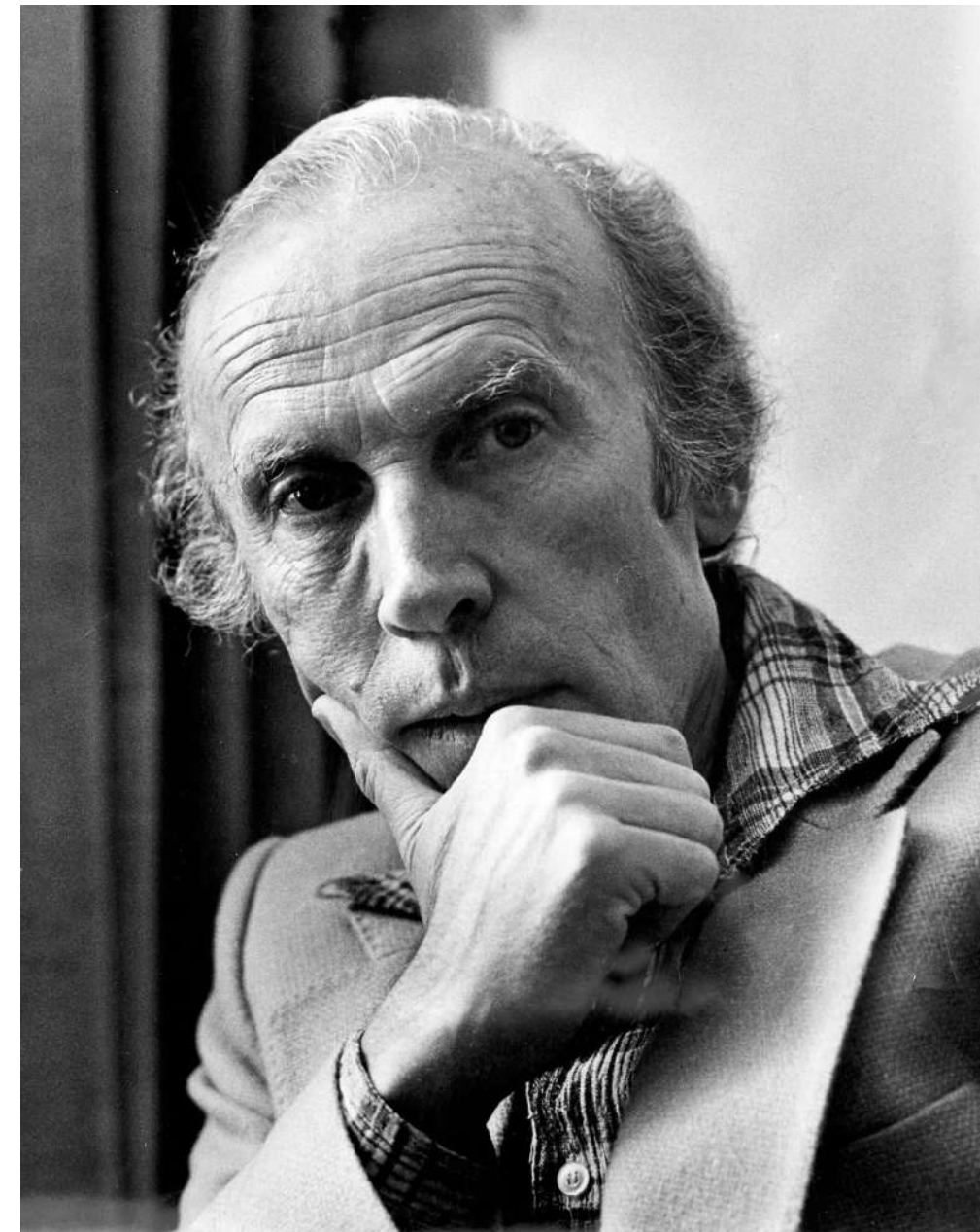
French New Wave (*Nouvelle Vague*)



François
Truffaut



Jean-Luc
Godard



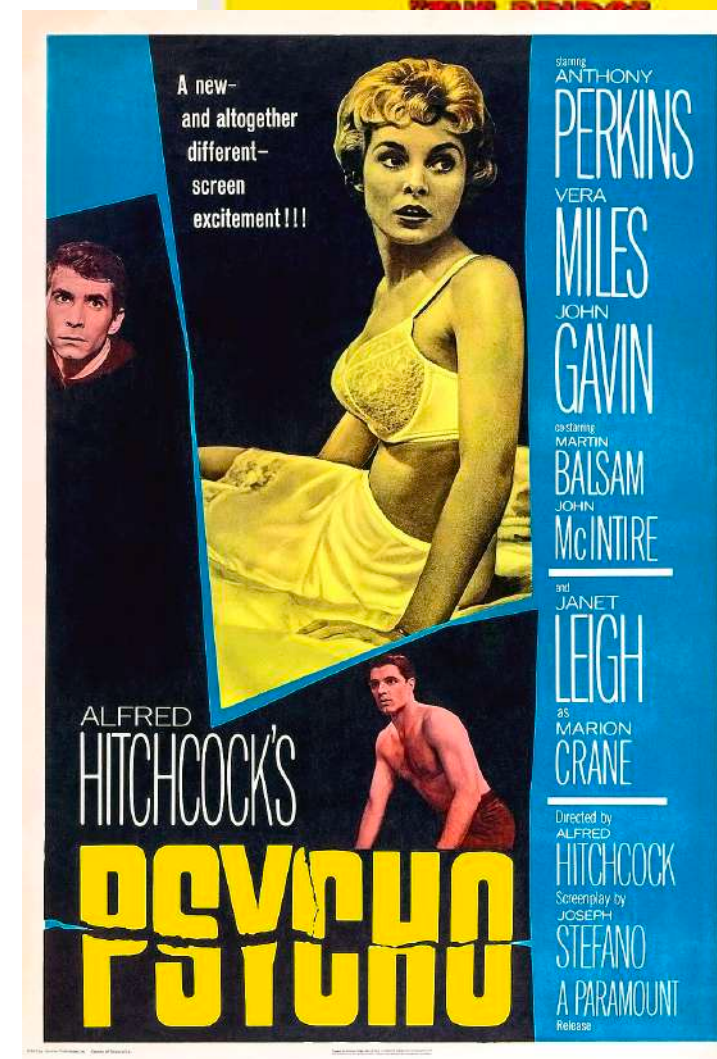
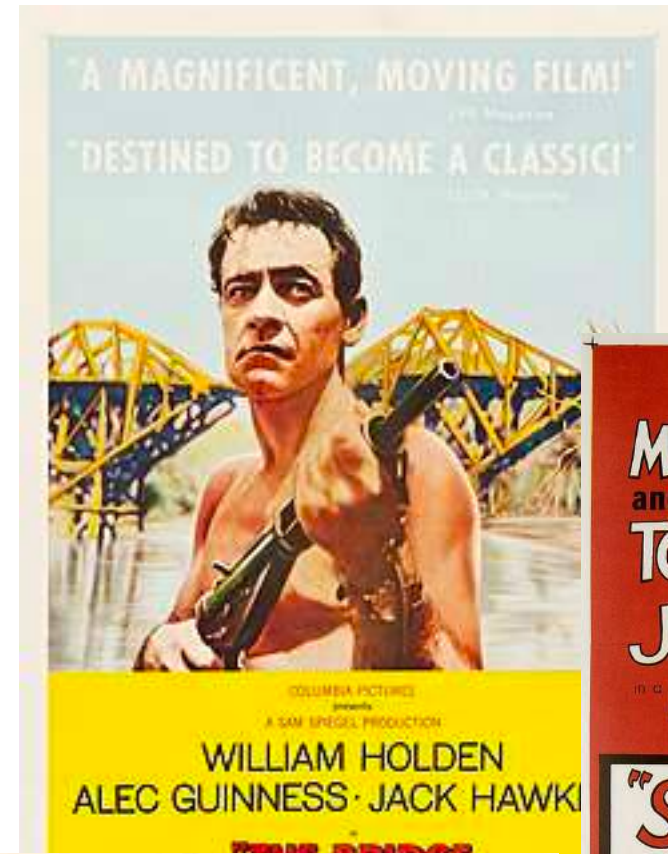
Éric
Rohmer



