

**The New Hollywood cinema antihero:  
the findings of a macro study towards a  
nuanced definition of complex heroes**

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**WORKING PAPERS FILM & TV STUDIES**

**WP 2017/1**

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Series editors: Sander De Ridder and Frederik Dhaenens  
Working Papers Film & TV Studies

WP 2017/1

The new Hollywood cinema antihero: the findings of a macro study towards a nuanced definition of complex heroes

Published by Working Papers Film & TV Studies, CIMS-Centre for Cinema and Media Studies, Department of Communication Sciences, Ghent University, Ghent – Belgium.

**ISBN** 9789090302508

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# ABSTRACT

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This working paper presents an overview of a macro study of 220 films over an eleven-year period. The findings it details are taken from my research on the evolution of the antihero as a character and narrative construct during a period of social, political, and economic flux in American history. These findings demonstrate how diverse conflicted protagonists challenge narrative binaries and simplistic archetypes during a period of innovation in filmmaking. Moreover, the working paper clearly demonstrates that important work is needed to understand the evolution of antiheroes during a period of Hollywood renaissance.

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# PREFACE

This working paper fits within my doctoral project examining the ways in which antiheroes evolved in New Hollywood cinema. This broader project draws upon a breadth of scholarship and research methodologies to consider how antiheroes can offer new and important insights on a period of creative innovation in the history of Hollywood, and vice versa. It looks closely at New Hollywood antiheroes through the lenses of gender, politics, religion, class, race, and ethnicity. To contextualize and substantiate my findings, my doctoral project addresses problems related to periodization and categorization. This working paper takes a popular definition of antiheroes and refines it in relation to New Hollywood cinema using various methodologies.

This working paper draws on a variety of literature to contextualize the field and show the need for a multifaceted approach. Its main contribution to my research is bringing together a breadth of data from 220 films. The data analyses presented here show a clear shift away from the constructs of heroism common in the predominantly aspirational cinema of Classical Hollywood. Moreover, the analyses highlight the areas related to the study of antiheroes in New Hollywood cinema that merit further attention.

This working paper develops and presents a series of categories for analysis. It shows how looking at the political, religious, class, racial, and ethnic aspects of antiheroes shows the limits of binary categorization and points towards a new realism in American cinema. Moreover, this working paper demonstrates that there is so much more to New Hollywood antiheroes than alienated characters who appear to lack motivation.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to those who have helped and supported me in the process towards publishing this working paper. In particular, I would like to thank Daniel Biltereyst for his ongoing support and guidance in supervising my research. Likewise, I am grateful to Gertjan Willems for his helpful comments; also, to the series editors, Sander De Ridder and Frederik Dhaenens, for breathing digital life into this working paper.

I would also like to acknowledge the following for their contribution to my doctoral project: Peter Stanfield and Sofie Van Bauwel; the CIMS team; Beverly Kienzle and colleagues at Harvard University; and Catherine Mooney at Boston College.

On a personal note, a final word of thanks and appreciation to Alison More, Thursday, Geraldine King, John and Margaret More.

# INTRODUCTION

## Defining, Quantifying, and Analyzing the Antihero

Antihero: the principal protagonist of a film who lacks the attributes or characteristics of a typical hero archetype, but with whom the audience identifies. The character is often confused or conflicted with ambiguous morals, or character defects and eccentricities, and lacks courage, honesty or grace. The antihero can be tough yet sympathetic, or display vulnerable and weak traits. Specifically, the antihero often functions outside the mainstream and challenges it.<sup>1</sup>

Defining antiheroes is problematic. They are open to subjective interpretation and definition. People are drawn to antiheroes because they reflect the reality of people wanting to assert their individualism. While diverse forms of storytelling (such as literature, music, theatre, ballet) have always used antiheroes to attract audience attention, their presence in both Classical and New Hollywood cinema is not so straightforward.

Hollywood champions the individual. This is evident in the breadth of scholarship discussed below and in the findings presented in this working paper. Meanwhile, it is important to note that this tendency results in a dominance of moral heroes who conform to the hegemonic ideology of success through hard and honest work. There are, of course, exceptions that predate the New Hollywood renaissance in film style that resisted this tendency during the 1960s and 1970s.<sup>2</sup> Social factors have always allowed characters to bend the rules in their quest for good when it comes to feeding their families or challenging corrupt authority.

To that effect, cinema's antiheroes are often associated with innovative and challenging texts that stand the test of time to become regarded as classic films. Such films present realistic characters that are as repellent as they are likeable. By reflecting the complexities of the human condition antiheroes challenge audiences through empathy to address what it means to be good in a conflicted and changing world.

As is evident throughout this working paper, my research shows that spikes in the prevalence of Hollywood antiheroes reflect periods of political and social flux. While such periods have been charted in diverse academic and popular discussions, my research links them directly with the portrayal of antiheroes, thus enabling new insights on the importance of these characters to New Hollywood cinema. However, the question of how to define an antihero is as complex the characters it describes. Even though the term is readily applied to discussions on film, the range of such characters is incredibly wide and somewhat varied. As the definition at the beginning of this working paper (taken from a popular film website) demonstrates, the criteria are both broad and open to subjective interpretation (as is the criteria for what is commonly regarded as a classic or canonical film). Inevitably people have their own take on who or what

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<sup>1</sup> [www.filmsite.org](http://www.filmsite.org) (accessed May 15, 2014).

<sup>2</sup> This working paper understands and discusses New Hollywood as term to describe the renaissance in Hollywood filmmaking during the late 1960s and 1970s. During this period, filmmakers pushed boundaries to fuse European styles with Hollywood techniques to create a realism in American cinema. At a time of political and cultural instability, these films addressed the concerns of a younger audience. Cf. Thomas Elsaesser, Alexander Horwath, and Noel King, eds., *The Last Great American Picture Show: New Hollywood Cinema in the 1970s* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2004). A fuller discussion is contained in the "Status questionis" section of this working paper.

is an antihero. Therefore, any serious discussion on the antihero requires a considered methodology to arrive at a nuanced definition.

It is firstly important to accept that an antihero is not the antithesis of a hero. My analysis of a sample of 220 films over an eleven-year period shows that rather than being a villain, an antihero is someone who is both “good” and “bad.” The reasons for this choice of time frame are developed below, for now it is important to note that this time frame allows a number of factors to be considered. Likewise, it is important to note that the findings within this period are consistent with the work of other scholars that is discussed later in this working paper.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, the inclusion of an antiheroic protagonist questions ideas of heroism and goodness. In this context, therefore, antiheroes reflect the reality of the human condition in response to different material circumstances. As becomes clear in the discussion of New Hollywood cinema below, the treatment of moral ambiguity is an innovative development in a cinematic style built on limited binaries. In particular, the antiheroes are constructed and performed to challenge the usefulness of binaries in fictive narratives. Using categories of analysis, this working paper demonstrates how antiheroes transcend limited definitions to become convincing characters who grapple with a spectrum of constraints.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, the categorizations presented below show the distinct ways in which antiheroes evolved in occurrence across a breadth of tropes between 1965 and 1975.

In recognizing the limitations of fixed and mutually exclusive categories of good and bad, this working paper also challenges the usefulness of the term “the antihero.” In doing so, it identifies, discusses, and defines a spectrum of antiheroes, which questions what it means to be good. My analysis has revealed that instead of “antiheroes” it is more useful to think of them as “complex heroes” when discussing evolutions in and related to New Hollywood cinema. Understood as such, the antiheroes who influenced, appear in, and are a response to New Hollywood cinema are layered characters. They are often driven by their own moral compass to reject or revisit the expected codes of conduct in reaction to their respective words.

Character complexity humanizes the protagonist as someone who possesses or realizes in reaction to material circumstances, the courage to act according to his or her own rules. Such characters are credible because their actions are questionable, yet understandable to the audience. As outsiders and individuals, antiheroes challenge the hegemony of numerous different ideologies and values. Inevitably, their motives are mixed but each nonetheless reflects the multi-layered tensions of an uncertain world.

To support a layered definition of antiheroes as complex individuals, this working paper not only goes beyond a sensitive reading of carefully chosen films but also analyzes a broad sample in light of historical developments. The data analysis and discussions in this working paper enable a more nuanced definition, and shows the prevalence of complex heroes beyond the politically liberal films associated with New Hollywood cinema. Likewise, in assessing existing scholarship to define its understanding of New Hollywood cinema, this working paper offers new insights on an important period in American film history.

This working paper has three distinctive parts. Firstly, it introduces and discusses the “Status quaestionis” through a wide range of existing scholarship on the flux within both Hollywood studios and American politics. In doing so, it explores New Hollywood and the breadth of interest during the 1960s

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<sup>3</sup> The working paper contains a “Status quaestionis” section that introduces and discusses scholarship pertinent to its findings and analyzes.

<sup>4</sup> In applying readings against hegemonic constructs, this working paper uses ideas akin to those used by scholars such as Judith Butler and Judith Roof when discussing gender politics and exceeding expected markers. For further reading, see: Judith Butler, *Undoing Gender* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2004); Judith Roof, *What Gender Is, What Gender Does* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2016); and Saba Safdar, and Natasza Kosakowska-Berezecka, eds., *Psychology of Gender Through the Lens of Culture: Theories and Applications* (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2015).

and 1970s in antiheroes. Moreover, it discusses how changes intersected with the demands of a younger, and often more educated audience who demanded films that reflected the concerns of their day.

Crises and change inevitably challenge ideas concerning identity. Yet, the often-saccharine product of an ailing Classical Hollywood studio style of filmmaking failed to reflect the crisis of identities. At a time of political instability and protests against the Vietnam War (1955-1975), as well as racial and gender inequalities, younger cinema audiences rejected the tightly constructed Hollywood dichotomy of good versus evil. Instead, they demanded a style of cinema that reflected the politicized trends of European cinema and other domestic media of popular culture.<sup>5</sup> This working paper shows how challenges and crises in confidence intersected with developments in filmmaking practices during the period of study to generate a creative renaissance. These developments resulted in American films that challenged what it meant to be a hero.

Secondly, this working paper explains its research methodology to analyze changes through a macro reading of 220 films over an eleven-year period. The time frame chosen is 1965-1975, which covers the beginnings of New Hollywood cinema through to the advent of the blockbuster with the release of *Jaws* (Spielberg, 1975). The films analyzed are the top 20 films for each year from the International Movie Database (IMDB).<sup>6</sup> Even though any list is open to criticism, the choice of criteria for this list reflects the tastes of a broad sample of people and provides 220 varied films for analysis. The list also includes non-American films, which is important since it reflects that American audiences were exposed to international films as the American studio system faltered as discussed in the “Status questionis” section below. Likewise, this reflects the influence of cinema as an international dialogue on the changing American film styles discussed throughout this working paper. More importantly, to enable a study on antiheroes evolving as complex characters, the methodological section offers a transparent explanation of how the films were read for the presence and developments in the construction and performance of antiheroes as complex individuals.

Thirdly, this working paper identifies groupings in which antiheroes clearly transcend the limitations of a binary construct to show how a spectrum of performativities reflects realism.<sup>7</sup> Rather than following the much-discussed yet thematically limited pattern of genre twists and developments within New Hollywood cinema, this working paper scrutinizes the influence of changing social and political significance of complex heroes. In doing so, it looks at how fact and fiction become intertwined to reflect a series of realities in which audiences felt a connection with film antiheroes. This is true for a variety of types of antiheroes.

After contextualizing the history of the era with the concerns of the age, the working paper classifies the different types of antiheroes in the films analyzed and assesses how they reflect different crises of identities.<sup>8</sup> In doing so, it illustrates the limitations of traditional binaries. In challenging binary readings, this working paper identifies, quantifies, and applies a spectrum of antiheroes to discuss narrative constructions and themes that reflect diverse crises. The findings also show how this reflected the zeitgeist of the time to speak to a receptive audience while restoring the appeal of Hollywood films.

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<sup>5</sup> There is a consensus among film historians, including those discussed in the “Status questionis” section below.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. [www.imdb.com](http://www.imdb.com) (accessed June 14, 2013); the films are listed in Appendix A.

<sup>7</sup> The analysis of the films identified the following groupings: gender and masculine performativities; fluidity within the spectrum of American politics; and un-hyphenating the American identities of class, race, ethnicity, and religion.

<sup>8</sup> The analysis of the films identified the following types of antihero for analysis: natural leaders; alienated, misfits and/ or lost; reluctant; solitary individuals; and selfish egocentrics.

# STATUS QUAESTIONIS: A Contextualization of New Hollywood Cinema as a Period of Creative Innovation in Which Character Complexity Came to Flourish

In order to understand the new creative freedoms afforded filmmakers and actors during the New Hollywood period, it is necessary to discuss the decline of Hollywood. Commercially, the 1960s was a turbulent decade for Hollywood. Film historians agree that a number of factors affected cinema attendance, box-office takings, and the overall economic stability of the Classical Hollywood studio system.<sup>9</sup> In his well-argued article, ‘Hollywood’s Major Crisis and the American Film Renaissance,’ Michalis Kokonis shows how important it is to focus on both scholarly and more popular styles for a nuanced understanding of the period in its historical political and cultural contexts.<sup>10</sup> This approach to historicity is important to understanding the contexts of the data analyzed and discussed. Moreover, it is particularly important to introduce a breadth of approaches to understanding the 1960s as a period of decline in the commercial success of Hollywood studios.

It is necessary to consider the reasons that audience figures dropped so dramatically between the late 1950s through to the commercial success of New Hollywood cinema identifying a profitable younger audience. There is a consensus among film scholars that the studio system of film as a mass produced means of entertainment failed to attract audiences.<sup>11</sup> This consensus acknowledges a number of factors, including a postwar increase in the birth rate; increased access to affordable leisure activities other than the cinema, families moving away from the cities; increased television ownership; and a younger generation who craved more from Hollywood cinema.

The term New Hollywood is applied to the immediate post-Classical Hollywood period of the late 1960s and beyond. As with any term applied to a periodization, it can be problematic and is best understood as a retrospective label in need of nuancing. While scholars fail to agree about the framing of this period, there is consensus about a noticeable change in the Hollywood film style in 1967, which is evident at many levels from production through to thematic and aesthetic approaches. Likewise, the films commonly considered to be part of New Hollywood push many boundaries to reflect the different realities in an uncertain world of change.

Peter Biskind’s book and Kenneth Bowser’s subsequent documentary, *Easy Riders, Raging Bulls* (Bowser, 2003) draw on a number of primary sources to create a persuasive narrative for the reasons behind the New Hollywood renaissance.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, “Easy Riders, Raging Bulls” shows how the changes of the mid-1960s carried over to address the concerns of the early- to mid-1970s. Geoff King’s “New Hollywood: An Introduction” offers a more nuanced definition of New Hollywood by identifying the distinctive stages that comprise this innovative revolution in filmmaking practices.<sup>13</sup> His distinctions strengthen and build on Michael Pye’s discussion on the first film school generation in his book “The

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<sup>9</sup> Including: Michael Allen, Peter Biskind, David Bordwell, Pam Cook, Thomas Elsaesser, Geoff King, Noel King, Alexander Horwath Kirsten Thompson, among others.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Michalis Kokonis, ‘Hollywood’s Major Crisis and the American Film Renaissance,’ *GRAMMA* 16 (2009): 169-206.

<sup>11</sup> Kristin Thompson and David Bordwell, *Film History: An Introduction* (New York, NY: McGraw Hill, 2010).

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Peter Biskind, *Easy Riders, Raging Bulls: How the Sex-Drugs-and-Rock ‘N’ Roll Generation Saved Hollywood* (New York, NY: Touchstone, 1999); and the documentary *Easy Riders, Raging Bulls* (Bowser, 2003).

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Geoff King, *New Hollywood Cinema: An Introduction* (New York, NY: I.B. Taurus Publishers, 2012).

Movie Brats: How the Film School Generation Took Over.”<sup>14</sup> Meanwhile, Robert Kolker looks at the interplay between characters and their society in his insightful and scholarly book, “A Cinema of Loneliness.”<sup>15</sup> Kolker’s book shows a degree of continuity across King’s progressive evolution of New Hollywood and its then contemporary screen culture.

The idea of evolutions in New Hollywood can be seen in the films discussed in this working paper. It is important to consider that while the angst-ridden characters of the late 1960s have much in common with those of the 1970s, the historical and political developments meant uncertainty after the initial hopes of the early 1960s. A good example of this is an exploration of the ways in which the policies of particular presidents are commented on in popular culture. It is, of course, important to consider the inevitable time lapse between beginning film production and distributing the final product for exhibition. Nonetheless, there is a marked shift in the antiheroes discussed below between the presidencies of Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon.

Hyman Muslin’s book on President Johnson (president between 1963 and 1969) explores his tragic side.<sup>16</sup> Johnson succeeded President John F. Kennedy after his assassination in 1963. In spite of passing Kennedy’s proposed race equality bills, Johnson’s handling of the Vietnam War made him increasingly unpopular with the American electorate. As a tragic character, he struggled to please, and felt the burden of unpopularity. Joseph Califano explores both the triumphs and the tragedies of Johnson’s highly personalized need to be loved as a president.<sup>17</sup> Increasingly, his desire to please intersected with the realities of an unpopular war. News media revealed a credibility gap between Johnson’s war reports and the increasing number of American casualties in Vietnam. As for film antiheroes, the data analyzes presented and discussed below shows how the alienated antiheroes during his time in office reflect an almost humourless and tragic desire to please.

