

New [as] quite simply  
becoming a means of



New wave cinema refers to a period of time during the late 1950s to 1960s, whereby, a group of young film critics and cinephiles – such as Jean-Luc Godard and François Truffaut- revolutionised the cinematic experience, by rejecting the traditional, quality cinema often reflected through American film and formulating a new way to direct film.

This group, also referred to as the Young Turks, were heavily influenced by Italian neorealism films like Vittorio de Sica's *Bicycle Thieves* (1948) and documentary cinema, for example, Jean Rouch's *Initiation à la Danse Des Possédés* (1948). By employing techniques picked up from these two influences, the Young Turks developed cinematic devices that would become iconic to 'New Wave Cinema' and challenge the conventions of Hollywood cinema. Similar to the Auteur theory or camera-pen, developed by Alexandre Astruc, these radical techniques allowed directors adopt a personal style to their films, making them "subject to only themselves" and thus "express their thoughts" in a manner that showed "cinema as quite simply becoming a means of expression". French new wave directors Jean-Luc Godard's (henceforth Godard) and Agnes Varda (henceforth Varda) reflect this idea of camera pen and a revolutionary cinematic experience in their works, *Breathless* (1960 – Godard) and *Cleo from 5 to 7* (1962 – Varda), through a range of techniques, including, the use of a handheld camera over a fixed tripod, natural lighting and sound instead of a studio with non diegetic sound laid over the scene and radical jump cuts, as opposed to smooth transitions. Firstly, both directors (Godard and Varda) employed the use of editing techniques in their films that were typical of 'New Wave' and contemporary European cinema, however, these techniques often challenged the

conventions of cinema put in place by Hollywood because of their ability to fragment the narrative and force the viewer to become concentrate on the filmmaking process.

Jump cuts were a method of the 'nouvelle vague' Godard uses this cinematic device, in order to create a sentiment of discontinuity amongst the viewers. This is prominently seen when Godard jump cuts from Patricia talking to the concierge to finding Michel in her bed, the discontinuity of this edit suggests that audience are purposefully unable to connect to the narrative of Michel. This separation of reality and fiction appears vague to the audience, thus, allowing them to personally reflect. This technique is also used as Michel waits for Patricia to cross the road and get into the car; by inserting a jump cut between the initial introduction of Patricia into the scene and her sudden appearance in the road disrupts the audience's line of sight and shows a discontinuous stream of events. Alternatively, it can be noted that the use of jump cut in this scene is to draw the attention of viewers to the relationship between Michel and Patricia, as despite Godard "sacrificing the spatial continuity" through this edit; he enhances the emotional and rhythmic atmosphere by maintaining the fluid diegetic sequence of the bicycle bell ringing and and a type of automobile in transit, driving across the road where Patricia is standing.

In spite of the changes of background scenery, the primary focus of the jump cut remains on Patricia as the camera is heavily focuses on her movements, suggesting that Godard purposefully "directed the viewers attention...

as they are only going to look at the most overriding thing in front.” Jump cuts were also a technique used in contemporary European cinema, however, it was a less popular device and was often executed to create atmospheric tension to enhance the narrative, instead of as a stylistic feature adopted by the director to purposefully disconnect the audience from the narrative. Alfred Hitchcock’s film *The Birds* (1963), demonstrates this as he uses three consecutive jump cuts to zoom into the body of a man whose eyes have been pecked out by the birds. In this scene, each jump cut is a zoom in closer to the body, breaking the editing continuity, and therefore building an uncomfortable and tense atmosphere. This allows the viewer to be drawn in and adding to the narrative, despite the fact that the jump cuts was designed to create discontinuity because of its “...

disregard to the story, to the dialogue, and to the construction of the cinematic illusion”. Although this editing device was used to denote a different meaning to audiences of the French New Wave, as it did to audiences of European cinema, the technique was still celebrated as a radical way of portraying cinema. This critical reception compares to that of classic Hollywood cinema, as it widely rejected the style because of the lack of continuity and the way in which it disrupts the narrative to disorientate the audience.