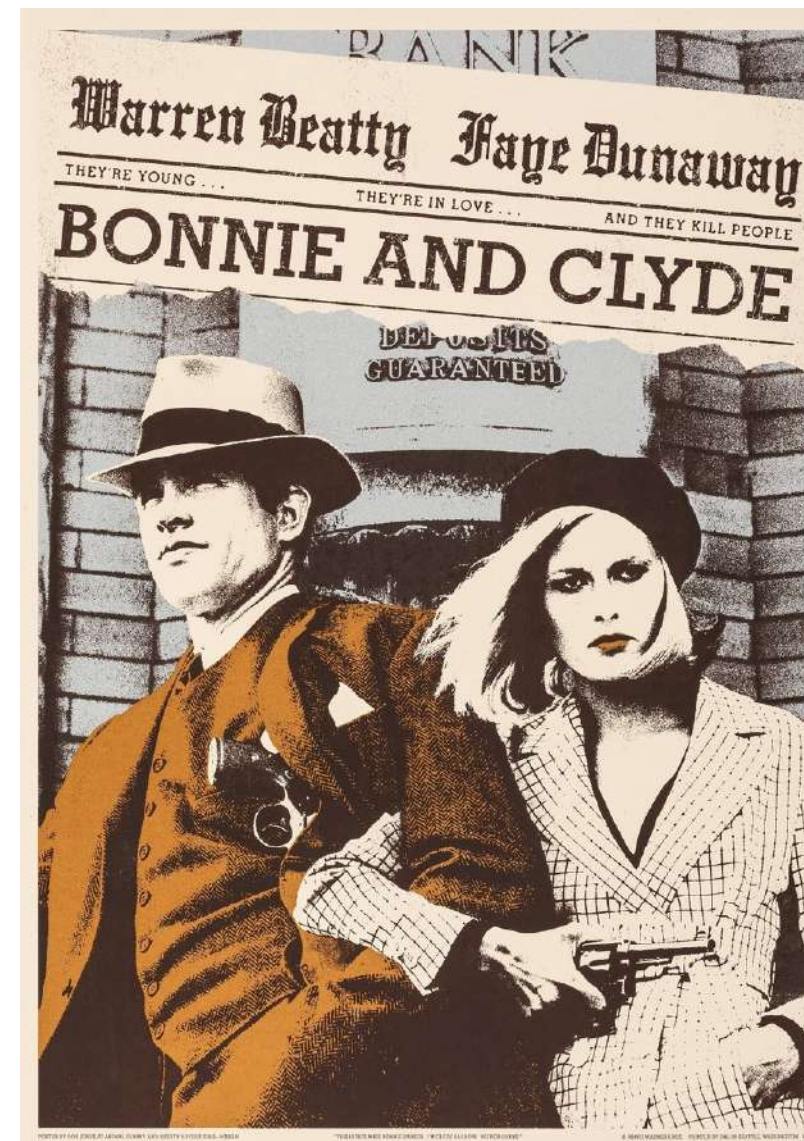
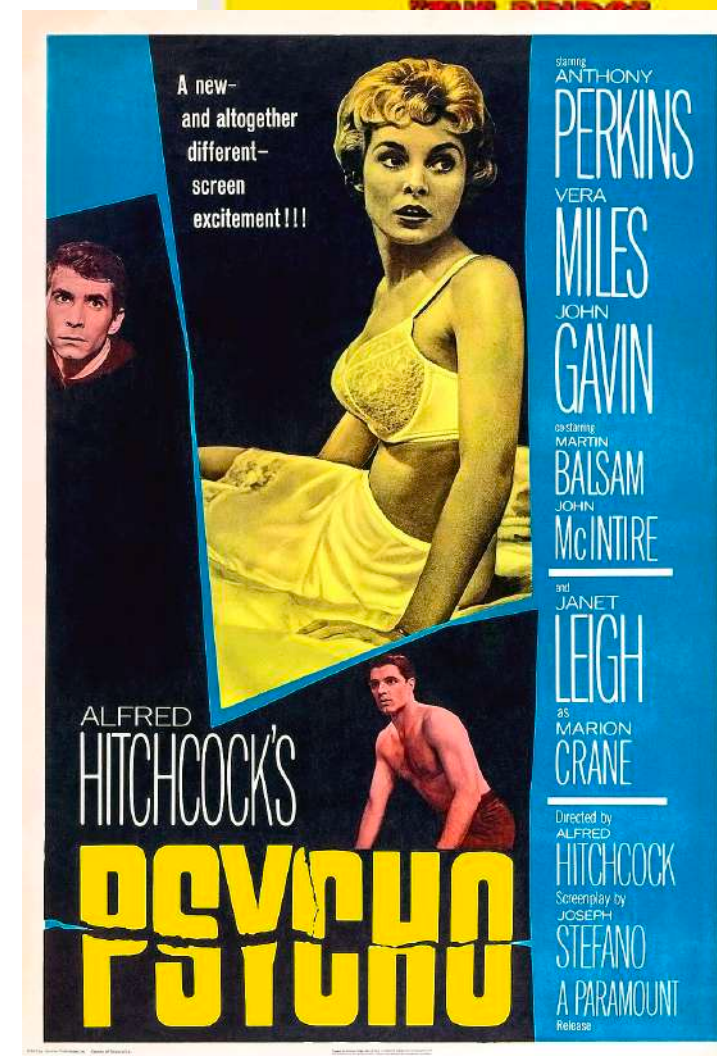
Agnès
Varda

And Many More...