Themes of alienation continue and develop during the presidency of Richard Nixon (president between 1969 and 1974) to reflect the paranoia associated with a tragic-antihero president who was forced to resign when exposed as a liar. Prior to his resignation, Nixon had transcended his humble beginnings to assume the office of president. His journey from the simple house his father built to the White House is consistent with the mythology of the American dream. Nixon won two terms as vice president (1953-61). As president, he won a second term in a landslide election victory. In 1978, Nixon wrote a lengthy memoir about his rise and fall.<sup>18</sup> While it was written from his own perspective, and should be read in light of scholarship about Nixon, the memoir is honest and self-reflective about his strengths and weaknesses. Nixon’s personality traits and paranoid style of leadership are the subject of much scholarship. Evan Thomas assesses political and cultural influences of Nixon’s presidency.<sup>19</sup> In doing so, Thomas looks at the place of cinema as both an influence on and of Nixon. In his book, Mark Freeny offers an insightful look at Nixon in relation to his obsession with film.<sup>20</sup> Freeny’s book includes a helpful appendix taken from secret service records that lists the films watched by Nixon during his time in office.<sup>21</sup> This shows the films repeatedly watched by Nixon. The Second World War film *Patton* (Shaffner, 1970) is of particular interest since Nixon watched it ahead of his decision to extend the Vietnam War to Cambodia. The eponymous antihero is based on General Patton, who had very definite ideas on how to lead the allies across North Africa and towards Rome through Sicily. Given the necessary arrangements for prints to be supplied and screened, the secret service records are a reliable source. Furthermore, the data and film

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<sup>14</sup> Cf. Michael Pye, *The Movie Brats: How the Film Generation Took Over* (New York, NY: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1979).

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Robert Kolker, *A Cinema of Loneliness* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

<sup>16</sup> Hyman L. Muslin, *Lyndon Johnson: The Tragic Self: A Psychological Portrayal* (New York, NY: Insight Books, 1991).

<sup>17</sup> Joseph A. Califano, *The Triumph and Tragedy of Lyndon Johnson: The White House Years* (New York, NY: Touchstone, 2015).

<sup>18</sup> Richard Nixon, *RN: The Memoirs of Richard Nixon* (New York, NY: Grosset & Dunlap, 1978).

<sup>19</sup> Evan Thomas, *Being Nixon: A Man Divided* (New York: NY: Random House, 2014).

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Mark Freeny, *Nixon and the Movies: A Book About Belief* (Chicago: IL, University of Chicago Press, 2014).

<sup>21</sup> Freeny, *Nixon and the Movies*, 2014, 339-353.

analyzes below show how the Nixon era produced some particularly interesting antiheroes who both reflected his style and the contemporary culture.

In addition to commercial and political factors, it is also important to consider the relevance of technological advances. Few people shared Nixon's presidential privilege of programming their own screenings at home. Assumptions have been made that the advent of television is largely responsible for declining cinema attendance. While the periods overlap, this is somewhat reductionist. A closer examination and contextualization – particularly in relation to the numbers of households who had a television against cinema attendance – shows that the trend began earlier. Michael Allen's book, "Contemporary US Cinema," draws on existing scholarship to offer a nuanced discussion of television's popularity in relation to declining cinema attendance within a changing screen culture.<sup>22</sup> Indeed, consensus among film historians suggests that the decline in cinema attendance is explained by many factors, including changes in the demographic make-up of cinema audiences and the availability of a greater range of leisure activities.<sup>23</sup>

Instead of families attending the cinema, a younger generation craved greater freedom through the burgeoning youth movement of the 1950s and beyond. The book "Baby Boomers and Popular Culture: An Inquiry into America's Most Powerful Generation," edited by Brian Cogan and Thom Gencarelli, includes various essays that discuss baby boomers as a generation and focuses on how their concerns affected tastes in popular art and entertainment.<sup>24</sup> This younger generation had become more politicized by protests against the Vietnam War and the pro-equality race and gender protests.<sup>25</sup> As is discussed in Simon Hall's "Peace and Freedom: The Civil Rights and Antiwar Movements in the 1960s," this generation demanded change.<sup>26</sup>

The uncertainties that characterized this period of American history were reflected in the dichotic clash of ideologies of the Cold War for a generation who felt increasingly disenfranchised. This is evident in the obvious differences between protest culture (literature, art, theatre and music) and the highly constructed images of 1950s domestic bliss in the situation comedies shown on television. American screen media failed to reflect changes in the symbolic codes of society at that time. Recent scholarship on how to read divergent media in the light of the protest culture of the 1960s includes the excellent studies by scholars such as Linda Holtzman and Leone Sharpe.<sup>27</sup> Erin McCoy looks at how song lyrics enabled a vocalization of anxiety and protest over the Vietnam War, which was a forbidden topic for direct treatment in American cinema.<sup>28</sup> While their arguments are concerned with how to read media and specifically music, they nonetheless show the effectiveness of movement towards a nuanced understanding of developments in film culture.

In spite of youth-orientated films such as *Rebel Without a Cause* (Ray, 1955) and revisionist westerns, Hollywood studios remained very conservative. Again, this differed to developments in popular music and literature, which reflected the protests of many Americans in urban areas. Michael Allen's book "Contemporary US Cinema" charts how screen culture evolved through New Hollywood cinema and

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<sup>22</sup> Cf. Michael Allen, *Contemporary US Cinema* (Harlow: Person Educational Limited, 2003), 15-17.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. King, *New Hollywood Cinema*, 2012, 24-26.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Brian Cogan and Thom Gencarelli, ed., *Baby Boomers and Popular Culture: An Inquiry into America's Most Powerful Generation* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers Inc., 2014).

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Robert Hensley-King, "Chilling to the Big Chill," in *Baby Boomers and Popular Culture: An Inquiry into America's Most Powerful Generation*, ed. Brian Cogan and Thom Gencarelli (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers Inc., 2014), 135-146.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Simon Hall, *Peace and Freedom: The Civil Rights and Antiwar Movements in the 1960s* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011).

<sup>27</sup> For further discussion, see: Linda Holtzman and Leon Sharpe, *Media Messages: What Film, Television and Popular Music Teaches Us About Race, Class, Gender and Sexual Orientation* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe Inc., 2014).

<sup>28</sup> Erin Ruth McCoy, "The Historical and Cultural Meanings of American Music Lyrics from the Vietnam War" (PhD diss., University of Louisville, 2013).

beyond to adapt the filmmaking process to address contemporary concerns.<sup>29</sup> The initial reticence of Hollywood to address contemporary issues is due to a variety of factors – not least because it takes an average of two years through production to exhibition. Moreover, it is important to note that Hollywood studios are businesses and the primary concern of their bosses is to generate profits. As is evident in the research of King and Biskind, many felt that the classical system still worked and were initially reluctant to change their production styles.<sup>30</sup>

This changed when the US federal government intervened to stop a small number of studios dominating the market. In particular, the government insisted that studios stop their oligopoly of domestic vertical integration, which enabled their market domination of films from their production through to exhibition. This edict was the result of the 1948 Paramount Case (a federal investigation that led to legislative action against a market protectionism that hindered the success of new or smaller film studios). This edict required the studios to rethink their business practices.<sup>31</sup> The subsequent divorcement of production and exhibition resulted in studio decline as resources were reduced and consolidated to survive their changed circumstances.<sup>32</sup> Preference was given to the previously successful model of big-budget musicals, which had in the past guaranteed considerable profits. However, audience decline was considerable between the successful *The Sound of Music* (Wise, 1965) and the box-office flop *Hello, Dolly!* (Kelly, 1969).<sup>33</sup> In his book “The Story of Film” Mark Cousins presents his research and discussion of the figures and reasons behind the decline, which support and strengthen the ideas discussed above.<sup>34</sup>

Another factor, discussed in detail below, is the aftermath of the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) trials, which further entrenched Hollywood’s conservative position.<sup>35</sup> In the Paramount Case, the Federal Government had been careful not to apply anti-oligopoly laws to films exported internationally, which even during the Cold War détente of the 1960s had considerable ideological value. Wheeler Dixon’s book “Death of the Moguls: The End of Classical Hollywood,” offers a well-researched and critical discussion of how studio bosses had to accept and respond to changed circumstances.<sup>36</sup>

With falling box-office takings the studio bosses had to take the demands of their new and younger audience seriously. Again, the contrasting scholarly and popular styles of King’s “New Hollywood Cinema” and Biskind’s “Easy Riders, Raging Bulls” support this assertion.<sup>37</sup> This new generation wanted realism in films both to resonate with their concerns. Scholars such as Daniël Biltereyst, Jon Lewis, Leonard Leff, and Jerold Simmons have examined how Hollywood filmmakers had to struggle with the constraints of the dated production code in order to make more realistic films.<sup>38</sup> Chronologically, this is

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<sup>29</sup> Allen, *Contemporary US Cinema*, 2003, 50-60.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. King, *New Hollywood Cinema*, 2012, 11-18; Biskind, *Easy Riders, Raging Bulls*, 1999, 23-51.

<sup>31</sup> For further reading on the Paramount Case and the federal sanctions imposed on Hollywood studios, see: Douglas Gomery, “Hollywood Corporate Business Practice and Periodizing Contemporary Film History,” in *Contemporary Film History*, ed. Steve Neale and Murray Smith (London: Routledge, 1999), 47-57.

<sup>32</sup> For further discussion, see: Linda Ruth Williams and Michael Hammond, ed., *Contemporary American Cinema* (Maidenhead: Open University Press, 2006); and Peter Lev, *Transforming the Screen 1950-1959* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2003).

<sup>33</sup> The US gross for *The Sound of Music* in 1965 was \$126,505, 564 – for this and full figures, see: [http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0059742/business?ref\\_=tt\\_dt\\_bus](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0059742/business?ref_=tt_dt_bus) (accessed on September 8, 2015). The US gross for *Hello Dolly!* in 1968 was \$33, 136, 000 – for this and full figures, see: [http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0064418/business?ref\\_=tt\\_dt\\_bus](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0064418/business?ref_=tt_dt_bus) (accessed on September 8, 2015).

<sup>34</sup> Cf. Mark Cousins, *The Story of Film* (London: Pavillion, 2006), 266-327. Cousins further disseminated his scholarship as documentary, which was also edited into a television series, *The History of Film: An Odyssey* (Cousins, 2011).

<sup>35</sup> For further reading, see: John Sbardellati, *J. Hoover Goes to the Movies: the FBI and the Origins of the Cold War* (New York, NY: Cornell University, 2012); and Thomas Doherty, *Cold War, Cool Medium: Television, McCarthyism, American Culture* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2003).

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Wheeler Winston Dixon, *Death of the Moguls: The End of Classical Hollywood* (New York, NY: Rutgers University Press, 2012).

<sup>37</sup> Cf. King, *New Hollywood Cinema*, 2012, 11-18; Biskind, *Easy Riders, Raging Bulls*, 1999, 23-51.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. Daniël Biltereyst, “Productive Censorship: Revisiting Recent Research on the Cultural Meanings of Film Censorship,” *Politics and Culture* 4(2008); John Lewis, “‘American Morality is not to be Trifled with’: Content Regulation in Hollywood After 1968,” in *Silencing Cinema: Film Censorship Around the World*, ed. Daniël Biltereyst and Roel Vande Winkle (New York, NY: Palgrave

reflected in how the films that first met with audience approval were ones that pushed the boundaries of censorship in terms of language and violence. Ahead of New Hollywood cinema and changes in Hollywood, Clint Eastwood drew upon the persona he had established in the television series *Rawhide* (1959-1965) and collaborated with Italian filmmaker Sergio Leone to become an antiheroic icon of both European and American cinema. The Spaghetti Western trilogy was produced by Italian and West German companies and shot in Spain. Directed by Leone, the films took the solitary antiheroic figure of the gunslinger common to many Westerns, and drew upon the example of Japanese films to create a gritty and a violent style. Christopher Frayling's "Sergio Leone: Once Upon a Time in Italy" presents a persuasive argument about the influence of Leone on American cinema.<sup>39</sup> Not only did Leone draw upon the iconography of the lonely gunslinger, but his framing, and extreme close-ups of Eastwood also revolutionized filmmaking using the American-developed Panavision aspect ratio.<sup>40</sup> The plate below from *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly* (Leone, 1965) shows a close-up of Eastwood as Blondie before the final shootout. This mixing of classical tropes and styles with post-war European stylistic innovation became an essential element in New Hollywood cinema.



PLATE 1

BLONDIE (CLINT EASTWOOD) IN *THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY* (SERGIO LEONE, 1966)

As is discussed in greater detail below, the Western holds a special place in film history of the US during the twentieth century.<sup>41</sup> As a classical genre, it has always relied on using a very carefully constructed set of masculinities for its heroes in relation to the American mythology of claiming the West. However, this working paper is interested in antiheroes that challenge the hegemony of the "good guy" or the "bad guy made good." In this regard, Clint Eastwood's willingness to perform a morally ambiguous and unredeemed antihero (or complex hero) marks an interesting transition towards the films of the New Hollywood era. His characters offered little motivational explanation, drew their guns first, and found no redemption. This is markedly different to the Classical Hollywood coding of heroes wearing white hats or

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Macmillan, 2013), 33-48; and Leonard J. Leff and Jerold L. Simmons, *The Dame in the Kimono: Hollywood, Censorship, and the Production Code* (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 2013).

<sup>39</sup> For further reading, see: Christopher Frayling, *Sergio Leone: Once Upon a Time in Italy* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2005).

<sup>40</sup> This "letterbox" anamorphic aspect ratio became popular during the 1950s and was particularly well suited to convey the sense of space in Westerns. For further reading, see: John Belton, *Widescreen Cinema* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992); and Thompson and David, *Film History*, 2010, 303-305.

<sup>41</sup> For further reading, see: Mary Lea Brady and Kevin Stoehr, *Ride, Boldly Ride: The Evolution of the American Western* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2012); and the collected essays in Peter C. Rollins and John E. O'Connor, ed, *Hollywood's West: The American Frontier in Film, Television, and History* (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 2005).

redeeming themselves after experiencing a heroic transformation. Instead, Leone's texts reflect contemporary dissatisfactions and comment on what it means to be "manly" in an uncertain world. With conflicted male antiheroes, it is less clear who is good and who is bad.<sup>42</sup> Leone's influence is evident across the spectrum the antiheroes during the New Hollywood era as analyzed below. Meanwhile, it is important to look at their collective reception in the light of existing scholarship.

The commercial success of low budget New Hollywood films in the 1960s reflects a resonance with the audience who flocked to see *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf* (Nichols, 1966), *The Graduate* (Nichols, 1967), *Bonnie and Clyde* (Penn, 1967), and *The Wild Bunch* (Peckinpah, 1969).<sup>43</sup> In contrast with other Hollywood films, these films reflect how men perform a wide range of masculinities. In doing so, they appealed to a younger generation who had already discovered the allure of Roger Corman's exploitation films, which satirized Classical Hollywood's villains and heroes.<sup>44</sup> Many of the emerging New Hollywood films were made by and starred younger talent first discovered by Corman, and appealed to the same audience: namely a confused generation that was coming of age. At the same time, these new films offered articulate social and political commentaries with higher production values than those of Corman's studio American International Pictures. This forced the studios to accept that they could make profits by investing in smaller-budget productions that had the potential to attract large audiences. Subsequently, this business model evolved to adopt larger budget films.

Eventually the studios were forced to reclaim much of the control they had given to younger directors associated with New Hollywood. Directorial freedom over large budgets resulted in the creative excesses of directors such as Francis Ford Coppola and Michael Cimino. In the case of Coppola, he was able to draw on the success of *The Godfather* films to demand a very substantial production budget for *Apocalypse Now!* (Coppola, 1979).<sup>45</sup> While the film was successful, production problems and spiralling costs caused studio bosses considerable anxiety.<sup>46</sup> There is much discussion about the ways in which *Heaven's Gate* (Cimino, 1980) contributed to a studio's economic collapse.<sup>47</sup> However, directors such as Steven Spielberg managed to combine his style of filmmaking with studio demands for profits to target films at a young audience.<sup>48</sup>

Before discussing how more personal style of filmmaking helped the antihero to evolve in cinema, it is important to note the then contemporary developments in critical theory concerning film authorship.<sup>49</sup> Auteur theories as applied to cinema capture something of the zeitgeist that enabled New Hollywood to produce films that could be read as art. While their discussions were not specifically related to cinema, they are nonetheless important to understanding how film theory has evolved. Moreover, they shed light on the importance of cinema's relationship with literary theory when read as a text, and significantly for this working paper, the importance of antiheroes. Likewise, it is essential to consider that the emerging college-educated generation of directors and actors would have been familiar with the discussions concerning authorship in film. Roland Barthes' essay "The Death of the Author" reflected changes in ideas between how something is written and received.<sup>50</sup> He argued that an understanding of the

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<sup>42</sup> For further reading on the objectification of men as antiheroes, see: Ashton D. Trice and Samuel A. Holland, *Heroes, Antiheroes and Dolts: Portrayals of Masculinity in American Popular Films 1921-1999* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co Inc, 2002), 74-166.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. Biskind, *Easy Riders, Raging Bulls*, 1999, 45-51.

