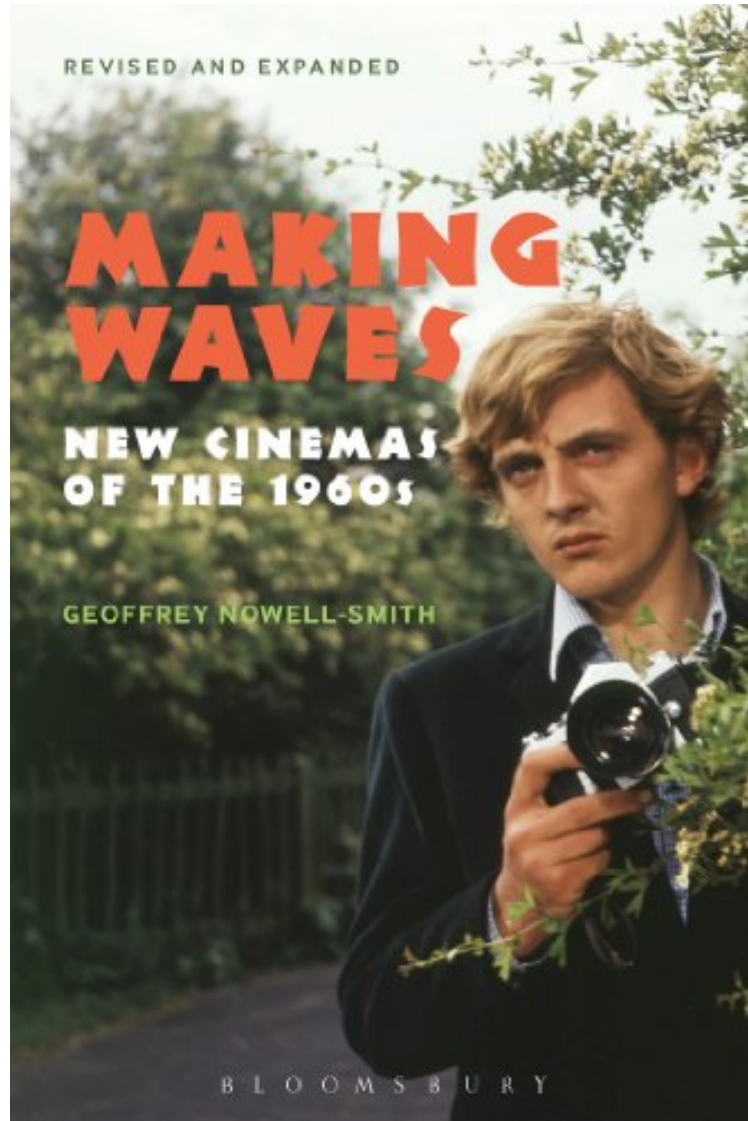


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Making Waves, Revised and Expanded: New Cinemas of the 1960s

Geoffrey Nowell-Smith

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The 1960s was famously the decade of sex, drugs and rock'n'roll. It was also a decade of revolution and counter-revolution, of the Cuban missile crisis, of the American intervention in Vietnam, of economic booms and the beginning of consumerism (and the rebellion against it). It was a decade in which the avantgarde came out of the closet and into the street, expressing itself on album covers and posters as much as in galleries. And it was a decade in which the old popular art - crooners and show bands, Hollywood musicals and melodramas - seemed destined to be swept away by the tide of novelty emerging across the world. The cinema was central to this atmosphere of cultural ferment. Hollywood was in decline, both artistically and commercially. The genres which had held audiences captive in the 1940s and 50s - musicals, Westerns, melodramas - were losing their appeal and their great practitioners were approaching retirement. The scene was therefore set for new cinemas to emerge to attract the young, the discriminating, the politically conscious and the sexually emancipated. The innovative features of the new cinemas were not the same everywhere. Common to most of them, however, were a political and aesthetic radicalism and a break with the traditions of studio filmmaking and its cult of perfect illusion. *Making Waves, Revised and Expanded* is a sharp, focused, and brilliant survey of the innovative filmmaking of the 1960s, placing it in its political, economic, cultural and aesthetic context - capturing the distinctiveness of a decade which was great for the cinema and for the world at large. Geoffrey Nowell-Smith pays particular attention to a handful of the most remarkable talents (Godard, Antonioni, Oshima) that emerged during the period and helped to make it so special.

Veteran film scholar Nowell-Smith (*The Oxford History of World Cinema*) is indeed making waves' as he demystifies the new cinemas of the 1960s in Europe and Latin America. He doesn't hesitate to point out that a new-wave director's use of a documentary style or black and white was because of financial rather than aesthetic reasons, or that some of the innovative techniques used (e.g. shaky camera, jump cuts, and strangely accentuated location sounds) actually reflect incompetence in overcoming difficulties in location shooting. Particularly interesting is his analysis of the change in British culture and how it affected free cinema in that country and the contrast between the diversity of new filmmaking in France and the corresponding dearth of new wave in Italy... this work distinguishes itself as an all-encompassing text on the subject, unlike others that focus on an individual country during the 1960s. Recommended for both public and academic libraries. Library Journal Its lucid and well-structured prose makes it a suitable addition to any student's reading list. PopMatters.com [A] brisk, sharp-witted primer on one of the most explosively creative periods of filmmaking. Los Angeles Times A brisk refresher course for cinephiles: Nowell-Smith, editor of *The Oxford History of World Cinema*, zeros in on the European New Wave, and the exuberant mavericks - Godard, Antonioni, et al. - who reinvented film during the 1960s. Warning: You'll be adding *Breathless*, *L'avventura* and *Mamma Roma* to your Netflix queue. - New York Newsday New York Newsday The 60s saw an eruption of cine-movements around the globe. The British Free Cinema, the French and Czech New Waves and the Polish School (among others) all jostle for space as Nowell-Smith tries to pack their innovations into a small single volume. A lack of snaps and an academic tone don't exactly set the pulse racing, but at least the author admits that the Euro film bias is there because that's what he knows best. Total Film, UK Nowell-Smith is exacting with detail and sparing with the flabby bits that often characterize cinematic study. Empire (UK) *Making Waves* is a vivid reminder of the newness of 1960s cinema and a useful introduction to the passionate debates of a uniquely creative period. Sight Sound (UK) A gratifyingly concise introduction to the likes of Bergman, Antonioni and Pasolini. Daily Telegraph (UK) [T]he writing is always engaging and complex issues are handled with a pleasing lightness of touch, while some incisive film criticism made this reader want to see the films again. Andrew Higson, BBC History Magazine, 2008 In his new book, *Making Waves*, Geoffrey Nowell-Smith reviews the crests of these cinematic new waves. In sharp, clearly written prose, Nowell-Smith provides a broad context, considering not just films and filmmakers, but also the politics and culture of the era, changes in film technology, industry economics, new "mature" subject matter, and so on. In addition to this historical information, Nowell-Smith is also able to communicate vividly the ways in which so many films of this period "felt" new Overall, in addition to being a fine review, the book is filled with insights that transform received wisdom into a subtle and textured history. Christian Keathley, French Forum, 2009 About the Author Geoffrey Nowell-Smith is Honorary Professorial Fellow in the School of History at Queen Mary, University of London.