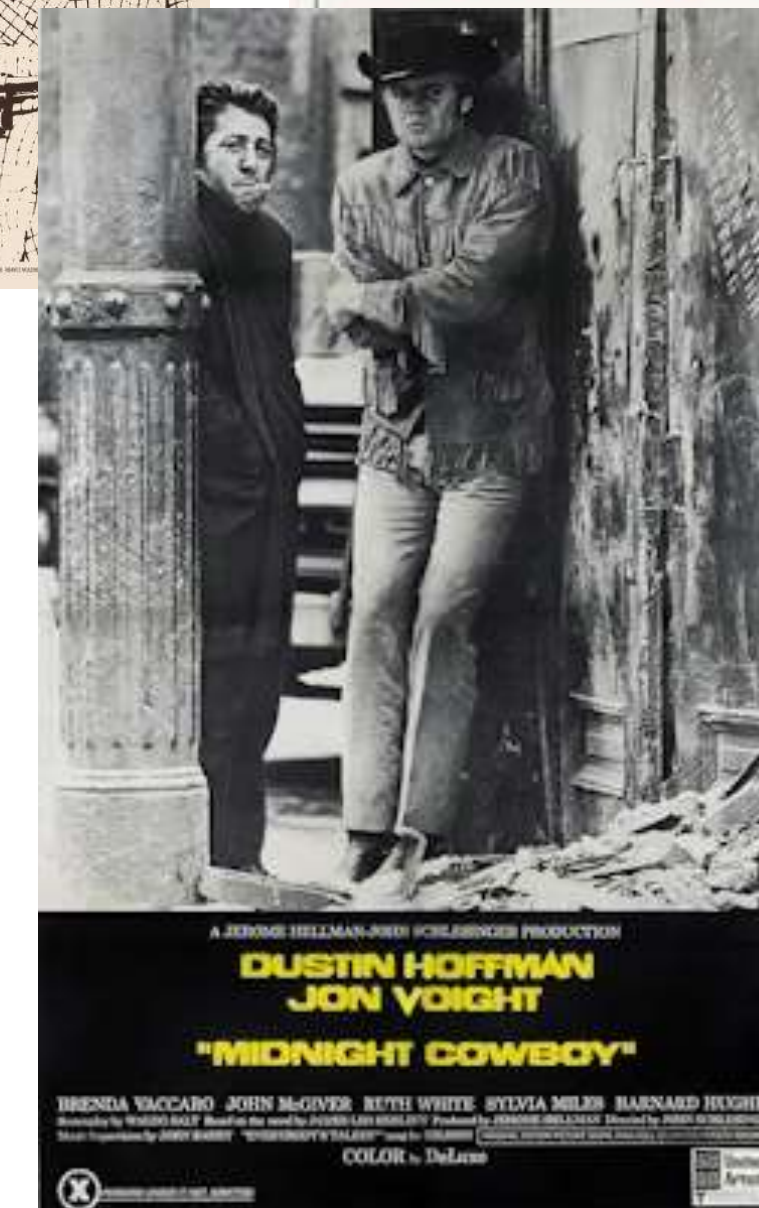
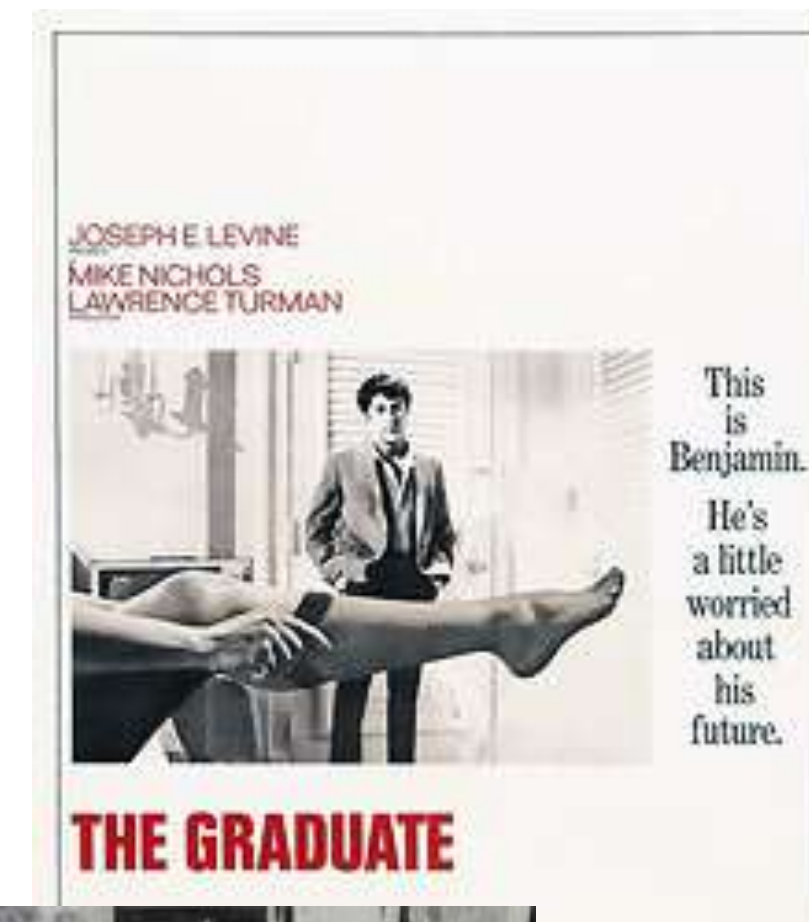
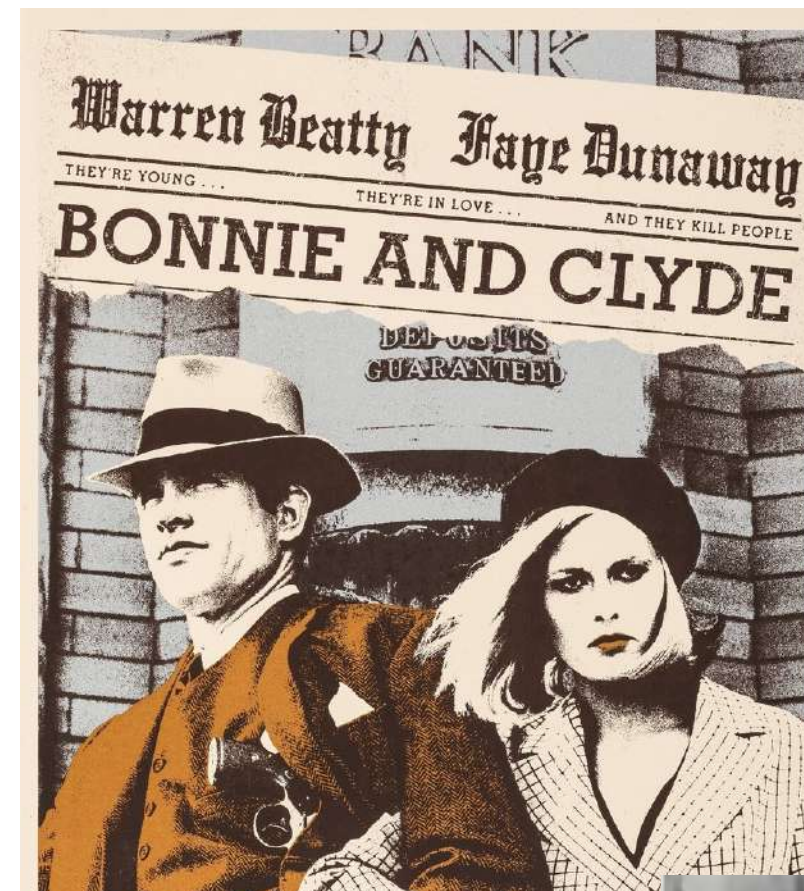
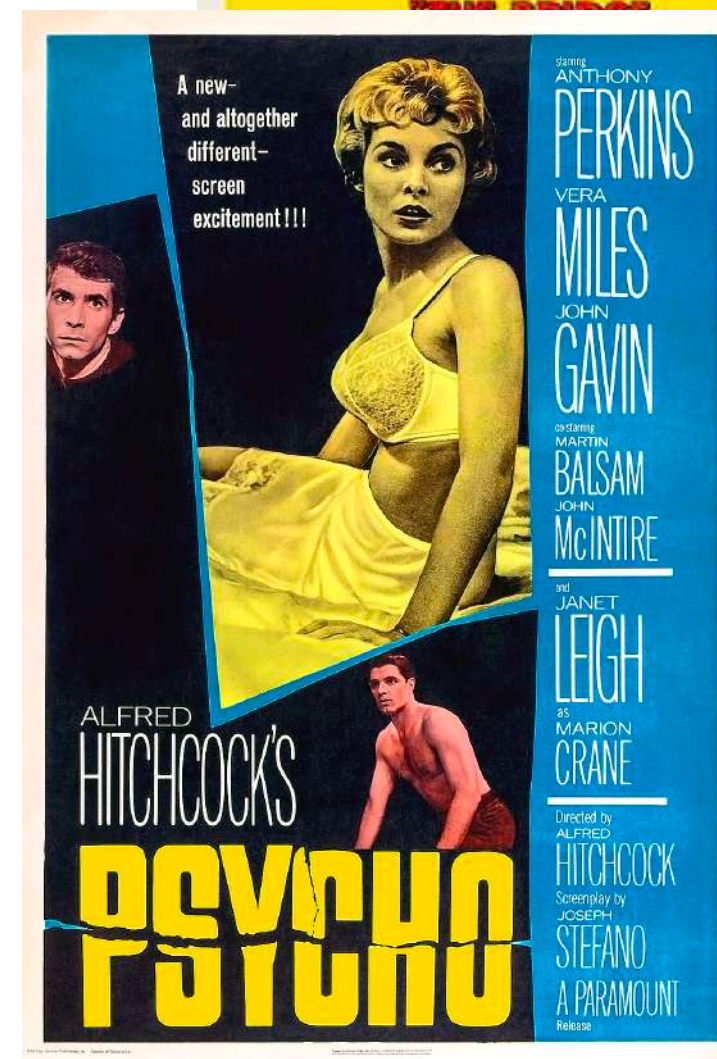
Hollywood Movies — Before and After