<sup>44</sup> For further reading, see: Constantine Nasir, ed., *Roger Corman Interviews* (Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 2012).

<sup>45</sup> The budget for *Apocalypse Now!* is an estimated \$31, 500, 000 – for further information, see: [http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0078788/business?ref=tt\\_dt\\_bus](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0078788/business?ref=tt_dt_bus) (accessed on September 8, 2015).

<sup>46</sup> For further reading, see: Peter Cowie, *The Apocalypse Now Book* (London: Faber, 2000).

<sup>47</sup> For further reading see, *Steven Bach, Final Cut : Dreams and Disaster in the Making of Heaven's Gate* (New York, NY: W Morrow, 1985); the budget for *Heaven's Gate* is an estimated \$44, 000, 000 – for further information, see: [http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0080855/business?ref=tt\\_dt\\_bus](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0080855/business?ref=tt_dt_bus) (accessed September 8, 2015).

<sup>48</sup> Cousins, *The Story of Film*, 2006, 328-387.

<sup>49</sup> For further reading a history of theories of film authorship, see: James Chapman, *Film History* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

<sup>50</sup> Roland Barthes, *Le bruissement de la langue* (Paris: Editions de Seuil, 1968), 61-67.

author's various identities could corrupt the reader's interpretation. While there is obvious merit in such a discussion on the then-dominant literary theory, it is at odds with the personalized filmmaking that characterized the new waves in France, Italy and also New Hollywood. The response of Michel Foucault challenged an individualized understanding of authorship to advance the discussion, asking what is the author?<sup>51</sup> By raising such questions he challenged a simplistic textual reading of a film, showing that authorship is much broader than just a single author and a reader. Such a development in thought reflects both something of the cinema of the period, and the tensions and failures that ultimately resulted from artistic egos taking their creative passions to excess. Ideas of authorship are particularly important when considering the creative input of both directors and actors, whose strong personalities and views have contributed to the construction and performances of antiheroes.

This shift in understanding film as a cultural product which can be read through a variety of lenses is important to understanding New Hollywood as a renaissance in American film style. As is well documented in Peter Biskind's and Geoff King's scholarship, New Hollywood era directors were given increasing freedom to make films that broke with the conservative restraints of Classical Hollywood.<sup>52</sup> However, it is important to note that the precedence of Hollywood directors influencing their films with personal perspectives on life and stylistic preferences had already been established in the work of Orson Welles and Alfred Hitchcock.<sup>53</sup> The novelty of the New Hollywood directors was to integrate aspects of Classical Hollywood with innovative stylistic developments from European cinema, most notably Italian Neo-Realism and the French New Wave. While both *The Graduate* and *Bonnie and Clyde* use non-classical styles, both films ultimately rely on continuity editing to drive the narrative forward. Later again, directors such as Martin Scorsese draw on *cinéma vérité* to give their films a documentary sense of realism. This realism is particularly evident in Scorsese's use of voiceovers and scenes shot using a handheld camera in *Mean Streets* (Scorsese, 1973). For this working paper, these developments are particularly interesting for their textual and thematic developments with regard to antiheroic protagonists.<sup>54</sup>

In New Hollywood cinema, both directors and actors became agents in the construction and performance of complex heroes. Directors used their creative freedom to tell more personal stories by using antiheroes to address some of the concerns that interested them. In doing so, they combined metaphor and direct treatments of the human condition to consider existentialist questions in an uncertain world. As is clear in the both the "Methodology" and "Data Findings" sections of this working paper, existentialist angst is an important consideration for New Hollywood antiheroes.<sup>55</sup> Also during the New Hollywood era, studios gave actors greater contractual freedom to develop their own styles and opportunities to reflect their own concerns and interests.<sup>56</sup> Studios could no longer afford to hold actors to a fixed contract to produce a certain number of films regardless of their personal preferences. Not only did this allow actors to develop their own styles, it also allowed them to integrate their on- and off-screen personas further. This argument is supported by the working paper's references to various interviews with the actors discussed in the "Data Findings" section.

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<sup>51</sup> Michel Foucault, "Qu'est-ce qu'un auteur?," *Dits et Ecrits* (1969): 789-821.

<sup>52</sup> Cf. Biskind, *Easy Riders, Raging Bulls*, 1999; and King, *New Hollywood Cinema*, 2012.

<sup>53</sup> For further reading, see: David A. Gerstner and Janet Staiger, *Authorship and Film* (Routledge: New York, NY 2003); and Andrew Sarris, *The American Cinema: Directors and Directions 1929-1968* (New York, NY: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1968).

<sup>54</sup> They are discussed in "The Data Findings" section of this working paper.

<sup>55</sup> Much work has been done on how this is true of directors, including scholars such as Andrew Sarris, Geoff King, and Robert Kolker. For further reading, see: Sarris, *The American Cinema*, 1968; King, *New Hollywood Cinema*, 2012; and Kolker, *A Cinema of Loneliness*, 2000.

<sup>56</sup> Studio contracts initially required actors to work on a certain number of films. This meant that actors were often typecast as characters; and were also associated with the genres particular to their contracted studios. A change in the practice of binding contracts enabled actors to decide their own career path and the roles they played. For further reading, see: King, *New Hollywood Cinema*, 2012.

One interesting innovation of acting during New Hollywood era is the parallel developments in what Barry King terms “personification” and “impersonation.”<sup>57</sup> The art of personification is closely associated with the theatrical style of an actor stripping his or her persona to assume the outward mannerisms of a particular character. The art of impersonation is closely linked to the method acting, in which actors cultivate their own persona to “become” the characters they play.<sup>58</sup> Some observers argue that a snobbery exists in which classically-trained theatrical-style actors look down on those who use the “method.”

Oral tradition has embellished and made much of a reported comment by Laurence Olivier about Dustin Hoffman’s acting style when filming *The Marathon Man* (Schlesinger, 1976).<sup>59</sup> Hoffman has explained this as a dialogue between two different actors working together, while both were under considerable pressure in their personal and professional lives. While this is obviously Hoffman’s account, it nonetheless reflects that there is merit and fluidity within and across different acting styles. As is evident in the films and antiheroes discussed below, acting styles should not be reduced to a binary reading. It is important, however, to note that actors embraced new contractual freedoms to perform complex characters during an innovative period. In doing so, they adapted and developed acting styles accordingly.

A good example of changes in method acting as personification is the contrast in styles between Marlon Brando and Robert De Niro. Both employ method acting to express a depth of emotion by drawing on personal experience. Brando is able to cry real tears as Vito Corleone in *The Godfather* (Coppola, 1972). Jon Lewis’s book on *The Godfather* discusses the significance of this. Lewis explains how a man crying for his son’s choices not reflecting his own hopes when Michael Corleone (Al Pacino) steps up to protect his family resonated with audiences at its time of release.<sup>60</sup> At a time when parents feared their sons being maimed or killed in the Vietnam War, audiences empathized with Vito crying over Michael. Lewis contrasts it with the inability of Tony Soprano (James Gandolfini) to show emotion 27 years later in *The Sopranos* (1999-2007). The TV show, Soprano as antihero in particular, resonated with audiences who empathized with a man unable to show emotion through tears. Instead of crying, he continually simmered with an underlying rage.

In *The Godfather: Part II*, Robert De Niro delivered most of his lines speaking Italian with a Sicilian accent. His practice of going to great lengths to become characters such as Travis Bickle in *Taxi Driver* (Scorsese, 1976) and Jake La Motta (*Raging Bull*, Scorsese, 1981) characterized his acting style and the time.<sup>61</sup> Jack Nicholson is another example of an actor who made the method style his own. His energy at times simmers under the surface of a character to create tension, while at other times his characters expend huge amounts of energy. As the work of Shaun Karli makes clear, the audience is never in any doubt that it is Jack Nicholson performing a character as Jack Nicholson.<sup>62</sup> The distinction between the two styles, however, is not absolute. Clint Eastwood, for example, played against type in the New Hollywood film and his directorial debut *Play Misty for Me* (Eastwood, 1971). The main innovation to consider in terms of developments of the theatrical style of personalization is the creative freedom that actors had to pick their roles.

This new freedom of actors to choose films, set up production companies, and direct films is important to a close study of antiheroes. Political unrest in the US explains, in part, the prevalence of

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<sup>57</sup> Cf. Barry King, “Articulating Stardom,” in *Stardom: Industry of Desire*, ed. Christine Gledhill (London: Routledge, 1991), 178.

<sup>58</sup> For further reading, see: King, *New Hollywood Cinema*, 2012.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. Dustin Hoffman in conversation with James Lipton: *Inside the Actors Studio S12: E16* (2006).

<sup>60</sup> Cf. Jon Lewis, *The Godfather* (BFI: London, 2010), 83.

<sup>61</sup> For further reading, see: Colin R. Tait, “Robert De Niro’s Raging Bull: The History of a Performance and the Performance of History,” *Canadian Journal of Film Studies / Revue Canadienne D’Etudes Cinématographiques* 20 (2011): 20-40.

<sup>62</sup> Cf. Shaun R. Karli, *Becoming Jack Nicholson: The Masculine Persona from Easy Rider to The Shining* (Lanham, Md. Scarecrow Press, 2012).

antiheroes at this time.<sup>63</sup> Moreover, the deliberate decision to play antiheroes and develop an antiheroic persona demands further investigation. As is shown below, this freedom to choose sheds light on how actors (as well as directors) brought their own personal political concerns to the screen. A simplistic and superficial reading of the films can suggest a series of characters rooted in various binaries. This is hardly surprising given Hollywood's long-standing preference for the good and bad dichotomy. However, as the discussions below demonstrate, complex characters enable a number of binaries associated with Classical Hollywood to be broken down. Ultimately such characters are constructed, performed, and read as so much more than mono-oppositional constructs. Instead antiheroes are the product of both directors and actors to reflect a range of issues, which can be read in a number of ways by a wide audience.

Having discussed an overview of the developments of the period, it is important to explain the reasons for the time frame and the choice of films for analysis in the light of existing scholarship.<sup>64</sup> As discussed above, it is difficult to define an exact starting point and finishing point for a period of change. Starting with 1965 shows how trends in antiheroic constructions and performances predate the beginnings of New Hollywood cinema. *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf*, *The Graduate*, and *Bonnie and Clyde* are commonly considered the first of the New Hollywood films. Again, there is a lack of consensus about the end of New Hollywood. However, ending in 1975 allows data to be tracked over a decade. Moreover, it marks both the end of the Vietnam War and the beginning of the blockbuster period. As Robin Wood argues in his book "Hollywood From Vietnam to Reagan – and Beyond," the antiheroes of the post-Vietnam War films belong to another period of film history.<sup>65</sup> The aftermath of the Vietnam War enabled a treatment of the trauma Vietnam which was, in part, transformed during the Reagan years to reflect the renewed American confidence of his presidential style. This thematic reinvention is also reflected in the scholarship contained in Linda Dittmar and Gene Michaud's edited volume, "From Hanoi to Hollywood: The Vietnam War in American Film."<sup>66</sup>

To ensure a breadth of films (within the aforementioned time time frame) for analysis and discussion, as introduced above, the sample of films is taken from IMDB. While the website is commercially owned it is user driven and provides a list that includes a diverse range of films between 1965 and 1975. The importance of a list of films that reflects the spectrum of all genres and styles becomes clear in the critical explanation of the assessment criteria below. In order to understand the analytical choices made in the "Research Methodology" section, it is important to reflect on the construction and performance of the protagonist as an individual (or individuals) with whom the audience identifies. Given that films are narrated through a protagonist the audience is, of course, encouraged to assume his or her point of view in the story.

As discussed in Pam Cook's scholarly volume "The Cinema Book," cinema is a product of the mass-production technological developments associated with modernity.<sup>67</sup> American film narratives show how protagonists stand out from the crowd to assert their individuality. In doing so they become heroes to whom the audience can relate, and even – as spectators – project their own hopes and ambitions onto their actions and narrative resolutions. Moreover, Hollywood cinema evolved throughout the twentieth century to reflect the mythology of the American dream. In asserting the rights of the industrious individual, Hollywood sought to create a contrast with the collectivism associated with Soviet

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<sup>63</sup> During the depression the Warner Brothers Studio cast its actors as antihero shysters. For further reading, see: Peter Roffman and Jim Purdy, *The Hollywood social problem film: madness, despair, and politics from the Depression to the fifties* (Bloomington, IN: 1981). This same practice is true of the film neo-noir detectives that reflected the post-war disillusionment in the US. For further reading, see: Jennifer Fay, *Film Noir: Hard Boiled Masculinity and the Cultures of Globalization* (New York: NY: Routledge, 2010).

<sup>64</sup> For a list of the films discussed, see: Appendix A.

<sup>65</sup> Cf. Robin Wood, *Hollywood from Vietnam to Reagan – and Beyond* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2003).

<sup>66</sup> Cf. Linda Dittmar and Gene Michaud, ed., *From Hanoi to Hollywood: The Vietnam War in American Film* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1990).

<sup>67</sup> Cf. Pam Cook, "Auteur Theory and Structuralism," *The Cinema Book*, ed. Pam Cooke (London: BFI, 2007), 446-449.

communism. This is especially pertinent to the Cold War clash of ideologies between the US and the USSR (c.1947-1991).<sup>68</sup>

How audiences empathized with, and even liked, morally ambiguous complex heroes is discussed in greater detail below. Meanwhile, it is important to note that at times, particularly when social or political concerns intersect with developments in screen culture, the protagonist is shown as alienated from the rest of society. In the golden age of Classical Hollywood, this is especially evident in the social commentary made in silent era and sound era films such as *The Crowd* (King Vidor, 1928) and *Modern Times* (Chaplin 1936). In *The Crowd*, the protagonist is eventually singled out from a room full of everyday people. In *Modern Times*, Charlie Chaplin struggles with the heavy machinery associated with “modern” industry.

Such films clearly demonstrate a long-standing tradition that both rebels against and struggles with hegemonic expectations are not necessarily at odds with Hollywood’s heroic construct of American dream. Scholars such as Robert Sklar, in his book “Movie-Made America,” rightly acknowledge that in many films the triumph of the filmic individual is achieving the American dream of hard being rewarded.<sup>69</sup> However, character motivation can be tweaked to allow heroes to transgress laws for reasons presented as either justifiable or indeed righteous.

At times this model of the industrious and morally upstanding individual is inverted when social needs justify criminal activity to feed one’s family, and in a hard-edged cynicism against questionable authority figures. Steven Messner, Richard Rosenfeld, and Ellis Cashmere offer insightful sociological commentaries on this moral ambiguity.<sup>70</sup> Meanwhile, pre-New Hollywood film examples include the 1930s shysters films, and the post-War film noir detectives in search of a truth. Common to all constructions and performances of heroism, and conversely anti-heroism, however, is how the protagonist is predominately an everyday person who overcomes various adversities

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<sup>68</sup> For further reading on cinema and the Cold War Clash of ideologies, see: Tony Shaw and Denise J. Youngblood, *The American and Soviet Struggle for Hearts and Minds* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2010).

<sup>69</sup> Cf. Robert Sklar, *Movie-Made America: A Cultural History of American Movies* (NY, New York: Vintage Books, 1990).

<sup>70</sup> Cf. Steven Messner and Richard Rosenfeld, *Crime and the American Dream* (Independence, KY: Cengage Learning, 2012); and Ellis Cashmore, *Martin Scorsese’s America* (Cambridge: Polity, 2009).

# RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodology presented in this section explains how an initially broad set of data is identified, quantified, and analyzed through a process of nuanced redaction. In presenting my methodology, this section explains how I decided upon a set of actions that could be described as antiheroic. It also discusses how I developed a series of categories for analysis. My assessment of actions takes into account a variance in the ways in which characters rebel both directly and indirectly against what is expected of them in accordance with the seemingly hegemonic norms of their worlds. This approach enables a reading of complex characters whose motivation is either not immediately obvious or whose actions are presented as a metaphor that can be read. Moreover, this section explains how this process results in a systematic data analysis to substantiate the discussions and definitions made about antiheroes as complex characters in this working paper. It shows how a multifaceted evolution of complex heroes reflects a number of concerns to show protagonists as credible humans responding to changing times and challenging circumstances.

To create a set of data to facilitate the processes of analysis, the following criteria were applied to create a database through a sensitive watching of the 220 films: year of release; director; country or countries of production; genre; main actors; whether the film is New or Classical Hollywood, Spaghetti Western etc.; the plot; period; political metaphors and analogies (if any); the antiheroic protagonist; type of antihero and motivation; gender, age, class, marital/relationship status; identities (religious, cultural, etc.); actions; psychological observations; character/film resolution. As is discussed in the third section of this working paper, there is a noticeable prevalence of antiheroes as complex characters; or, characters whose moral ambiguity raise questions about the then contemporary status quo of American society. Meanwhile, it is important to note that complex characters were found in every style (New Hollywood or otherwise) and genre. Moreover, these complex characters represented every class, age and marriage and relationship status. As is discussed below this break with traditional binaries categories of class, age, and social groupings enabled realistic and ultimately likeable antiheroes. Hollywood studios no longer required that complex heroes be punished for their moral ambiguities. This development in American cinema differed to the outcome of slysters in the 1930s, the cynical private detectives, the teenage delinquents, and the grittier western gunslingers of the 1950s.

