

Mason, M. R. (2019). *(Re)viewing the 'Children of Marx and Coca-Cola': the 'Cultural Revolution(s)' of Jean-Luc Godard's Early Political Cinema (1966-1967) and the spirit of a new era*. Abstract from Global Cultural History, Tallinn, Estonia.

I claim that Jean-Luc Godard's last few pre-1968 (pre-Dziga Vertov group) films offer us a fascinating account of, and commentary on, the changing nature of Western society during a period of great transformation and, ultimately, mark the emergence of a whole new era (Postmodernity/Globalisation). By exploring the notion of 'cultural revolution' – through its various understandings – an interesting picture of this tumultuous era can be usefully painted via these films. One can decipher, for example, at least 3 fundamental interpretations of the notion of 'cultural revolution' which featured importantly in 1) the theories of the Situationist International (SI) at the time, which 2) draws directly upon the events of the 'Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution' in China (1966 - 1976) and which also 3) serves as a useful (and not uncommon) description of the 'postmodern turn' itself characterised by the emergence of mass consumption, designer fashion, Pop Art and colour TV to name but a few. I see Godard's films of the period 1966-1967 as depicting each one of these elements in some detail and thus capturing the various shades of a period of great historical importance. The films made by Godard during 1966-1967 mark a decisive moment in the director's career (MacCabe, 1980; Morrey, 2005) in which 'politics' became a central concern while the films remained (broadly-speaking) within the mainstream context of a commercial cinema. This study intends to show how Godard's interest - during this period - in everything from an exultation of Maoist China to a critique of urbanisation and an obsession with the car crash, in retrospect, seems to brilliantly capture the paradoxes of an era in which Western societies were at once increasingly prosperous but increasingly and ever-more violently in a state of war. Did Godard's 'Children of Marx and Coca-Cola' (*Masculin Féminin*, 1966), then, prophetically characterise the phenomenon of 'postmodernity' (Jameson, 1991, 1998; Anderson, 1998; Harvey, 1989), or, as later defined, 'globalisation'?