Hollywood Movies — Before and After



Hollywood Movies — Before and After



Breathless and Hollywood



Mystery and fascination of this American cinema. How can I hate Robert McNamara and adore Take the High Ground, hate the John Wayne who supports Goldwater and tenderly love him when he abruptly takes Nathalie Wood into his arms in the next to last reel of The Searchers?

All my avowed ambitions were to make a normal gangster film.

— Godard

— Writing for Cahiers du Cinéma

But Socialism?

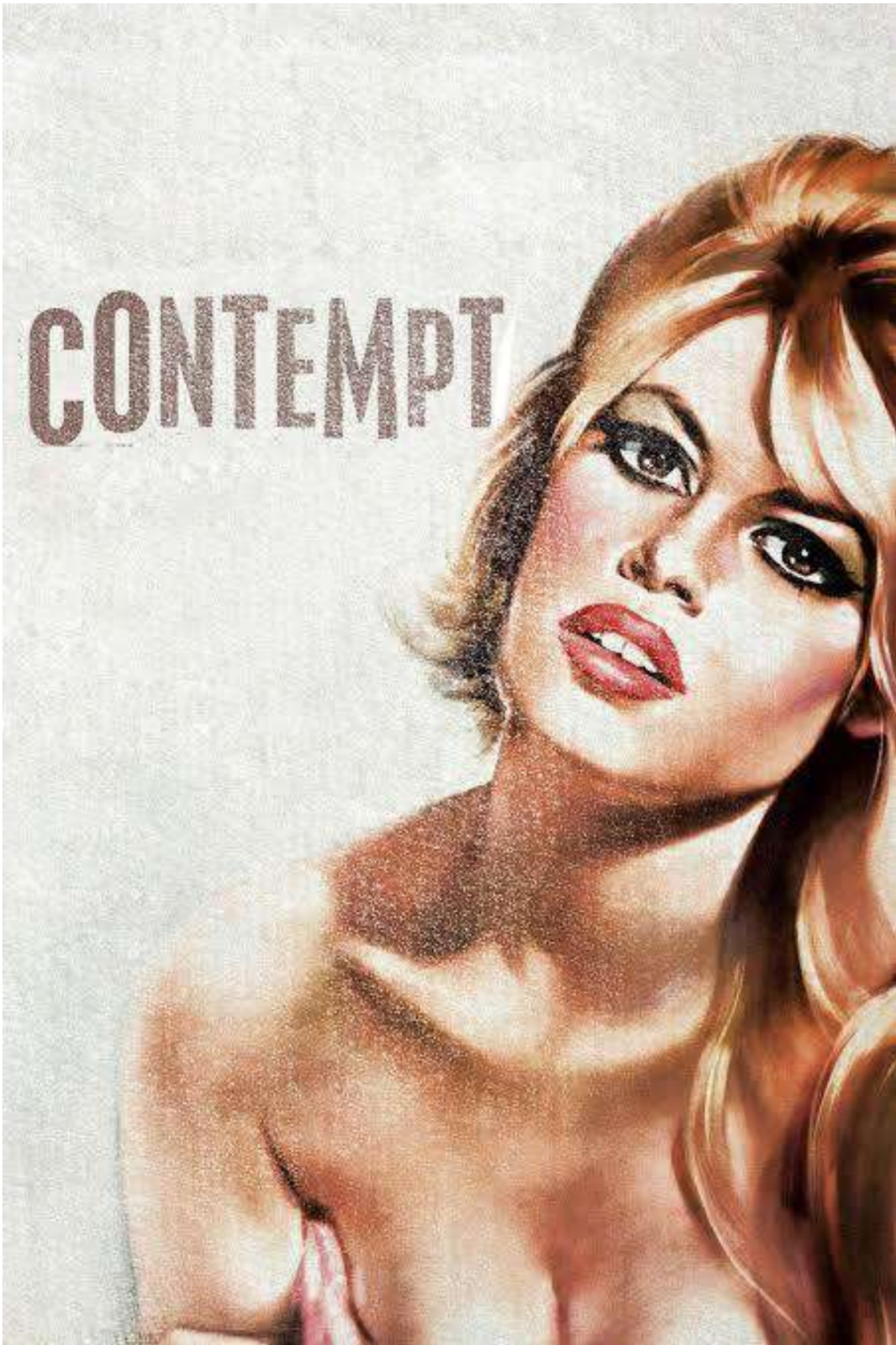


(From *Masculin Féminin*, 1966)