In order to demonstrate the break with binary character constructs and motivations, the choice of categories for this working paper was determined by a need for quantifiable data such as a chronological order in which to analyze the data. Rather than basing the working paper on a sensitive reading of films carefully selected in the light of existing scholarship, it is based on the findings of 220 films across a decade. As well as providing a broad sample of films for analysis, this approach includes films that have been neglected in terms of scholarship. Some such films are considered too lowbrow, while others were poorly received and misunderstood at the time release. Maria Pramaggiore offers an interesting perspective through her case study on *Barry Lyndon* (Kubrick, 1975). She examines why the film has been neglected in terms of both scholarship and popular interest.<sup>71</sup> In order to form a useful body of data, the database recorded a wide selection of information from the actor through to the construction, motivation (or lack of), and actions of the character.<sup>72</sup>

Reading such a large amount of data requires a considered process of redacting it to facilitate the nuanced discussion presented in “The Data Findings.” The following two charts reflect the first step in

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<sup>71</sup> Cf. Maria Pramaggiore, *Making Time in Stanley Kubrick's Barry Lyndon: Art History and Empire* (New York, NY: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2015).

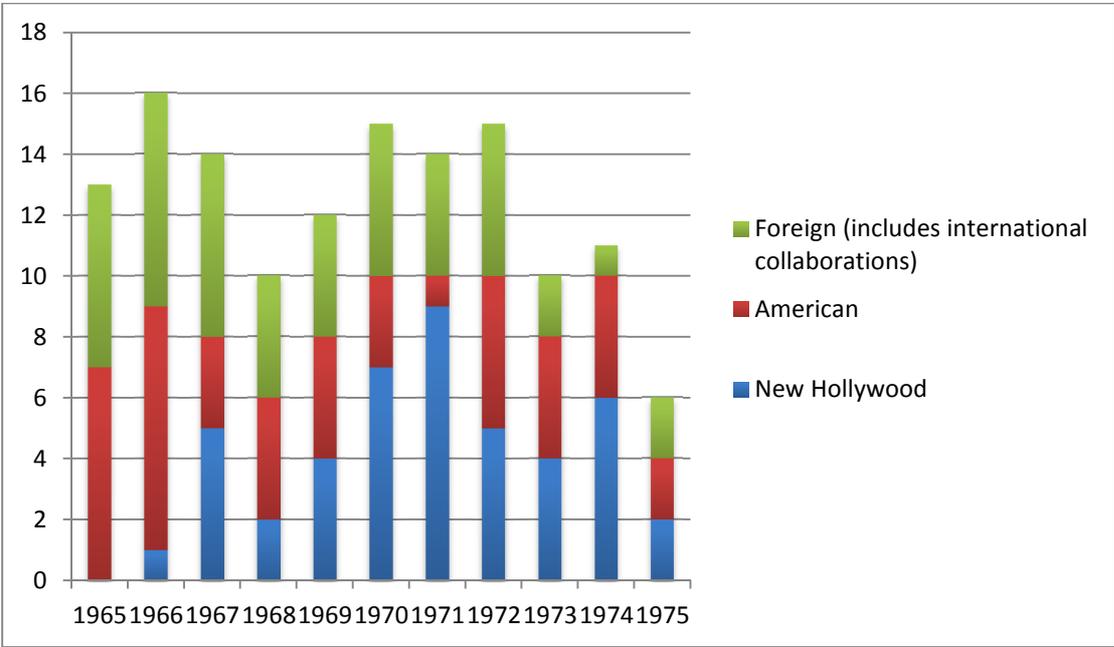
<sup>72</sup> The database facilitated a reading of the aforementioned criteria through an analysis of variable antiheroic qualities, plots, themes etc., upon which the findings presented and discussed in this working paper are based.

this process. Chart 1, below, gives an annual break down of antiheroes, and whether they are found in New Hollywood, American or foreign films (including international collaborations). The country of production is important since it shows changes in American production as well as the exhibition practices that exposed audiences to grittier foreign content. Likewise, it shows how film evolved to become an international dialogue between different countries. As Classical Hollywood influenced European renaissances in filmmaking, New Hollywood directors applied European styles to their films.

Chart 1 serves to provide an overview of how antiheroes are present in a range of films, including the spikes in New Hollywood cinema. The trends are developed and discussed in greater detail in below, with specific regard to how the New Hollywood antiheroes reflect the changing concerns of their time. Meanwhile, it is important to note that the classifications included in Chart 1 fit within the nuanced spectrum presented in this working paper. This breadth of analysis is an essential step towards my definition of the antihero within a spectrum of character complexity. Moreover, it is important to my discussion of the particular place and role of antiheroes in New Hollywood cinema.

Chart 2 develops this first step to offer a more nuanced break by type of antihero based on the categorization explained below. This chart is important since it is the fruit of the difficult process of identifying objective categories with which to quantify and analyze antiheroic traits. In turn, these categorizations require further analytical and discursive reflection to define and chart evolutions in a spectrum of complex characters between 1965 and 1975.

CHART 1: A LONGITUDINAL CHART SHOWING THE PRESENCE OF ANTIHEROES IN FILMS BY COUNTRY OF PRODUCTION AND HOLLYWOOD STYLE, CLASSICAL OR NEW<sup>73</sup>



<sup>73</sup> For a list of films by their country of production, see Appendix B.

CHART 2: A LONGITUDINAL CHART CATEGORIZING THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF ANTIHEROES IN ALL FILMS OF THE PERIOD OF STUDY, AS DEFINED BY ANALYZING THE DATABASE FOR CHARACTER TROPES<sup>74</sup>

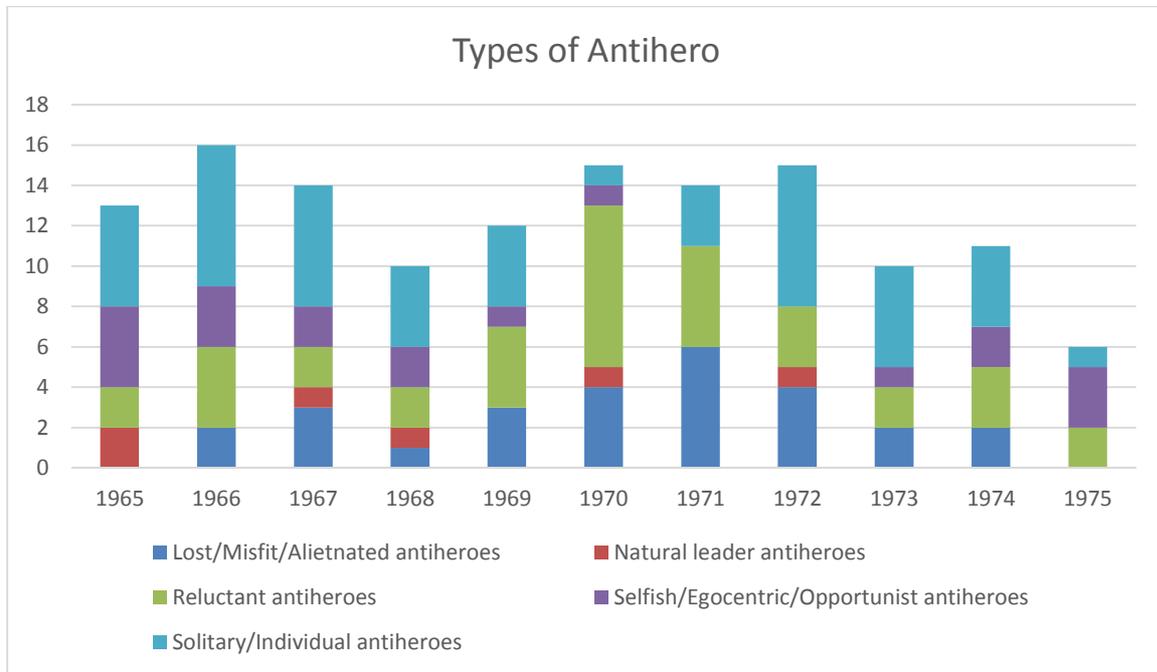


Chart 2 presents a longitudinal break down of the different categories of antiheroes. It is important to read the data in conjunction with the list of films and various protagonist characteristics, identities, categorizations and their explanation in Appendix B. This list includes data which at first may seem general, but is a nonetheless important stage in quantifying an evolution of antiheroes during the period of study. Likewise, the following discussions about the difficulty of making such categorizations show how the evolutions challenged constructs based on hegemonic binary groupings.

The list in Appendix B details antiheroes by the characters' gender, age, class, race, ethnicity, and religious associations if any. Given that many Hollywood characters are constructed in unrealistic ways it is difficult to categorize protagonists by numbers without careful nuancing. An obvious example is trying to group characters by age. In a fictive world in which the performances of actors in their thirties and forties are meant to resonate with a younger audience, an accurate categorization by age is problematic. The same is true for class as a social construct in a fictive yet traditionally aspirant world. Likewise, it is difficult to quantify unarticulated political affiliations. Political associations are by their nature subjective and fluid across a spectrum of beliefs and opinions. As the case studies below make clear, even the binary of being a Republican or a Democrat is not straightforward during the 1960s and 1970s. Religion is equally problematic to categorize without careful nuancing.

Appendix B also lists whether the film is widely considered New Hollywood, American, or foreign (including international collaborations with American studios). Again, this variation in country or countries of production supports the discussions in this working paper about the bad economic state of Hollywood and the audience demands for a different film style. Meanwhile, it is important to explain and

<sup>74</sup> For a list of films with a categorization of antiheroes, see Appendix B.

nuance the categorizations included in Chart 2 for the different types of antihero and how they support the discussions contained within this working paper. This will help contextualize changes in relation to the groupings discussed within this working paper.

Each category is relatively broad, nonetheless the longitudinal graph shows the ways in which different tropes of antiheroic narratives change during the period in question. This is particularly important when analyzing changes within diverse historical contexts. Before explaining each of the categorizations, it is important to discuss the difficulty of making even broad categorizations.

As introduced above, antiheroes are complex characters rather than a villainous antithesis of a hero. In an age of cinematic realism, it is easy to confuse or even conflate ideas of heroism when trying to define a character as a hero or as an antihero. Likewise, as also introduced above, care must be taken not to review the films in light of a subjective reading without a serious degree of analysis. The findings of this working paper show how the process of working through generalized categorizations towards a nuanced discussion on the evolution of antiheroes between 1965 and 1975 is important.

As is evident throughout every stage of the analytical process, the working paper's macro reading of 220 films over an eleven-year period shows definite trends in the types of actions that define the characters' complexity. These trends reflect the broad categorizations that follow. When read within the contexts addressed within this working paper and the history of the period, these categorizations enable a series of insightful discussions. This process of investigation and analysis provides valuable insights on the purpose of antiheroes as avatars. In making a series of commentaries about the world in which they find themselves, antiheroes evolve in interesting ways.

The first category "Lost/ Misfit/ Alienated" groups together films whose protagonist is struggling with his or her world.<sup>75</sup> With the exception of 1970 and 1975, the number of films is fairly consistent. However, the concerns of alienated antiheroes inevitably change over the course of the eleven year study. The groupings used in this working paper enable a discussion on the limitations of binary assumptions, and also hegemonic assumptions on heroism in cinema. For now, it is important to note also, that this group tends to include very earnest characters.

Queer Theory offers useful insights on alienated antiheroes. The more assertive antiheroes could be described as queering hegemonic expectations. Through their ability to think and act independently they overcome limited societal expectations. At the opposite end of this spectrum, many alienated characters are constructed and performed to feel trapped. As such they often struggle to consider alternatives, yet alone overcome them.<sup>76</sup> This is discussed in greater detail in each of the category groupings below.

The category "Reluctant" is a difficult antihero to label. There is often a fine line between antiheroism and heroism when characters are reluctant. In identifying such characters, I tried to reconcile characters' questionable moral approaches with Umberto Eco's line that "[T]he real hero is always a hero by mistake; he dreams of being an honest coward like everybody else."<sup>77</sup> When it comes to an objective assessment of what is good, it is essential to note that antiheroes break the "rules" in order to achieve a subjective good. While that good can be for the good of others, it can equally be for personal gain as much as survival. Again, this distinction is important when contextualizing the groupings discussed, below.

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<sup>75</sup> Further explanation is given in Appendix B.

<sup>76</sup> Cf. Judith Halberstan, *The Queer Art of Failure* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 89-92.

<sup>77</sup> Umberto Eco, *Travels in Hyperreality* (Boston, MA: Mariner Books, 2014), 122.

The category “Solitary/ Individual” is a well-established character trope in cinema, Hollywood in particular. As introduced above, the individual as hero fits very well with Hollywood’s preference for narratives that reflect the American dream of hard work leading to personal success. The inversion of this hero is also well entrenched in Hollywood history. However, within a spectrum of antiheroism the characters within the category merit closer scrutiny. While the above chart offers longitudinal insights, the discussions below reflect evolutions in relation to the different groupings.

The category “Natural Leader” includes alpha-type people who are strong and determined. Unlike the solitary antiheroes, these protagonists are leaders who inspire others. As with reluctant antiheroes, motivation is an important factor when it comes to a spectrum of what makes a leader heroic or antiheroic.

The category “Selfish/ Ego-centric/ Opportunist” includes those who quite clearly put their own interests first. While these characters undergo something of a materially driven narrative, they nonetheless remain concerned with what interests them the most. As with each of the above antihero categories, it is important not to conflate being selfish with being a sociopath.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> While the term is in common use, a sociopath is clinically defined as someone who lacks empathy and is capable of erratic and violent behavior. Within this definition, it is accepted that there is a spectrum of severity. Examples in film include highly erratic and violent characters, and those who are high functioning and able to conceal many of their symptoms.

## THE DATA FINDINGS

The data show a definite trend towards antiheroic protagonists in the sample of 220 films. This reflects the various scholarship on thematic shifts towards realism and a more personalized style in New Hollywood discussed in the “Status quaestionis” section. The data quantifies how many films employed character complexity to reflect the concerns of the day. While the scholarship and the data point towards trends common to constructing and performing antiheroes, it is necessary to substantiate the nuanced definition of this working paper. Namely that the antihero is not an archetype, but rather a complex character, who in different ways and through different genres, challenges binary constructs to question expectations about his or her place in a changing and troubled world. This section discusses the data and the scholarship to show how a variety of complex characters reflect the concerns of a particular time to attract audience attention and, at times, empathy. As such these characters embrace thematic and aesthetic realism to challenge binaries. They are motivated both essentially and materially to raise questions about what it means to be bad and good.

It is clear that the term “antihero” refers to a spectrum of complex heroes. It is also clear that this spectrum does not reflect a single archetype, but rather a means of questioning hegemonic moral assumptions in Hollywood cinema. As mentioned above, this working paper focuses on groupings beyond genre to look at films that address of concern through a treatment of diverse crises in identities. The following section looks at gender and masculine performativity; fluidity within the spectrum of American politics; and un-hyphenating the American identities of class, race, ethnicity, and religion.

## GENDER AND MASCULINE PERFORMATIVITY

Of the 220 films analyzed, 136 have antiheroes. The vast majority of the antiheroes in the 136 films are male, 90 percent.<sup>79</sup> Of that percentage: 32.3 percent are in New Hollywood films, 32.3 percent in American films, and 35.4 percent in foreign produced films.<sup>80</sup> The high ratio of films with male antiheroes to females ones is consistent in New Hollywood (7:1 in New Hollywood films, 42:5 in American films, 46:5 in foreign films). This demonstrates that New Hollywood filmmakers did not break with the practice of having mostly male leads. With regard to gender and masculinity in New Hollywood, however, antiheroes are used to develop character tropes to reflect the concerns of nation in crisis. The films of this period challenged and adapted ideas concerning masculinities and hegemony of uncomplicated male heroes. As the case studies below demonstrate, this is true for antiheroes performed by both male and female actors.

By defining a spectrum of antiheroes this working paper shows the limitations of binaries, as has also been shown in scholarship related to gender. The influential work of scholars such as Joan Scott and Judith Butler challenged binary readings of gender to show that both men and women perform what are commonly understood as masculine and feminine characteristics.<sup>81</sup> The insights of Scott and Butler have facilitated much work on gender and the limitations of binaries more generally. Moreover, within performances of masculinity there are many ways in which a person could be considered “manly.”<sup>82</sup> There

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<sup>79</sup> Cf. Appendix B.

<sup>80</sup> As defined in Chart 1. For the figures, see: Appendix B.

<sup>81</sup> Cf. Joan Scott, “Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis,” in *American Historical Review* 29 (1986): 1053-1075; and Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York, NY: Routledge, 1999).

<sup>82</sup> Appendix B lists the biological gender of each antiheroes and, in one case, includes a transgendered antihero who identifies as a woman. While the vast majority are male (90 percent), it is important to note that both the male and female antiheroes perform traits within a spectrum of masculinities. For further reading on masculinity and Hollywood, see: Susanne Kord and Elisabeth Krimmer, *Contemporary Hollywood Masculinities: Gender, Genre, and Politics* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); and Donna Peberdy, *Masculinity and Film Performance: Male Angst in Contemporary American Cinema* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

are obvious extremes such as the hard-bodied masculinity of action heroes and the softer sensitive side of friends who care for each other. Within this spectrum there are also subtler ways of performing masculinities.