Godard's 'Political Era'

Year ⇄	Original title ⇄	English title ⇄	Notes
1968	<i>Ciné-tracts</i>		
	<i>Le Rouge: Film-Tract: n° 1968</i>		Co-directed and written with Gérard Fromanger ; also Editor and Producer
	<i>Un Film comme les Autres</i>	<i>A Film Like Any Other</i>	Editor
	<i>Sympathy for the Devil</i>		
	<i>One A.M. (One American Movie)</i>		Unfinished; also cinematographer. Incorporated into <i>One P.M.</i> by D. A. Pennebaker (1971).
1969	<i>Le Gai Savoir</i>	<i>Joy of Learning</i>	Narrator; also Editor
	<i>British Sounds</i>		Co-directed and written with Jean-Henri Roger
	<i>Pravda</i>		
	<i>Vent d'est</i>	<i>Wind from the East</i>	Co-written and directed with Jean-Pierre Gorin , Editor
	<i>Lotte en Italia</i>	<i>Struggles in Italy</i>	Co-written and directed with Jean-Pierre Gorin
1970	<i>Jusqu'à la Victoire</i>	<i>Until Victory</i>	Unfinished; incorporated into <i>Here and Elsewhere</i> by Godard & Anne-Marie Miéville in 1974
1971	<i>Vladimir et Rosa</i>	<i>Vladimir and Rosa</i>	Vladimir Lenin; co-written and directed with Jean-Pierre Gorin; also Editor and Cinematographer
	<i>Schick after Shave</i>		
1972	<i>Tout Va Bien</i>		Co-written and directed with Jean-Pierre Gorin
	<i>Letter to Jane</i>		Co-written and directed with Jean-Pierre Gorin

← \$73,647



\$1,600,000

Godard's 'Political Era'

Year ⇅	Original title ⇅	English title ⇅	Notes
1968	<i>Ciné-tracts</i>		
	<i>Le Rouge: Film-Tract: n° 1968</i>		Co-directed and written with Gérard Fromanger ; also Editor and Producer
	<i>Un Film comme les Autres</i>	<i>A Film Like Any Other</i>	Editor
	<i>Sympathy for the Devil</i>		
	<i>One A.M. (One American Movie)</i>		Unfinished; also cinematographer. Incorporated into <i>One P.M.</i> by D. A. Pennebaker (1971).
1969	<i>Le Gai Savoir</i>	<i>Joy of Learning</i>	Narrator; also Editor
	<i>British Sounds</i>		Co-directed and written with Jean-Henri Roger
	<i>Pravda</i>		
	<i>Vent d'est</i>	<i>Wind from the East</i>	Co-written and directed with Jean-Pierre Gorin , Editor
	<i>Lotte en Italia</i>	<i>Struggles in Italy</i>	Co-written and directed with Jean-Pierre Gorin
1970	<i>Jusqu'à la Victoire</i>	<i>Until Victory</i>	Unfinished; incorporated into <i>Here and Elsewhere</i> by Godard & Anne-Marie Miéville in 1974
1971	<i>Vladimir et Rosa</i>	<i>Vladimir and Rosa</i>	Vladimir Lenin; co-written and directed with Jean-Pierre Gorin; also Editor and Cinematographer
	<i>Schick after Shave</i>		
1972	<i>Tout Va Bien</i>		Co-written and directed with Jean-Pierre Gorin
	<i>Letter to Jane</i>		Co-written and directed with Jean-Pierre Gorin

← \$73,647



What does it mean for Socialism in film?



What does it mean for Socialism in film?

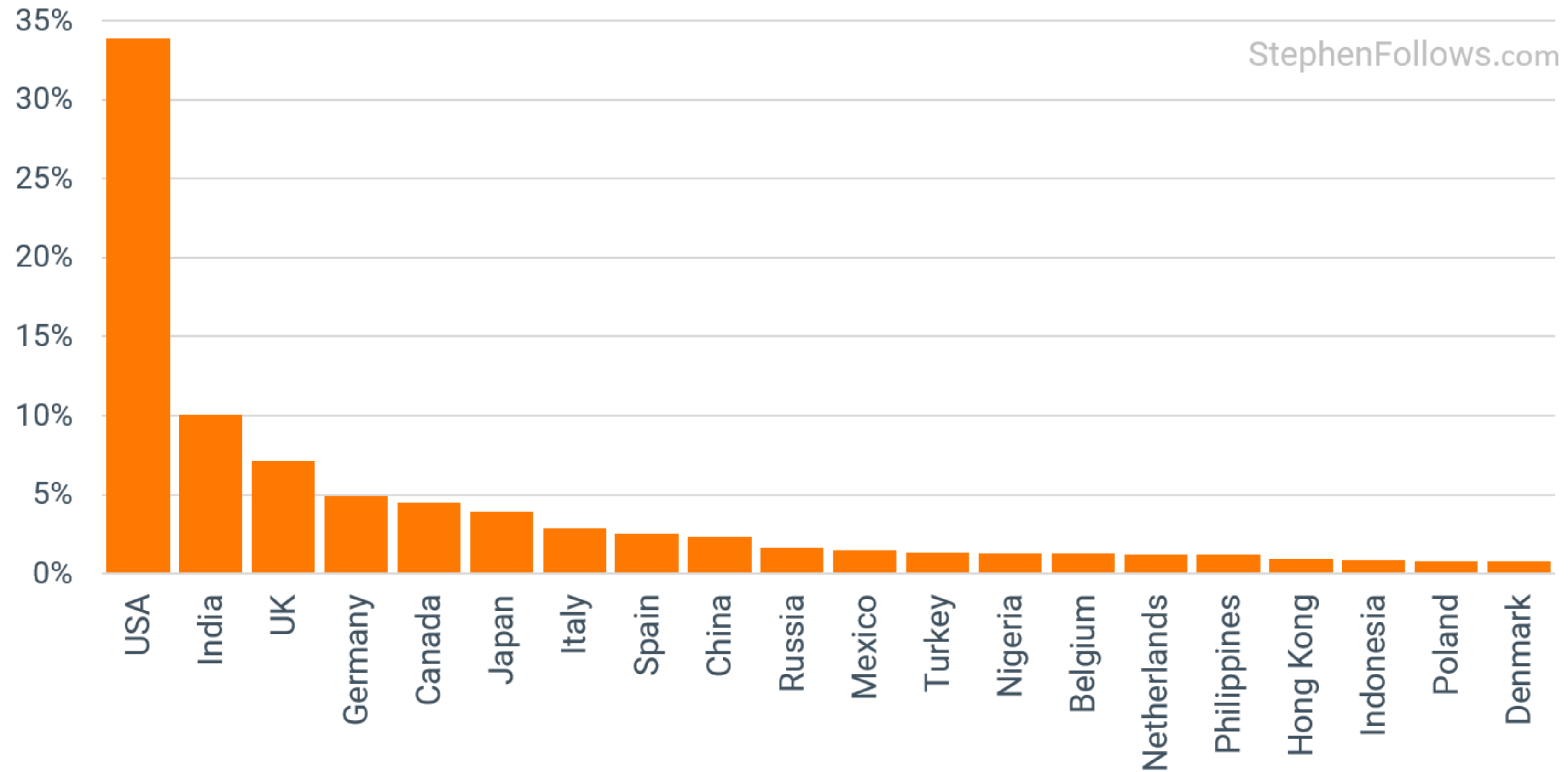


What does it mean for Socialism in film?