An excellent example of gender performativity in relation to “manliness” is Scorsese’s cine-literate references to other antiheroes in his early films featuring Harvey Keitel (see below). The analysis of Scorsese’s complex antiheroes in this working paper complements the contributions by scholars such as Giorgio Bertellini, Jaqueline Reich, David Sterritt, Larissa Ennis, Matt Lohr, and Jonathan Cavallero in Aaron Baker’s “A Companion to Martin Scorsese.”<sup>83</sup>

With regard to the range of antiheroes analyzed, the findings of this working paper demonstrate definite developments in how characters are constructed and performed. Moreover, the data analyzes contribute to a more nuanced definition of antiheroes within a spectrum of masculinities. It is important to note, however, that this spectrum of gender performativities (and character complexities) is true of the films both within and outside of the New Hollywood style.<sup>84</sup> This is evident in the analysis of the protagonists in the films listed in Appendix A. Likewise, it is also reflected in the categorizations of Chart 2, based on the films listed in Appendix B.<sup>85</sup>

To understand the particular innovation of New Hollywood antiheroes within this spectrum, it is important to consider the intertextual dynamic between the different Hollywood styles in the films of this period. Continuing with the example of Scorsese, he draws upon Wayne’s earlier antiheroic performances to present an intertextual discussion on masculinities in his early films. In particular, Wayne’s performance in *The Searchers* (Ford, 1956) provided a coming-of-age male role model for the characters played by Harvey Keitel in Scorsese’s highly personal films *Who’s That Knocking at My Door* (Scorsese, 1967) and *Mean Streets* (Scorsese, 1973). Both films present an almost polar difference between the construction and portrayal of the self-assured and hard-bodied masculinity of John Wayne and the respective struggles of JR and Charlie. JR repeatedly states his admiration for John Wayne and Lee Marvin.<sup>86</sup> This is furthered developed in the inclusion of a screening of *The Searchers*. Likewise, it is evident in the mise-en-scène of Charlie calling Teresa from a cinema foyer, which places him next to a poster for *Point Blank* (Boorman, 1967). *Point Blank* is a New Hollywood film that stars Marvin as a vengeful hard-bodied antihero. In *Mean Streets*, the call is made by Charlie while trying to force his friend Johnny Boy to run from a violent confrontation. As is clear in the films analyzed, antiheroes played on heroic tropes to explore the issues of the day. In common with many of the directors of the period, Scorsese was interested in complicating masculine archetypes, including hegemonic ideas of heroism.

Scorsese revealed his interest in masculinity and what it means to be a man in American Public Broadcast Service (PBS) documentary first aired on 10 May 2006, *Pappy and The Duke*. The documentary is a focused discussion on the collaborative work between the director John Ford and the actor John Wayne. Responding to fellow New Hollywood filmmaker John Milius’s assertion that John Wayne “taught us how to be men,” Scorsese asks what does it mean “to be a man?” My analysis of 220 films has shown that these concerns were not unique to Scorsese, and many directors and actors explored the significance of masculinity through film. They did this by raising questions about gender in relation to uncertainty through the diverse antihero types identified above in the films listed in Appendix B.<sup>87</sup> As introduced

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<sup>83</sup> Cf. Aaron Baker, ed., *A Companion to Martin Scorsese* (Chichester: John Wiley and Sons, 2015).

<sup>84</sup> Cf. Appendix A

<sup>85</sup> Cf. Appendix B.

<sup>86</sup> Cf. Robert Casillo, *Gangster Priest: The Italian American Cinema of Martin Scorsese* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press: 2006), 141-178.

<sup>87</sup> Cf. Appendix B.

above, ideas about gender performativities and a queering of identities are important to understanding evolutions in the antihero as a complex character.

Judith Butler's seminal book "Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity" challenged a binary readings of gender to reflect a spectrum of performativities.<sup>88</sup> Her work questions the dichotic reading of gender performativity as being either essentially or materially driven. Instead, she argues people perform roles for numerous reasons. As both men and women perform characteristics that are regarded as masculine and feminine in reality, the same ought to be true of antiheroes in realistic cinema.

The film analysis in this working paper, however, shows how the female antiheroes, or complex characters, of this period perform qualities that are often regarded as "masculine." This is different to the male antiheroes who perform within a spectrum of what are generally considered to be masculine characteristics. Two examples from contrasting genres are characters played by Jane Fonda. In *Cat Ballou* (Silverstein, 1965), Fonda's character leads a gang to avenge her father's murder. In *Barberella* (Vadim, 1968), Fonda plays the eponymous special agent on a space mission to "save the world." Her character plays on male secret agents such as James Bond who are promiscuous and heroic in their respective missions. Another example is the British film *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* (Neame, 1969) set in the 1930s. Maggie Smith plays Jean Brodie, a teacher who is dedicated to teaching her students the humanities. Determined to do things her own way, Brodie is bullish, politicized through her interest in fascism, and determined in her sexual freedoms. As a conflicted woman she performs both "masculine" and "feminine" traits as an outsider who nonetheless gains audience empathy.

In the context of this working paper, a queering of identities is related to a character's ability to transcend his or her world by imagining an alternative to hegemonic systems. In terms of masculinity this is important. Extremes include hard-bodied protagonists who "create" a world in which their sense of justice is needed and appreciated, and alienated lost characters who feel trapped within a "determined" world.<sup>89</sup> With a spectrum of diversity, the macro study of films shows a variety of different antiheroes trying to make sense of themselves in relation to the world in which they find themselves.

In terms of masculinity in crisis, the 1960s and 1970s are generally considered by historians to be a time of significant culture change in the US.<sup>90</sup> Given the high number of male protagonists, the aspirations of this generation as represented in cinema are often conflated with what it means to be successful as a man. Gender equality was very much a concern of the post-Second World War generation of baby boomers.<sup>91</sup> As they came of age, their concerns were very different to those of their parents.<sup>92</sup> For the first time, many baby boomers could hope to achieve more than their parents had in terms of material wealth.<sup>93</sup> These new opportunities and their treatment in cinema appealed to people coming of age. As is discussed below, films such as *The Graduate* and *Five Easy Pieces* (Rafelson, 1970) reflected the concerns of wealthier baby boomers. Likewise, this period also saw an increase in the aspirations of those who wanted more material success than their parents and sought opportunities to succeed. Again, as is further developed below, films such as *Love Story* (Hiller, 1970) are good examples of how hard work and aspiration challenge the expectations of class. This new generation demanded something different from a

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<sup>88</sup> Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 1999.

<sup>89</sup> For further reading on resisting determinism, see: Antonio Gramsci, "Hegemony, Relations of Force, Historical Bloc," in *The Gramsci Reader*, ed. David Forgasc (New York, NY: New York University Press), 189 -221.

<sup>90</sup> For further reading, see the essays included in this edited collection: Rodney P. Carlisle and Geoffrey J. Golson, ed., *America in Revolt During the 1960s and 1970s* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-Clio, 2007).

<sup>91</sup> For further reading, see: Gretchen Lemke-Santangelo, *Daughters of Aquarius: Women of the Sixties Counterculture* (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 2009).

<sup>92</sup> Cf. Cogan and Gencarelli, *Baby Boomers and Popular Culture*, 2014.

<sup>93</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*

Hollywood film studio that was in decline. Again, the audience wanted credible characters with whom they could empathize.

In Classical Hollywood films, it not difficult to chart and even quantify acts of heroism gendered as masculine. Many such films can easily be divided into three coherent acts in which a protagonist is introduced and shown to overcome obstacles resulting in a personal or moral success. In the filmic dramatization of the American-dream ideology of hard work resulting in success, which is quantifiable by achieving happiness through material and emotional goals. In his insightful book, “Dream West: Politics and Religion in Cowboy Movies,” Douglas Brode examines how the narratives of Classical Hollywood are conflated with political and religious moral perspectives.<sup>94</sup> Likewise, even a cursory scan of twentieth-century American film history shows the hegemony of White successful males forging a life for themselves.

Charting and quantifying antiheroism is difficult and potentially open to subjective value opinions. The defining elements of the heroic cannot be readily inverted to equal “antihero.” This means that a nuanced assessment of moral ambiguity is necessary. Unlike the classical shyster of early cinema, crime can pay off in a grittier screen culture. In the opening sequence of *For a Few Dollars More* (Leone, 1965), a title card explains: “where life had no value, death, sometimes, had its price.” Monco, Eastwood’s bounty hunter, indeed prospers from his, at times, morally compromised activities. In early New Hollywood films such as *The Graduate* and *Bonnie and Clyde* interest in the filmic goals of wealth and its pursuit are set aside in favour of complex and conflicted character studies. In *The Graduate*, Benjamin Braddock (Dustin Hoffman) is unhappy with in his privileged life, and ultimately exchanges his red sports car for the bus when he escapes to an unknown future with Elaine. In turn, Elaine rejects her new husband at the altar when she escapes with Benjamin. In *Bonnie and Clyde*, the eponymous couple’s (Warren Beatty and Faye Dunaway) world becomes increasingly smaller as they seem not to prosper from their crime spree as bank robbers. Rather than following traditional heroic motivation, each of these antiheroes reflects the realism of human complexity through the pursuit of morally questionable goals.

Instead of presenting absolute definitions, the antiheroes of the New Hollywood era are contradictions. As Geoff King explains, New Hollywood cinema subverts genre.<sup>95</sup> As is demonstrated in the findings of this working paper, this subversion of classical tropes and styles continues the trend of Spaghetti Westerns towards anti-buddy, anti-gangster and several other genres. This cinematic play on the ideas of good and bad is not only realistic in reflecting the complexity of the human condition, but it also supports this working paper’s find that the antihero belongs to a spectrum of character complexities.

## FLUIDITY WITHIN THE SPECTRUM OF AMERICAN POLITICS

Having looked at gendered constructs and performances of antiheroes, this working paper now looks at fluidity within the spectrum of politics. Many new Hollywood films are regarded as being politically left leaning. This is certainly true of films such as *The Dirty Dozen* (Aldrich, 1967) *MASH* (Altman, 1970), *Catch-22* (Mike Nichols, 1970). By analogy these films question American involvement in the Vietnam War and ultimately US foreign policy. *MASH* and *Catch-22* use intelligent and educated characters to question the sense of conscripting young men for the war effort who resent being forced into service. The anxiety of those conscripted is part of the uncertainties discussed above; these anxieties are also related to class, which is discussed further below.

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<sup>94</sup> Cf. Douglas Brode, *Dream West: Politics and Religion in Cowboy Movies* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2013).

<sup>95</sup> Cf. King, *New Hollywood Cinema*, 2002, 19.

Meanwhile the *Dirty Dozen* provides a good catalyst for a discussion on political fluidity during crises. In this film, Lee Marvin plays a war-wearied Major Reisman, who has trained and led a squadron formed by convicted military prisoners on a dangerous covert mission. If successful, their reward would be to have their convictions overturned. For his part, Reisman is heroic in training and preparing the men for his covert mission. He knows that the odds are very much against them; he nonetheless he trains them to the best of his ability, and in doing so he gives them renewed dignity as individuals. Later in the film he shows a conflicted leadership: he understands that burning the Nazi officials with petrol would expedite the mission and help save at least some of those under his charge. As such, the film reflects the concern over the contentious policy of using napalm in the escalation of the Vietnam War. This politically motivated practice was met with disapproval from the right as much as the left. In his book “Napalm: An American Biography,” Robert Neer explains how coverage of the Vietnam War swayed public opinion against the use of napalm.<sup>96</sup>

A good example of political fluidity in the face of the political concerns of the era is Clint Eastwood, whose distaste for President Richard Nixon’s foreign and domestic policies (1969-1974) challenged his public allegiance to the Republican Party. In an interview with *Playboy* he called Nixon immoral, and effectively showed himself to be more fluid in his personal politics within a binary system of voting either Republican or Democrat.<sup>97</sup> As Eastwood played a spectrum of masculinities in this period (from the frontier individual to sensitive friend in *Thunderbolt and Lightfoot* (Cimino, 1974)), his films also asked pertinent political questions. This is especially evident in *Dirty Harry* (Siegel, 1971), *Magnum Force* (Post, 1973), and *The Eiger Sanction* (Eastwood, 1975). *The Eiger Sanction* reflects the post-Watergate scandal concerns of a nation fearful of its individual rights being compromised by Federal Government espionage. While such fears are consistent with the concerns of politically right-wing libertarians, the exposed actions of Nixon and concerns about the Vietnam War brought the issue to the centre ground and beyond.

This same fluidity that can be seen regarding Eastwood is also evident in Robert Redford’s role in *Three Days of the Condor* (Pollack, 1973). Redford is known for his left-leaning political stance and chose to associate himself with a character fighting for the “truth.” His performance as Joe Turner, a bookish CIA operative, is centred on how a reluctant hero can use desperate measures to beat a corrupt federal department. It is interesting to note that the *Eiger Sanction* (Eastwood, 1975), directed by and starring Eastwood, has a similar theme of distrusting the CIA. Eastwood plays Jonathan Hemlock, a cultured academic who is called out of retirement as a government assassin under the threat of being taxed on his previously untaxed income. In combining intellectual wit and physical ability, Hemlock is able to bring down both the villain and expose the corrupt enemy within. Again, the parallels with Nixon’s Watergate Scandal, his foreign policies, and the subsequent mistrust of the people are obvious. They are, however, situated within the imagery of an intellectual political centrist or liberal political construct.

## UN-HYPHENATING THE AMERICAN: CLASS

Eastwood’s performances as Detective “Dirty” Harry Callaghan contrast with how he portrays a professor in the *Eiger Sanction*. As a police detective fighting for justice from within a questionable justice system, Callaghan is a working-class errant hero who is complex yet driven by his determination to do the right thing. However, concerns about his hyper-masculinity polarized public reaction to the film. While some regarded it as a voice for the unsung working-class heroes working as police officers, others considered it libertarian propaganda.<sup>98</sup> The *New Yorker* film critic Pauline Kael was particularly vocal in her distaste for

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<sup>96</sup> Cf. Robert Neer, *Napalm: An American Biography* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2013).

<sup>97</sup> Cf. Arthur Knight, “Playboy Interview: Clint Eastwood,” *Playboy*, February, 1974, 57-65.

<sup>98</sup> Libertarianism is a political philosophy that prioritizes the rights of the individual over the government control. In the USA, libertarianism is often associated with the politically rightwing who favour minimal governmental regulation, and require that is

*Dirty Harry*, which she called “fascistic” and described as “a remarkable single-minded attack on liberal values, with every prejudice in place.”<sup>99</sup> This polarizing effect has been the subject of considerable scholarly discussion.<sup>100</sup> This working paper, however, is concerned with assessing the antiheroic actions and motivations to support its argument that antiheroes reflect a political fluidity with a so-called political binary.

In *Dirty Harry*, Callaghan is concerned that a rotten system allows criminals to escape punishment. Guided by his own sense of right, he is determined to see that a psychotic serial killer, Scorpio (Andy Robinson), is brought to justice. The film unfolds into a game of wits between the two, in which Scorpio is able to ensure that Callaghan’s unorthodox methods see him become the criminal. Nonetheless Callaghan triumphs as he ultimately stops Scorpio and prevents him from murdering others. The film, however, asks the question of whether he is right in his assassination of Scorpio.

Callaghan is very much an antihero, defined as a complex character capable of good and bad. However, his hyper-masculine use of his gun and aggressive catch phrases are also interesting in terms of pushing binaries. While Callaghan is a gun-happy detective, Scorpio still physically and mentally challenges him in a complex cat-and-mouse game. Callaghan needs to draw upon heroic strength to bring Scorpio to a questionable sense of justice. Politically, this encapsulates the frustrations of an individual railing against a corrupt system. It also raises further interesting questions about the influence of class on heroism, which are dealt with below. Meanwhile, it is interesting to note that many political antiheroes of the films listed in Appendix A transcend traditional class distinctions.<sup>101</sup>

*Death Wish* (Winner, 1974) narrates how a middle-class architect, Paul Kersey (Charles Bronson), is transformed from his liberal outlook to become a vigilante assassin after his wife is killed. Like Callaghan, Kersey is frustrated by a justice system that fails to bring criminals to justice.<sup>102</sup> Unlike Callaghan, he operates outside of the law to bring those he considers criminal to justice. His interest in gun-fuelled justice is first aroused when he visits a reconstructed frontier town in Arizona with his boss while visiting a client. The client takes Kersey to a gun range after he is excited by a mock Western gunfight. Having served in the Korean War, Kersey is an impressive shot, and the libertarian client presents him with a powerful revolver as a gift. Feeling empowered by the gun, Kersey begins his descent into murderous street vigilantism. The film was understandably subject to many of the hypermasculinity criticisms made against *Dirty Harry*.<sup>103</sup> Nonetheless, *Death Wish* and *Dirty Harry* reflect how both working- and middle-class Americans were frustrated with overly politicized police departments. Importantly for this working paper, however, they show a social and political fluidity that transcends class.

This play on class breaks with the often centrist constructions of Classical Hollywood, which often favoured safe middle class or aspirant working class characters. There are, of course, exceptions not least in times of social concern and the various stages of post-World War II cinema. As complex heroes, the vigilante and the maverick police detective are extremely challenging as characters. Moreover, they call in to question binary myths about good and bad within political and social constructs. Both middle- and working-class characters are equally capable of political and moral fluidity. Just as both are capable of challenging political corruption at federal and local levels, both classes are equally comfortable with drifting, and with breaking the law. As is discussed above with regard to masculinities, both middle- and

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restricted to upholding the rights of the individual. For a balanced discussion, see: Duncan Craig and Tibor Machan, *Libertarianism: For and Against* (Lanham, MD: Rowland and Littlefield, 2005).

<sup>99</sup> Pauline Kael (Saint Cop), “The Current State of Cinema,” in, *The New Yorker* January 15, 1972, 78-82.

<sup>100</sup> For further reading, see: Harvey O’Brien, *Action Movies: The Cinema of Striking Back* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2012); and Eric Lichtenfeld, *Actions Speak Louder: Violence, Spectacle, and the American Action Movie* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2004), 23-59.

<sup>101</sup> Cf. Appendix A.

<sup>102</sup> For further reading, see: Paul Sorrentino, *Death Wish* (California, CA: Soft Skull Press, 2010).

<sup>103</sup> For further reading, see: Lichtenfeld, *Actions Speak Louder*, 2004, 23-59.

working-class antiheroes assume a subjective responsibility to rebel against that they consider an erroneous, pointless, or even corrupt system.

Another interesting development that reflects how antiheroes challenge binary constructs is how the East and West Coast differences are set aside to examine the South as a place of new opportunities. Much has been written by scholars such as Douglas Brode, Melissa Walker, James C. Cobb, and Charles Wilson about the political transformation of the South through the right to work anti-union protests of the 1970s.<sup>104</sup> At this time non-union labour saw industry and shipping move South. In his book “Hard Hats, Rednecks and Macho Men: Class in 1970s Cinema,” Derek Nystrom explains this transformation through a case study discussion of *Deliverance* (Boorman, 1972).<sup>105</sup> The film follows the misadventures of group of friends who decide to go on a river trip. They clash with a rural community that is soon to have its town and river flooded to generate electricity to fuel the air-conditioning and other amenities for new economic migrants. The group of friends comprises a mix of masculinities and politics, and as such is a credible grouping. This dynamic includes the mild-mannered Ed Gentry (Jon Voight) as the unlikely hero who manages to survive by killing. Gentry is contrasted with libertarian Lewis Medlock (Bert Reynolds), who struggles when order breaks down. In spite of a different set of political problems, the film shows that crises can result in violence, and demonstrates how an unlikely hero or morally complex antihero can rely on similar survival instincts regardless of class or politics.

As discussed above, representations of class have, in many ways, intersected with politics to discredit and dispel binary constructions and constraints. This same break in binary style is also evident in the construction and performance of race, ethnicity, and religion in the filmic antiheroes. In spite of the inequalities identified and discussed below, the antiheroes of the New Hollywood are complex and exceed the traditional categories of racial, ethnic, and political identities used to categorize Americans.

## UN-HYPHENATING THE AMERICAN: RACE

The vast majority of the antiheroes in the 220 films analyzed are White, 94.4 percent.<sup>106</sup> Of that percentage: 33.1 percent are in New Hollywood films, 33.8 percent in American films, and 33.1 percent in foreign produced films.<sup>107</sup> 2.8 percent of the antiheroes in the 220 films analyzed are Asian; each of whom is in a foreign produced film. 2.1 percent of the antiheroes analyzed are Black, in New Hollywood and in foreign-produced films. Less than 1 percent of the antiheroes analyzed are Native American; the one character is in a New Hollywood film. The very low figure for non-White antiheroes is not in keeping with the interests of a younger and college-educated generation. Nonetheless, they reflect the complexities of protesting across a country divided by racial tensions.

Race and racial equality among Americans was an important topic for many baby boomers. Moreover, racial segregation among Americans in the Southern States increasingly became a source of national embarrassment in contrast to pro-American Cold War Propaganda. With regard to demands for change reflected in popular culture, scholars such as Allison Graham and Maurice Berger have written about cinema and the civil rights movements.<sup>108</sup> While New Hollywood innovations resulted in films that challenged aspirational tropes in the American films style, they remained very White. At a time of

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<sup>104</sup> Cf. Brode, *Dream West*, 2013), 22; and Melissa Walker, James C. Cobb and Charles Wilson (ed.), and *The New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture Vol. 11* (Chapel Hill, NC: North Carolina Press, 2012).

<sup>105</sup> Cf. Derek Nystrom, *Hard Hats, Rednecks, and Macho Men: Class in 1970s Cinema* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 59-77.

<sup>106</sup> The racial classifications as in accordance with the American Standards for the Classification Federal Data on Race and Ethnicity, see: [https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/fedreg\\_1997standards/](https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/fedreg_1997standards/) (accessed on September 8, 2015); for further explanation, also see: Appendix B.

<sup>107</sup> As defined in Chart 1. For the figures, see: Appendix B.

<sup>108</sup> Cf. Allison Graham, *Framing the South: Hollywood, Television, and Race During the Civil Rights Struggle* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011); and Maurice Berger, *For All the World to See: Visual Culture and the Struggle for Civil Rights* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010).

personalized filmmaking, many directors felt unsuited to address racial civil rights in film. Blaxploitation films, made by a small number of Black directors with predominantly Black casts, emerged as a way to challenge derogatory stereotypes during the 1970s; they did not, however, enjoy wide success and failed to make the top-20 lists analyzed in this paper. In terms of ethnicity, however, there were significant developments in New Hollywood cinema. Scholars such as Mary Carolan and the many excellent contributors included in “Mediated Ethnicity” have reflected on the importance of ethnicity in a personalized film style.<sup>109</sup> Other pertinent scholarship is included in Aaron Baker’s edited “A Companion to Martin Scorsese,” which touches on race, ethnicity, and religion.<sup>110</sup> Political fluidity has shown how people of different economic or social classes are equally capable of challenging the expected codes of conduct across a spectrum of antiheroes; the same is true for race, ethnicity and religion.

In terms of race and the New Hollywood era, Sidney Poitier performs a number of roles across a spectrum of character complexities which ask what difference race makes to his heroism. Three films, each released in 1967, reflect the ongoing civil rights protests in the USA. In *In the Heat of the Night* (Jewison, 1967), Poitier plays Virgil Tibbs, a police detective who becomes caught up in a murder investigation while travelling through the American South. In response to ingrained racial prejudice, he tells the local police chief Bill Gillespie (Rod Steiger) that he is called “Mr. Tibbs” in the American North. The two are forced to overcome their differences and work together to solve the murder of a local businessman. As a reluctant hero, Tibbs sets aside his anger to help Gillespie. While the subject of the film racial tensions, Tibbs’s heroic actions are beyond racial dichotomies. He puts the quest for justice first.

In *To Sir With Love* (Clavell, 1967), Poitier plays Mark Thackeray, another reluctant complex hero who chooses to continue with teaching job in a poor district in London, UK, that he intended as a temporary post while waiting for his dream job. Again, he overcomes racial prejudice to discover his reluctant heroism. In doing so, he shows that compassion and well as his skills are essential to his success. Like *In the Heat of the Night*, *To Sir With Love* demonstrates that reluctant heroic actions enable people to see beyond racial prejudices to appreciate personal ability. This was a bold move in the US during the 1960s and resulted in characters that attempted to transcend racial typecasting. For a country still divided over racial equality, it was an important development in American cinema to have an African-American as the protagonist in films.

In *Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner* (Kramer, 1967), Spencer Tracy plays Matt Drayton, a liberal media mogul who is surprised by his reaction to his daughter, Joey (Katherine Houghton) bringing home an African-American who she wants to marry. The film addresses Drayton’s reaction to an outstanding man who is clearly devoted to his daughter, and his concerns about their mix-race union. Sidney Poitier’s character, John Prentice, is a very distinguished medical doctor. Not only is his work extensively published in academic journals and monographs, his medical findings are also discussed in the popular media. As a father, Drayton is proud to have brought up a daughter who can see no difference in race; yet, he wonders whether his role is to stop her from being hurt. In many ways the film’s weakness is that it restates the hegemonic White man’s privilege; yet at the same time Tracy’s performance as a man to be a heroic father in changing times is important for this working paper. His reluctance is indicative of the era’s questioning of good and bad through the concerns of its time.

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<sup>109</sup> Mary Ann McDonald Carolan, *The Transatlantic Gaze: Italian Cinema, American Film* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2014); Guiliiana Muscio et al., *Mediated Ethnicity: New Italian-American Cinema* (New York, NY: Queens College, CUNY, 2010).

<sup>110</sup> Baker, *A Companion to Martin Scorsese*, 2015.

## UN-HYPHENATING THE AMERICAN: THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION AND ETHNICITY

The vast majority of the antiheroes in the 220 films analyzed show no or little interest in religion. The following statistics are based on characters who directly embrace, struggle with or reject a religion. The statistics also include “dystopian religions,” which are constructed to replicate faith systems in films such as *THX 1138* (Lucas, 1971). 79.9% of the antiheroes analyzed are not overtly religious.<sup>111</sup> Of that percentage: 31.3 percent are in New Hollywood films, 35.7 percent in American produced films, and 33 percent in foreign produced films.<sup>112</sup>

13.2 percent of the antiheroes in the films analyzed make direct reference to Christianity. Of that percentage, 47.4 percent are in New Hollywood films, 21 percent in American produced films, and 31.6 percent in foreign produced films. In denominational terms, the overall Christian percentage breaks down as follows: Catholic 73.7 percent, Protestant 10.5 percent, Mormon 10.5 percent and 5.3 Russian Orthodox. The Catholic antiheroes are largely divided between New Hollywood (50 percent) and Foreign films (42.6 percent). With regard to the Dystopian religious themes, 2.1 percent of the antiheroes analyzed rebel against them. This percentage breaks down to 66.6 percent in New Hollywood, and 33.3 percent in foreign-produced films. The remaining figures break down as follows: Native American religion, 0.7 percent (New Hollywood), and Soviet State Atheism, 0.7 percent (foreign-produced films).

With regard to ethnicity religion is often either presumed or used as a signifier in American films to underscore stereotypes. This is especially true of the way in which Hollywood has conflated assimilation with mythology of the American dream. Successful middle-class Americans have often and continue to be constructed as “White Anglo-Saxon Protestants” (WASPS). Even though religion or its practice is not necessarily revealed, many American viewers will make this assumption. However, symbols of Catholic devotions were used as signifiers to other identities, such as European or immigrant heritage. As with Protestant assumptions, religious identities are not always developed in any depth. An innovation of New Hollywood cinema is to subvert and challenge stereotypical constructions of ethnic identity by exploring the character complexities.

With regard to “White Anglo-Saxon Protestants,” angst-ridden characters lack the self-assured confidence of their Classical Hollywood counterparts. New Hollywood coming-of-age-films such *The Graduate* and *Five Easy Pieces* (Rafelson, 1970) challenge the middle-class version of White male privilege. Both Benjamin Braddock, as introduced above, and Robert Dupea in *Five Easy Pieces* endeavour to reject the worlds prepared for them by their wealthy families, and grapple with societal expectations that they should become “successful” men like their fathers.

Third-generation Italian directors such as Martin Scorsese and Francis Ford Coppola have explored their personal experiences of ethnicity and religion from a Catholic perspective.<sup>113</sup> Both address their own identities through protagonists who reflect the search for meaning in their lives. They do so in different ways and from different points of view. Interestingly, their gangster films contrast class and power structures to show equally conflicted male antiheroes who grapple with their responsibilities. While the leadership qualities and material successes between Michael Corleone and Charlie differ considerably, both Coppola and Scorsese produce antiheroes whose misplaced loyalties clash with egoism to devastating effects.

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<sup>111</sup> Cf. Appendix B.

<sup>112</sup> As defined in Chart 1. For the figures, see: Appendix B.

<sup>113</sup> For further reading, see: Robert Hensley-King, “Religion and the Antihero in Cinema during the 1970s,” *Harvard Divinity Bulletin* 42 (2015), (in press).

As discussed above in “Gender and Masculine Performativity,” Harvey Keitel’s Scorsesean antiheroes are torn between loyalties. For the Keitel characters such as JR in *Who’s That Knocking at My Door* and Charlie in *Mean Streets*, his ethnic identity as an Italian-American is a thematic factor. Yet, as with other antiheroes, the characters’ anxieties are not entirely dissimilar to those of young Americans who were uncertain about their place in the world.

The films of Coppola and Scorsese also offer interesting insights on how religious identities become conflated with ethnic ones. In doing so they show there is no such thing as a monolithic construct called Catholicism, just as the films that portray the so-called “White Anglo-Saxon Protestants” demonstrate that there is no such construct for Protestantism. In films, aspects or qualities associated with each are used to construct and portray a character’s particular concerns. This is most evident in the collaborations between Martin Scorsese and Paul Schrader, which create very conflicted characters that reflect the Catholic influences of Scorsese and the Protestant influences of Schrader. Schrader and Scorsese’s first collaboration, *Taxi Driver* (Scorsese, 1976), was realized subsequently to the working paper’s period of study. Yet, the idea of religious conflict is already integral to both Scorsese and Coppola’s characters that question their ethnicity (among other identities) as complex heroes. This is evident in the following confluences of ethnic and religious identities.

Both Scorsese and Coppola constructed characters capable of performing ethnicity and religion at whim. As introduced above, Charlie is torn between his conflicting interests, and this makes him selfish yet likeable as a protagonist trying to please. In terms of religion, he grapples with “Catholic guilt” and the idea that he should atone for his sins. He is quite candid about making up for his sins on the streets rather than through sacramental confession with a priest in the Church. Nonetheless, he remains troubled by the fires of hell and develops something of a literal and a figurative fetish for playing with fire. Mark Conrad relates this to Charlie being unhappy and unable to cope.<sup>114</sup> He repeatedly plays with fire by putting his hand close to flames and by not taking responsibility for his actions or those of Johnny Boy and his debts. His friend Johnny Boy recklessly borrows money from local loan sharks, and Charlie sees it as his mission or vocation as a “priest” of the streets to save him.

Coppola’s films during the 1970s offer his own vision of conflated ethnicity and religion.<sup>115</sup> Unlike Scorsese who tries to make sense of his understanding of Catholicism, Coppola tries to reject it. Scholars such as Jeff Menne have written about how Coppola was forced to move around a lot as a child.<sup>116</sup> This is evident in throughout *The Godfather* trilogy, and specifically to this working paper in the first two parts of the trilogy. In his obsession to be a good husband, father, and mafia boss, Corleone alienates himself and even murders his own brother. This is juxtaposed with the hypocrisy of him being a Catholic, albeit on his own terms. Ultimately, Michael is a very different man to his father. Vito is very much in keeping with the shysters of the Great Depression, who did wrong to feed their families. In the case of Vito, he worked through initial poverty as an immigrant to become head of the Corleone family. In a subversion of the American dream, he is respected as an honourable man because he conforms to a different (but recognizable) code of ethics.

In *The Conversation* (1974), Gene Hackman plays a surveillance expert, Harry Caul. As a very private man, Caul feels guilty about an earlier event that is alluded to but never directly discussed as the Watergate Scandal. His guilt is lived through his Catholic religiosity, which comes to the forefront when

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<sup>114</sup> Mark Conrad, “Mean Streets: Beatitude, Flourishing, and Unhappiness,” in *The Philosophy of Martin Scorsese*, ed. Mark Conrad (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2007), 53-74.

<sup>115</sup> For further reading, see: Robert Hensley-King, “Francis Ford Coppola,” in *Italian Americans: The History and Culture of a People*, ed. Eric Martone (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers Inc., 2017), 343-345.

<sup>116</sup> Jeff Menne, *Francis Ford Coppola* (Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2014).

he thinks he has heard a plan to murder someone. His actions are too slow, and his guilt is heightened as is his suspicion that he is being watched on earth as well as by “God.”

## CONCLUSION

The breadth of antiheroes as complex characters identified and discussed in this working paper offer fresh insights on New Hollywood cinema. Likewise, the longitudinal study offers valuable insights on antiheroes as layered and complex characters who can comment on the concerns of their time. As troubled individuals they have their significance and relevance as endured through subsequent generations of audiences. There is a clear spectrum of New Hollywood antiheroes, who like any other antiheroes cannot be reduced to simple binary categories. That there is no such thing as an archetypal antihero is clear in the findings of the working paper. Instead the antihero that characterizes the era of New Hollywood cinema is not an inverted hero, but rather a complex hero whose subjective moral compass is used to question hegemonic ideas about what is right. As such, these conflicted and conflicting characters require nuancing to define them as antiheroes within the spectrum of complex heroes that belong to this creatively fertile period of American cinema.

The methodology of assessing the antiheroic traits and of a diverse spectrum of complex heroes has shown a remarkable breadth in the range of avatars that spoke to cinema audiences at a time of political and economic turmoil.<sup>117</sup> Close analysis has revealed that antiheroes are complex characters whose actions and attitudes challenge audiences to question hegemonic ideologies about right and wrong. They encourage the passivity of cinematic voyeurs of a frightening set of realities to question the morality of their situations and how they react to it. This is evident in the treatment of politics during this era and what it means to come of age as an adult person. In each instance, New Hollywood has brought new and considered innovations to the ways in which the conflicts resulting from and associated with the human condition can be addressed. In particular, the complex heroes discussed break with traditional Hollywood tropes in how ethnicity and religion are screened. The characters discussed invite reflection on identities and morality. However, the period has gaps: gender and racial equality. In New Hollywood cinema, even complex characters are predominantly White and male.