Hollywood is Rich

Country of origin of global movie production 2000-24



Godard — Weaponizing Aesthetics



Realists vs Fantasy



Realists vs Fantasy



Realists vs Fantasy



Cinema Aestheticizes Things

Communicating Viscerally



Trailer for a Film that Will Never Exist: “Phony Wars” (2023)

Communicating Viscerally

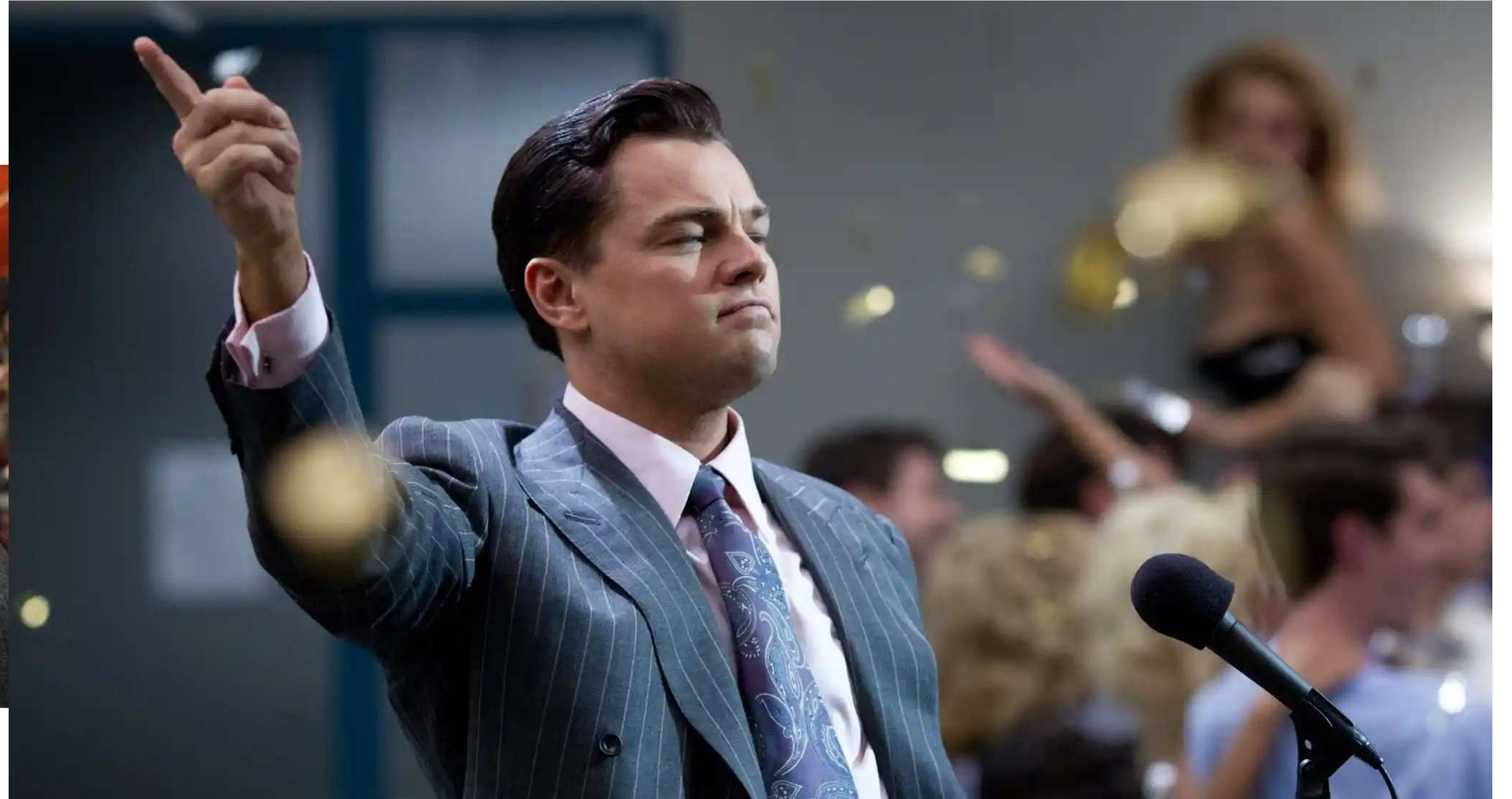


Reds (1981)