In sum, this working paper has shown the powerful potential of realistic characters in cinema to challenge hegemonic assumptions concerning the human condition. It concludes that the complex heroes of this remarkable period of film history show the necessity of understanding the “antihero” as a broad category. Instead, they reflect changes in film style to present realistic characters who challenge a range of hegemonic assumptions and expectations on how they should “be.” In holding a mirror to their audience, many of these characters successfully challenged people to ask what exactly is “good.”

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<sup>117</sup> This diversity is particularly important given the overwhelming majority of New Hollywood antiheroes are White men, as clearly illustrated in data above and in the appendices below

# APPENDIX A

## List of Films in the Database

*The Sound of Music* (Robert Wise, 1965, USA)  
*For a Few Dollars More* (Sergio Leone, 1965, Italy, Spain, West Germany)  
*Thunderball* (Terence Young, 1965, UK)  
*Doctor Zhivago* (David Lean, 1965, USA)  
*The Great Race* (Blake Edwards, 1965, USA)  
*Dr. Who and the Daleks* (Gordon Fleming, 1965, UK)  
*36 Hours* (George Seaton, 1965, USA)  
*Repulsion* (Roman Polanski, 1965, UK)  
*Battle of the Bulge* (Ken Annakin, 1965, USA)  
*Pierrot le Fou* (Jean-Luc Godard, 1965, France, Italy)  
*Help* (Richard Lester, 1965, UK)  
*Cat Ballou* (Elliot Silverstein, 1965, USA)  
*The Flight of the Phoenix* (Robert Aldrich, 1965, USA)  
*The Collector* (William Wyler, 1965, UK, USA)  
*The Spy Who Came in From the Cold* (Martin Ritt, 1965, UK)  
*Faster, Pussycat! Kill! Kill!* (Russ Meyer, 1965, USA)  
*Alphaville* (Jean-Luc Godard, 1965, France, Italy)  
*In harm's Way* (Otto Preminger, 1965, USA)  
*The Sons of Katie Elder* (Henry Hathaway, 1965, USA)  
*What's New Pussycat* (Clive Donner, Richard Talmadge, 1965, France, USA)  
*The Good, the Bad and the Ugly* (Sergio Leone, 1966, Italy, Spain, West Germany)  
*Django* (Sergio Corbuccio, Italy, Spain, 1966)  
*Our Man Flint* (Daniel Mann, 1966, USA)  
*The Fortune Cookie* (Billy Wilder, 1966, USA)

*Persona* (Ingmar Bergman, 1965, Sweden)

*Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf* (Mike Nichols, 1966, USA)

*Fahrenheit 451* (François Truffaut, 1966, UK)

*Blow-Up* (Michelangelo Antonioni, 1966, UK, USA)

*Batman* (Leslie H. Martinson, 1966, USA)

*Nevada Smith* (Henry Hathaway, 1966, USA)

*Stagecoach* (Gordon Douglas, 1966, USA)

*El Dorado* (Howard Hawks, 1966, USA)

*A Man for all Seasons* (Fred Zinnerman, 1966, UK)

*The Battle of Algiers* (Gillo Pontecorvo, 1966, Italy, Algeria)

*The Chase* (Arthur Penn, 1966, USA)

*The Blue Max* (John Guillermin, 1966, UK)

*Torn Curtain* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1966, USA)

*Alfie* (Lewis Gilbert, 1966, UK)

*Andrei Rublev* (Andrei Tarkovsky, 1966, USSR)

*The Professionals* (Richard Brooks, 1966, USA)

*The Graduate* (Mike Nichols, 1967, USA)

*The Jungle Book* (Wolfgang Reitherman, 1967, USA)

*Cool Hand Luke* (Stuart Rosenberg, 1967, USA)

*You Only Live Twice* (Lewis Gilbert, 1967, UK)

*The Dirty Dozen* (Robert Aldrich, 1967, UK, USA)

*Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* (Stanley Krammer, 1967, USA)

*Casino Royale* (Val Guest, Ken Hughes, John Huston, Joseph McGrath, Robert Parrish, Richard Talmadge, 1967, UK, USA)

*Bonnie and Clyde* (Arthur Penn, 1967, USA)

*Point Blank* (John Boorman, 1967, USA)

*Belle de Jour* (Luis Buñuel, 1967, France, Italy)

*In the Heat of the Night* (Norman Jewison, 1967, USA)

*The War Wagon* (Burt Kennedy, 1967, USA)

*The Thief of Paris* (Louis Malle, 1967, France, Italy)  
*To Sir, with Love* (James Clavell, 1967, UK)  
*Valley of the Dolls* (Mark Robson, 1967, USA)  
*In Like Flint* (Gordon Douglas, 1967, USA)  
*In Cold Blood* (Richard Brooks, 1967, USA)  
*Wait Until Dark* (Terrence Young, 1967, USA)  
*Le Samourai* (Jean-Pierre Melville, 1967, USA)  
*The Fearless Vampire Killers* (Roman Polanski, 1967, USA, UK)  
*Once Upon a Time in the West* (Sergio Leone, 1968, Italy, USA)  
*2001: A Space Odyssey* (Stanley Kubrick, 1968, USA, UK)  
*Rosemary's Baby* (Roman Polanski, 1968, USA)  
*Romeo and Juliet* (Franco Zeffereilli, 1968, UK, Italy)  
*Planet of the Apes* (Franklin J. Schaffner, 1968, USA)  
*Theorem* (Pier Paolo Pasolini, 1968, Italy)  
*The Odd Couple* (Gene Saks, 1968, USA)  
*Bullitt* (Peter Yates, 1968, USA)  
*Where Eagles Dare* (Brian G. Hutton, 1968, USA, UK)  
*Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* (Ken Hughes, 1968, UK)  
*Night of the Living Dead* (George A. Romero, 1968, USA)  
*Oliver!* (Carol Reed, 1968, UK)  
*Barbarella* (Roger Vadim, 1968, France, Italy)  
*The Producers* (Mel Brooks, 1968, USA)  
*The Green Berets* (Ray Kellogg, John Wayne, 1968, USA)  
*Hang 'Em High* (Ted Post, 1968, USA)  
*Funny Girl* (William Wyler, 1968, USA)  
*The Love Bug* (Robert Stevenson, 1968, USA)  
*Ice Station Zebra* (John Sturges, 1968, USA)  
*The Lion in Winter* (Anthony Harvey, 1968, UK)  
*Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* (George Roy Hill, 1969, USA)

*Mackenna's Gold* (J. Lee Thompson, 1969, USA)  
*On Her Majesty's Secret Service* (Peter R. Hunt, 1969, UK)  
*Easy Rider* (Dennis Hopper, 1969, USA)  
*The Wild Bunch* (Sam Peckinpah, 1969, USA)  
*Midnight Cowboy* (John Schlesinger, 1969, USA)  
*True Grit* (Henry Hathaway, 1969, USA)  
*The Italian Job* (Peter Collinson, 1969, UK)  
*The Reivers* (Mark Rydell, 1969, USA)  
*Hello, Dolly!* (Gene Kelly, 1969, USA)  
*Battle of Britain* (Guy Hamilton, 1969, USA)  
Z (Vassili Vassilikos, 1969, France, Algeria)  
*Orgies of Edo* (Masahiro Kafefuda, 1969, Japan)  
*Paint your Wagon* (Alan Jay Lerner, 1969, USA)  
*Yakuza's Law: Yakuza Keibatsushi: Rinb* (Teruso Ishi, 1969, Japan)  
*Cactus Flower* (Gene Saks, 1969, USA)  
*The Prime of Miss Brodie* (Ronald Neame, 1969, UK)  
*Army of Shadows* (Jean-Pierre Melville, 1969, France, Italy)  
*Kes* (Ken Loach, 1969, UK)  
*Hercules in New York* (Arthur A. Seidelman, 1969, USA)  
*The AristoCats* (Wolfgang Reitherman, 1970, USA)  
*MASH* (Robert Altman, 1970, USA)  
*Love Story* (Arthur Hiller, 1970, USA)  
*Two Mules for Sister Sara* (Don Siegel, 1970, USA)  
*Patton* (Franklin J. Schaffner, 1970, USA)  
*Kelly's Heroes* (Brian G. Hutton, 1970, Yugoslavia, USA)  
*Airport* (George Seaton, 1970, USA)  
*Five Easy Pieces* (Bob Rafelson, 1970, USA)  
*Catch-22* (Mike Nichols, 1970, USA)  
*Tora! Tora! Tora!* (Richard Fleischer, Kinji Fukasaku, Japan)

*A Man Called Horse* (Elliot Silverstein, 1970, USA)  
*Beneath the Planet of the Apes* (Ted Post, 1970, USA)  
*Little Big Man* (Arthur Penn, 1970, USA)  
*El Topo* (Alejandro Jodorowski, 1970, Mexico)  
*My Name is Trinity* (Enzo Barboni, 1970, Italy)  
*Beyond the Valley of the Dolls* (Russ Meyer, 1970, USA)  
*Sweet Vengeance* (Amin Q. Chaudhri, 1970, USA)  
*The Conformist* (Bernardo Bertolucci, 1970, Italy, France, West Germany)  
*The Twelve Chairs* (Mel Brooks, 1970, US)  
*Ryan's Daughter* (David Lean, 1970, UK)  
*A Clockwork Orange* (Stanley Kubrick, 1971, UK, USA)  
*Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory* (Mel Stuart, 1971, USA)  
*The Last Picture Show* (Peter Bogdanovich, 1971, USA)  
*Dirty Harry* (Don Siegel, 1971, USA)  
*Diamonds are Forever* (Guy Hamilton, 1971, UK)  
*Vanishing Point* (Richard C. Sarafian, 1971, USA, UK)  
*The French Connection* (William Friedkin, 1971, US)  
*THX 1138* (George Lucas, 1971, USA)  
*Straw Dogs* (Sam Peckinpah, 1971, USA)  
*Fiddler on the Roof* (Noman Jewison, 1971, USA)  
*Bedknobs and Breadsticks* (Robert Stevenson, 1971, USA)  
*Harold and Maude* (Hal Ashby, 1971, USA)  
*Play Misty for Me* (Clint Eastwood, 1971, USA)  
*Fists of Fury* (Wei Lo, 1971, Hong Kong, USA)  
*Maid in Sweden* (Dan Wolman, 1971, USA)  
*Walkabout* (Nicholas Roeg, 1971, UK)  
*Billy Jack* (Tom Laughlin, 1971, USA)  
*The Amdromeda Strain* (Robert Wise, 1971, USA)  
*The Omega Man* (Boris Sagal, 1971, USA)

*Bananas* (Woody Allen, 1971, USA)  
*The Godfather* (Francis Ford Coppola, 1972, USA)  
*Deliverance* (John Boorman, 1972, USA)  
*The Poseidon Adventure* (Ronald Neame, 1972, USA)  
*Last Tango in Paris* (Bernardo Bertolucci, 1972, France, Italy)  
*The Cat Ate the Parakeet* (Philip Pine, 1972, USA)  
*Avanti!* (Billy Wilder, 1972, USA, Italy)  
*Joe Kidd* (John Sturges, 1972, USA)  
*Jeremiah Johnson* (Sidney Pollack, 1972, USA)  
*Solaris* (Andrei Tarkovsky, 1972, USSR)  
*The Last House of the Left* (Wes Craven, 1972, USSR)  
*The Way of the Dragon* (Bruce Lee, 1972, Hong Kong)  
*Cabaret* (Bob Fosse, 1972, USA)  
*Sleuth* (Joseph L. Mankiewicz, 1972, USA, UK)  
*Aguirre: the Wrath of God* (Werner Herzog, 1972, West Germany)  
*Pink Flamingoes* (John Waters, 1972, USA)  
*Frenzy* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1972, UK)  
*Silent Running* (Douglas Trumbull, 1972, USA)  
*The Chinese Connection* (Wei Lo, 1972, Hong Kong)  
*The Getaway* (Sam Peckinpah, 1972, USA)  
*The Cowboys* (Mark Rydell, 1972, USA)  
*The Exorcist* (William Friedkin, 1973, USA)  
*American Graffiti* (George Lucas, 1973, USA)  
*The Sting* (George Roy Hill, 1973, USA)  
*Enter the Dragon* (Robert Clouse, 1973, Hong Kong)  
*Robin Hood* (Wolfgang Reitherman, 1973, USA)  
*Papillon* (Franklin J. Schaffner, 1973, USA, France)  
*Live and Let Die* (Guy Hamilton, 1973, UK)  
*Westworld* (Michael Crichton, 1973, USA)

*Soylent Green* (Richard Fleischer, 1973, USA)  
*Serpico* (Sidney Lumet, 1973, USA, Italy)  
*The Way We Were* (Sydney Pollack, USA, 1973)  
*The Holy Mountain* (Alejandro Jodorowsky, 1973, Mexico, USA)  
*Badlands* (Terrence Malick, 1973, USA)  
*Mean Streets* (Martin Scorsese, 1973, USA)  
*High Plains Drifter* (Clint Eastwood, 1973, USA)  
*Don't Look Now* (Nicholas Roeg, 1973, UK, Italy)  
*Jesus Christ Superstar* (Norman Jewison, 1973, USA)  
*Magnum Force* (Ted Post, 1973, USA)  
*The Wicker Man* (Robin Hardy, 1973, UK)  
*The Long Goodbye* (Robert Altman, 1973, USA)  
*The Great Gatsby* (Jack Clayton, 1974, USA)  
*The Godfather: Part II* (Francis Ford Coppola, 1974, USA)  
*Blazing Saddles* (Mel Brooks, 1974, USA)  
*The Man with the Golden Gun* (Guy Hamilton, 1974, UK)  
*Chinatown* (Robert Towne, 1974, USA)  
*Young Frankenstein* (Mel Brooks, 1974, USA)  
*The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* (Tobe Hooper, 1974, USA)  
*The Conversation* (Francis Ford Coppola, 1974, USA)  
*Earthquake* (Mark Robson, 1974, USA)  
*Emmanuelle* (Just Jaeckin, 1974, France)  
*Gone in 60 Seconds* (H. B. Halicki, 1974, USA)  
*Thunderbolt and Lightfoot* (Michael Cimino, 1974, USA)  
*The Longest Yard* (Robert Aldrich, 1974, USA)  
*Murder on the Orient Express* (Sidney Lumet, 1974, UK)  
*Death Wish* (Michael Winner, 1974, USA)  
*The Towering Inferno* (John Guillermin, 1974, USA)  
*Dark Star* (John Carpenter, 1974, USA)

*Airport 1975* (Jack Smight, 1974, UK)

*Zardoz* (John Boorman, 1974, UK)

*Dirty Mary Crazy Larry* (John Hough, 1974, USA)

*One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest* (Milos Forman, 1975, USA)

*Jaws* (Steven Spielberg, 1975, USA)

*Monty Python and the Holy Grail* (Terry Gilliam, Terry Jones, 1975, UK)

*The Rocky Horror Picture Show* (Jim Sharman, 1975, UK, USA)

*Dog Day Afternoon* (Sidney Lumet, 1975, USA)

*Saló, or the 120 Days of Sodom* (Pier Paolo Pasolini, 1975, Italy, France)

*Barry Lyndon* (Stanley Kubrick, 1975, UK, USA)

*The Story of O* (Just Jaeckin, 1975, France, West Germany, Canada)

*The Three Days of the Condor* (Sydney Pollack, 1975, USA)

*Death Race 2000* (Paul Bartel, 1975, USA)

*Rooster Cogburn* (Stuart Millar, 1975, USA)

*A Boy and His Dog* (L. Q. Jones, 1975, USA)

*The Man Who Would Be King* (John Huston, 1975, UK, USA)

*Sholay* (Ramesh Sippy, 1975, India)

*Tommy* (Ken Russell, 1975, UK)

*Love and Death* (Woody Allen, 1975, France, USA)

*Mandingo* (Richard Fleischer, 1975, USA)

*The Stepford Wives* (Bryan Forbes, 1975, USA)

*Picnic at the Hanging Park* (Peter Weir, 1975, Australia)

*Rollerball* (Norman Jewison, 1975, UK)

# APPENDIX B

## Categorizations of antihero

### Natural Leaders:<sup>118</sup>

1. *Battle of the Bulge* (1965)  
American film<sup>119</sup>; male antihero: middle aged;<sup>120</sup> working class background (police officer army officer);<sup>121</sup> White American;<sup>122</sup> neither overtly religious nor anti-religious<sup>123</sup>
2. *In Harm's Way* (1965)  
American film; male antihero: middle aged; middle class; White American; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious
3. *The Dirty Dozen* (1967)  
New Hollywood film<sup>124</sup>; male antihero: middle aged; middle class; White American; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious
4. *Where Eagles Dare* (1968)  
Foreign film;<sup>125</sup> male antihero: middle aged; middle class; White British; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious
5. *Patton* (1970)  
New Hollywood film; male antihero: middle aged; middle class; White American; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious (except for re-incarnation delusion)
6. *Aguirre, The Wrath of God* (1972)  
Foreign film; male antihero: middle aged; 16<sup>th</sup> century soldier; Spanish; Roman Catholic

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<sup>118</sup> Each of these antiheroes is a warrior.