Communicating Viscerally



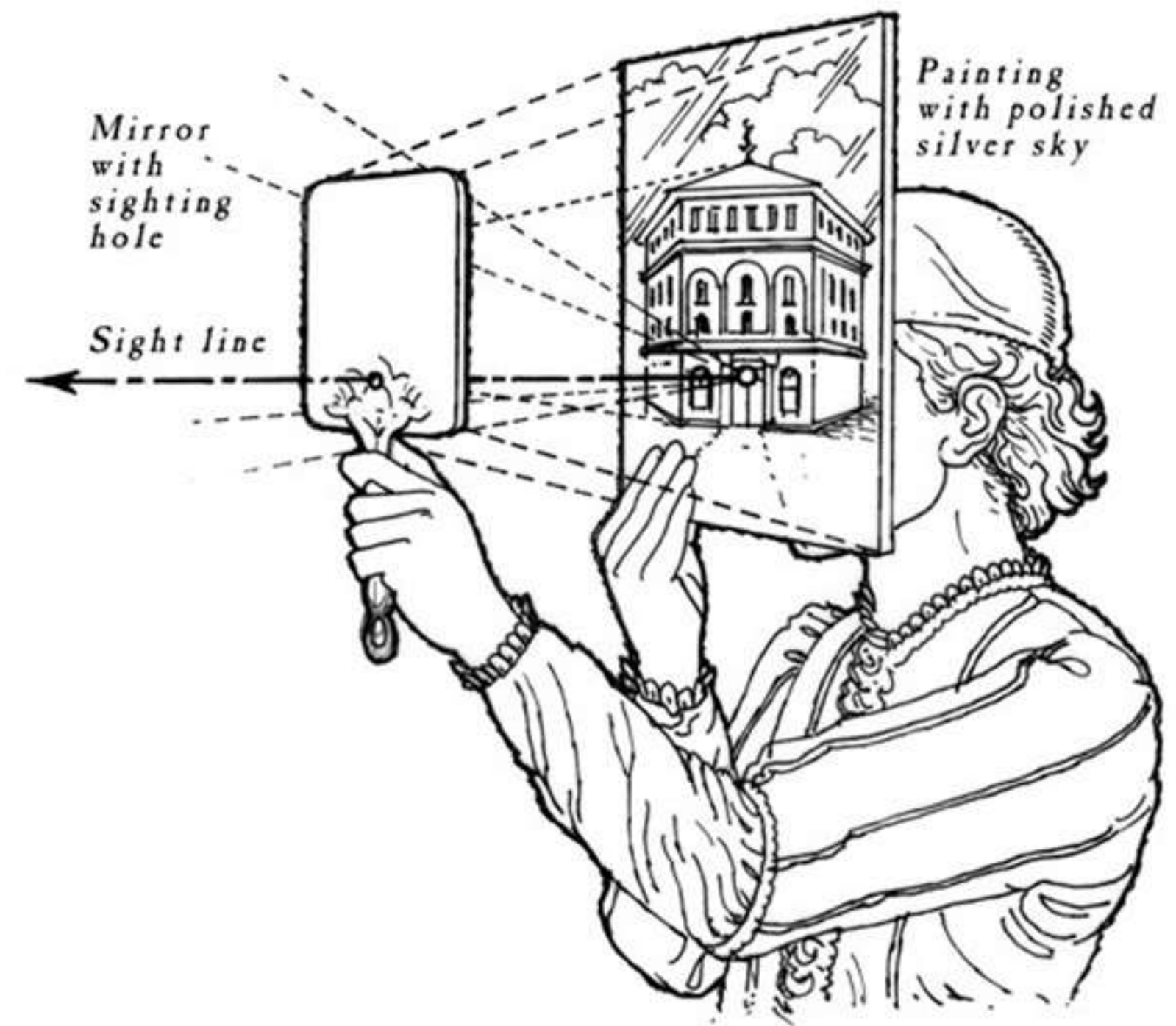
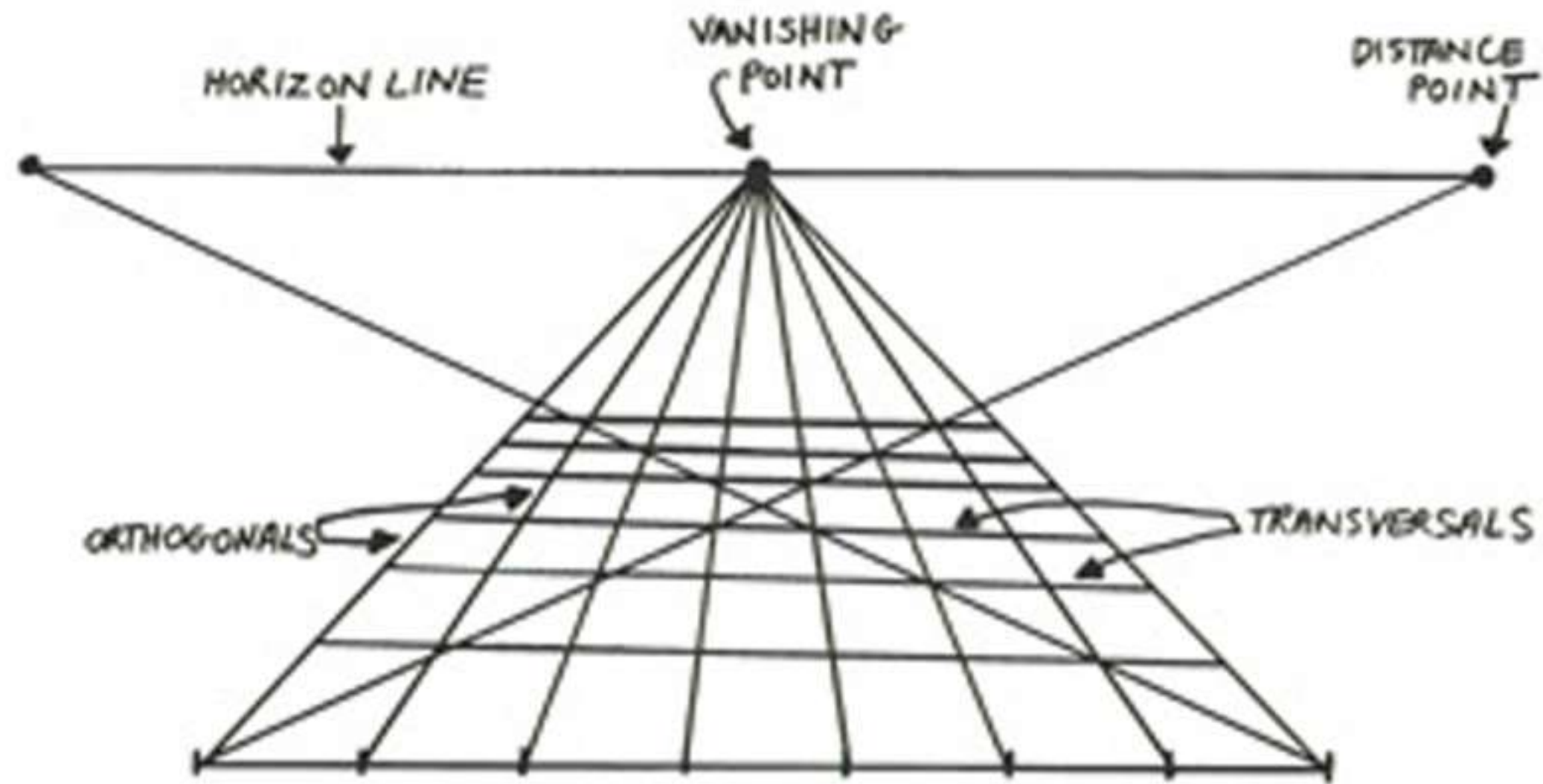
Reds (1981)



The Wolf Of Wall Street (2013)

Cinema Rewires Your Brain

Before and After Photography



Before and After Photography



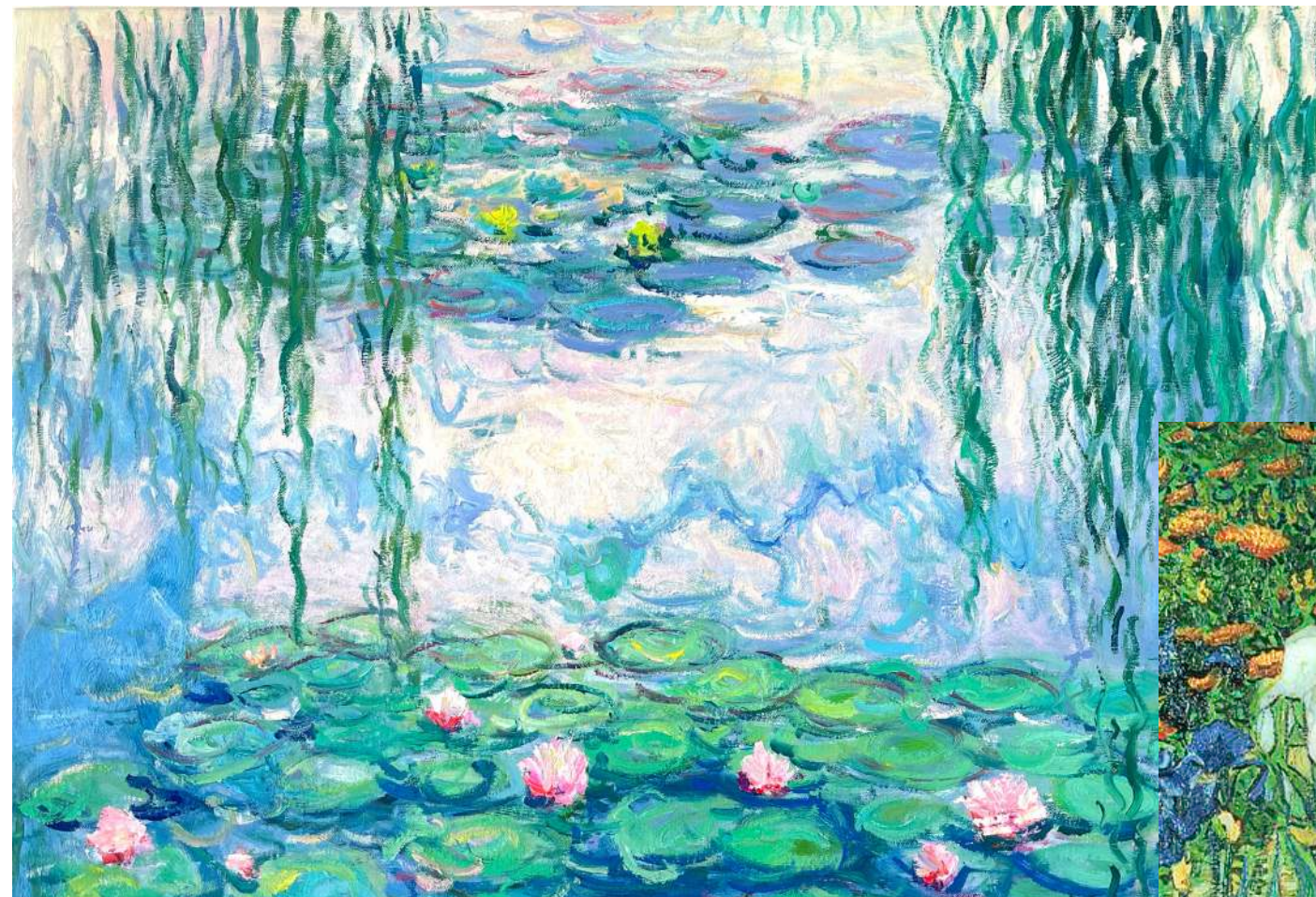
Before and After Photography



Before and After Photography



Before and After Photography



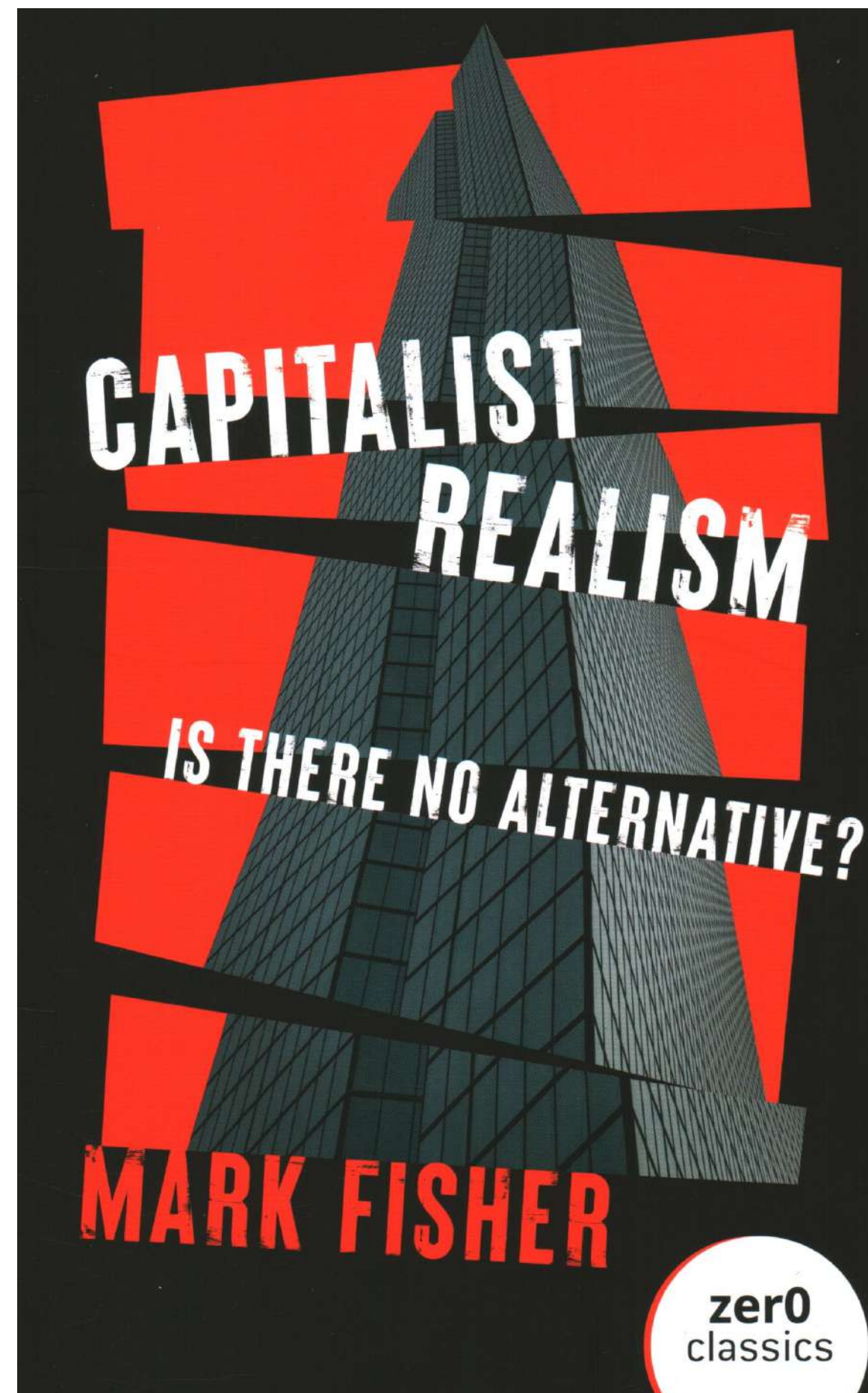
Before and After Photography



What About Cinema?

Is a Socialist Cinema Possible?

A Parting Note



“It is easier to imagine an end to the world
than an end to capitalism.”

— Frederick Jameson/Slavoj Žižek

Does such a world without
capitalism have cinema?