<sup>119</sup> As explained in the working paper, American means non-New Hollywood films in this analysis.

<sup>120</sup> Given that many roles are constructed to make the characters seem much younger, especially those who perform hypermasculinity, this is very difficult to quantify. Likewise, “youth” is often conflated with new ideas that are modern and contemporary to the age of production. It can also suggest naivety. This appendix follows the Hollywood practice that protagonists are mostly portrayed as being young. The nuanced exceptions to this, as discussed in this working paper, reflect examples in which age is of particular importance.

<sup>121</sup> Again, given that class is often constructed to reflect an “everyperson” with a wide audience appeal in Hollywood, this is difficult to quantify. Again, the working paper follows the broad Hollywood definitions of class and nuances definitions in its discussions.

<sup>122</sup> The racial groupings used in the working paper are in accordance with the American Standards for the Classification Federal Data on Race and Ethnicity, see: [https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/fedreg\\_1997standards/](https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/fedreg_1997standards/) (accessed on September 8, 2015). The standards make the following minimum classifications: Native American or Alaskan, Asian, Black, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Island, and White. The distinctions of race and ethnicity made in this appendix give further information to help substantiate the working paper’s nuanced discussions with regard to ethnicity and race.

<sup>123</sup> Many protagonists, in both Classical and New Hollywood, do not comment directly on religion. Even though the violent and sexual actions of some antiheroes can be understood as being contrary to religious attitudes, they are in themselves not a direct comment on religion. In some cases, when referenced, religion is simply a signifier for another set of identities, such as class and ethnicity. As is nuanced in this working paper, however, a few New Hollywood antiheroes offer a direct commentary on both religion and religious conflict. This is true for known religions and dystopian allegories.

<sup>124</sup> As explained in the working paper, the term “New Hollywood” films refer to those widely regarded to belong to that category.

<sup>125</sup> As explained in the working paper, the category “foreign” includes international collaborations with American studios and talent in this analysis.

Lost/ Misfit/ Alienated:

1. *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf* (1966)  
New Hollywood film; male and female antiheroes: Middle aged, middle aged; middle class, middle class; White British, White British; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious, neither overtly religious nor anti-religious
2. *Blow-Up* (1966)  
Foreign film; male antihero: young; middle class; White British; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious
3. *The Graduate* (1967)  
New Hollywood film; male antihero young; middle class; White American; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious
4. *Cool Hand Luke* (1967)  
American film; male antihero: young; working class; White American; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious
5. *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967)  
New Hollywood film; male and female antiheroes: young, young; working class, working class; White American, White American; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious
6. *Theorem* (1968)  
Foreign; male antihero: young; anti-bourgeois; mysterious outsider –Italian; Catholic – commentary
7. *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* (1969)  
New Hollywood; male antiheroes: young, young; working class, working class; White American, White American; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious, neither overtly religious nor anti-religious
8. *Easy Rider* (1969)  
New Hollywood; male antiheroes: young, young; working class (counter cultural), working class (counter cultural); White American, White American; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious, neither overtly religious nor anti-religious
9. *The Prime of Miss Brodie* (1969)  
Foreign film; female antihero: young; middle class; White British; Protestant - challenges school's sexual ethics
10. *MASH* (1970)  
New Hollywood film; male antihero: young, middle class; White American, neither overtly religious nor anti-religious
11. *Five Easy Pieces* (1970)  
New Hollywood film; male antihero: young; middle class; White American; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious
12. *Catch-22* (1970)

- New Hollywood film; male antihero: young; middle class; White American; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious
13. *The Conformist* (1970)  
Foreign film; male antihero: young; aspirational; Mediterranean Italian; Roman Catholic links through Italian fascism
  14. *A Clockwork Orange* (1971)  
New Hollywood film; male antihero: young; working class; White British; performs generic prison Christian religion – thus offering an interesting commentary on Roman Catholic idea of free will
  15. *Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory* (1971)  
American film; male antihero: middle aged; middle class; White American; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious
  16. *The Last Picture Show* (1971)  
New Hollywood film; male antihero: young; working class; White American; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious
  17. *Vanishing Point* (1971)  
Foreign film, male antihero: young; working class; White American; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious
  18. *Harold and Maude* (1971)  
New Hollywood film, male antihero: young; middle; White American; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious, in spite of attending funerals
  19. *Maid in Sweden* (1971)  
Foreign film, female antihero: young; middle class; White Swedish; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious
  20. *The Godfather* (1972)  
New Hollywood film; male antihero: young; middle class; Italian-American; Roman Catholic
  21. *Last Tango in Paris* (1972)  
Foreign film, male antihero: middle aged; middle class; White American; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious
  22. *Cabaret* (1972)  
New Hollywood film; female antihero: young; working class; White American; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious
  23. *Pink Flamingos* (1972)  
American film; transgender antihero:<sup>126</sup> young; working class; White American; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious
  24. *Badlands* (1973)

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<sup>126</sup> The protagonist identifies as a female

New Hollywood film; male and female antiheroes: young, young; working class, working class; White American, white American; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious

25. *Mean Streets* (1973)

New Hollywood film; male antihero: young: working class; Italian-American; Roman Catholic

26. *The Godfather: Part II* (1974)

New Hollywood film; male antihero: young: middle class; Italian-American; Roman Catholic

27. *The Conversation* (1974)

New Hollywood film; male antihero: young; middle class; White American; Roman Catholic

Reluctant Antiheroes:

1. *Pierrot le Feu* (1965) Foreign film: male antihero; middle aged; middle class; White French; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious

2. *Cat Ballou* (1965)

American film; female antihero: young; working class; White American; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious, in spite of Protestant references in the film

3. *Our Man Flint* (1966)

American film; male antihero: young; middle class; White American; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious

4. *Fahrenheit 451* (1966)

Foreign film; male antihero: young; working class; White American; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious, in spite of challenging the authorities in his dystopian world

5. *Torn Curtain* (1966)

Foreign film; male antihero: young; middle class; White American; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious

6. *The Professionals* (1966)

American film; male antiheroes: young, young; working class, working class; White American, White American; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious, neither overtly religious nor anti-religious

7. *In the Heat of the Night* (1967)

New Hollywood film, male antihero: young; working class; Black American; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious

8. *To Sir with Love* (1967)

Foreign film; male antihero: young; working class; Black British Guyanese (has lived in CA, USA); neither overtly religious nor anti-religious

9. *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968)

Foreign film; male antihero: young; middle class; White American; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious

10. *Planet of the Apes* (1968)  
New Hollywood film; male antihero: young; middle class; White American; challenges the ape religion he encounters in a dystopian world
11. *MacKenna's Gold* (1969)  
American film; male antihero: middle aged, working class; White American; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious
12. *Midnight Cowboy* (1969)  
New Hollywood film; male antihero: young; working class; White American; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious, in spite of his encounters with a male Roman Catholic client
13. *The Reivers* (1969)  
American film; male antihero: young; working class; White American; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious
14. *Paint Your Wagon* (1969)  
American film, male antiheroes: young and middle aged; working and middle class; White American, White American; reverses un-reformed-Mormon plural marriage with the two men sharing a "wife"
15. *Two Mules for Sister Sara* (1970)  
American film; male antihero: young; working class; White American; he is conflicted about his feelings for a woman posing as a Roman Catholic nun
16. *Airport* (1970)  
New Hollywood film; male antiheroes: middle, middle; middle class, middle class; White American, Black American, neither overtly religious nor anti-religious
17. *Beneath the Planet of the Apes* (1970)  
American film; male antihero: young; middle class; White American; challenges the ape religion and a nuclear bomb cult that he encounters in a dystopian world
18. *Little Big Man* (1970)  
New Hollywood film, male antihero: a very old man looks back; working class; native American
19. *My Name is Trinity* (1970)  
Foreign film; male antihero: young; working class; White American; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious
20. *Sweet Vengeance* (1970)  
American film; female antihero: young; working class; White American; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious
21. *The Twelve Chairs* (1970)  
American film; male antihero: middle; impoverished Russian aristocrat in the USSR; Russian; relies on the help of a Russian Orthodox priest
22. *Ryan's Daughter* (1970)  
Foreign film; male antihero: middle; working class; White Irish; Catholic background

23. *THX 1138* (1971)  
New Hollywood film; male antihero: young; dystopian proletariat; White-dystopian American; challenges a dystopian religion
24. *Straw Dogs* (1971)  
New Hollywood film; male antihero: young; middle class; White American; cynical about religion, directed towards local Protestant minister and his parish
25. *Play Misty for Me* (1971)  
New Hollywood film; male antihero: young; working class (with a comfortable lifestyle as a radio presenter); White American; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious
26. *Fists of Fury* (1971)  
Foreign film; male antihero: young; working class; Chinese; martial arts sense of duty
27. *Deliverance* (1971)  
New Hollywood film; male antihero: young; working class (aspirational); White American; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious
28. *The Poseidon Adventure* (1972)  
New Hollywood film; male antihero: young; entitled cleric; White American; Protestant minister at odds with his church's authority
29. *The Last House on the Left* (1972)  
Foreign film; male antihero: middle aged; middle class; White American; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious
30. *The Getaway* (1972)  
American film; male antihero: young; working class; White American; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious
31. *The Exorcist* (1973)  
New Hollywood film; female antihero: young; middle class; cynical about religion witnesses a Catholic exorcism
32. *Westworld* (1973)  
American film; male antihero: young; middle class; White American; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious
33. *Earthquake* (1974)  
American film; male antihero: young, working class; White American; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious
34. *Thunderbolt and Lightfoot* (1974)  
New Hollywood film; male antihero: young; working class; White American; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious, in spite of posing as a Protestant minister at the opening of the film
35. *The Towering Inferno* (1974)  
New Hollywood film; male antihero: young; middle class; White American; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious

36. *Dog Day Afternoon* (1975)  
New Hollywood film; male antihero: young; working class; American with Polish and Italian heritage; Roman Catholic – separated from his husband, having been married by a priest tied to the counter-cultural movement.
37. *Rollerball* (1975)  
Foreign film; male antihero: young; dystopian proletariat; White American; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious

Solitary/ Individual antiheroes:

1. *For a Few Dollars More* (1965)  
Foreign film; male antihero: young; working class; White American; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious, in spite of a Roman Catholic culture
2. *Thunderball* (1965)  
Foreign film; male antihero: young; middle class; White British; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious
3. *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold* (1965)  
Foreign film; male antihero: young- middle aged; working class; White British; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious
4. *Alphaville* (1965)  
Foreign film, male antihero: young; dystopian proletariat; White French; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious
5. *The Sons of Katie Elder* (1965)  
American film; male antihero: middle; working class; White American; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious, but respects his mother's faith
6. *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly* (1966)  
Foreign film; male antihero: young; working class; White American; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious, in spite of a Roman Catholic culture
7. *Django* (1966)  
Foreign film; male antihero: young, working class; White American; young; working class; White American; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious
8. *Batman* (1966)  
American film, male antihero: young; middle class; White American; young; working class; White American; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious
9. *Nevada Smith* (1966)  
American film, male antihero: young; working class; White American; young; working class; White American; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious
10. *Stagecoach* (1966)

American film; male antihero: young; working class; White American; young; working class; White American; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious, in spite of challenging the hypocrisy of his travel companions

11. *El Dorado* (1966)  
American film, male antihero: middle aged; working class; White American; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious
12. *The Chase* (1966)  
American film; male antihero: young; working class; White American; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious
13. *You Only Live Twice* (1967)  
Foreign film; male antihero: young; middle class; White British; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious
14. *Casino Royal* (1967)  
Foreign film; male antihero: young; middle class; White British; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious
15. *Point Blank* (1967)  
New Hollywood film; male antihero: middle aged; working class (albeit a successful ex-con); White American neither overtly religious nor anti-religious
16. *The War Wagon* (1967)  
American film; male antihero: middle aged; working class; White American; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious
17. *In Like Flint* (1967)  
American film; male antihero: retired; middle class; White American; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious
18. *Le Samourai* (1967)  
Foreign film; male antihero: young; working class; White American; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious
19. *Once Upon a Time in the West* (1968)  
Foreign film; male antihero: young - middle aged; working class; White American; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious
20. *Bullitt* (1968)  
American film; male antihero: young; working class; White American; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious
21. *Barbarella* (1968)  
Foreign film; female antihero: young; working class; White American; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious
22. *Hang 'Em High* (1968)  
American film; male antihero: young; working class; White American neither overtly religious nor anti-religious

23. *On Her Majesty's Secret Service* (1969)  
Foreign film; male antihero: young; middle class; White British; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious
24. *The Wild Bunch* (1969)  
New Hollywood; male antihero: young – middle aged; working class; White British; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious
25. *True Grit* (1969)  
American film; male antihero: middle aged; working class; White American; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious
26. *Army of shadows* (1969)  
Foreign film; male antihero: young; working class; White French; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious
27. *El Topo* (1970)  
Foreign film; male antihero: young; working class; Mexican; a man in search of enlightenment with Christian and Eastern references
28. *Dirty Harry* (1971)  
New Hollywood film; male antihero: young; working class; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious
29. *Diamonds are Forever* (1971)  
Foreign film male antihero: young; middle class; White British; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious
30. *The French connection* (1971)  
New Hollywood film; male antihero: young – middle aged; working class; White American; neither religious nor anti-religious
31. *Joe Kid* (1972)  
American film; male antihero: young; working class; working class; White American; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious
32. *Jeremiah Johnson* (1972)  
American film; male antihero: young; working class; White American; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious
33. *Solaris* (1972)  
Foreign film; male antihero: young – middle; White Russian; Soviet atheism
34. *The Way of the Dragon* (1972)  
Foreign film; male antihero: young, working class; Chinese; martial arts sense of duty
35. *Silent Running* (1972)  
American film; male antihero: young; middle class; White American; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious

36. *The Chinese Connection* (1972)  
Foreign film; male antihero: young, working class; Chinese; martial arts sense of duty
37. *The Cowboys* (1972)  
American film; male antihero: middle aged: working class; White American; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious
38. *Enter the Dragon* (1973)  
Foreign film; male antihero: : young, working class; Chinese; martial arts sense of duty
39. *Live and Let Die* (1973)  
Foreign film; male antihero: Foreign film male antihero: young; middle class; White British; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious
40. *High Plains Drifter* (1973)  
American film; male antihero: young; working class; White American; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious
41. *Magnum Force* (1973)  
American film; male antihero: young; working class; White American; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious
42. *The Long Goodbye* (1973)  
American film; male antihero: young; working class; White American; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious
43. *The Man with the Golden Gun* (1974)  
Foreign film male antihero: young; middle class; White British; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious
44. *Chinatown* (1974)  
New Hollywood film; male antihero: young; working class; White American; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious
45. *Death Wish* (1974)  
American film; male antihero: young – middle aged; middle class; White American; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious
46. *Zardoz* (1974)  
Foreign film; male antihero: middle aged; middle class; White British; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious
47. *Rooster Cogburn* (1975)  
American film; male antihero: middle aged; working class; White American; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious

Selfish/ Egocentric/ Opportunist Antiheroes:

1. *Dr. Zhivago* (1965)  
American film; male antihero: from young to middle aged (epic); middle class; White Russian; Soviet atheism
2. *The Great Race* (1965)  
American film; male antihero: young; middle class; White American; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious
3. *Faster, Pussycat! Kill! Kill!* (1965)  
American film; female antihero: young; working class; White American; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious
4. *What's New Pussycat?* (1965)  
Foreign film; male antihero: young; young; middle class; middle class; White British; White American; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious
5. *The Fortune Cookie* (1966)  
American film; male antihero: young; middle class; White American; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious
6. *The Blue Max* (1966)  
Foreign film; male antihero: young; working class; White German; young; middle class; White American; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious
7. *Alfie* (1966)  
Foreign film; male antihero: young; working class; White British; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious
8. *Belle du Jour* (1967)  
Foreign film; female antihero: young; middle class; White French; young; working class; White German
9. *The Thief of Paris* (1967)  
Foreign film; male antihero: young; working class; White French; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious
10. *The Odd Couple* (1968)  
American film; male antihero: young; middle class; White American; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious
11. *The Producers* (1968)  
New Hollywood film; male antihero: young; middle class; White American; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious
12. *The Italian Job* (1969)  
Foreign film; male antihero: young; working class; White British; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious
13. *Kelly's Heroes* (1970)  
Foreign film; male antihero: young; working class; White American; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious

14. *The Sting* (1973)  
New Hollywood film; male antihero: young; working class; White American; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious
15. *The Great Gatsby* (1974)  
American film; male antihero: young; middle class; White American; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious
16. *Young Frankenstein* (1974)  
New Hollywood film; male antihero: young; middle class; White American; scientist creating life
17. *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (1975)  
American film; male antihero: young; working class; White American; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious
18. *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* (1975)  
Foreign film; male antihero:<sup>127</sup> young; middle class; White from "Transylvania;" non-religious pleasure-seeking scientist
19. *Barry Lyndon* (1975)  
New Hollywood film; male antihero: young to young-middle aged (epic); lower-middle class aspiring to upper-middle class acceptance; neither overtly religious nor anti-religious