

# EROTICISM AND FORM AS SUBVERSION IN *DAISIES*

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Censorship is a tool to set aside the obvious and classifiable, but when a piece of art is ambiguous and allows multiple interpretations, a bureaucrat is exposed to a swamp of exegesis. The crucial moment in which suspicion crosses with certainty becomes the starting point for a game of hide and seek between the artist and the official.

One example of this tension is the Czechoslovak film *Daisies* (Sedmikrásky, Věra Chytilová, 1966) that is celebrating its fifteenth anniversary in 2016. Two young girls<sup>1</sup> constantly seduce elder men in order to be invited to dinner. Neither of them have work or a significant other. They act unscrupulously and outside the rules. Isolated from society, they are at the edge of drowning in their hopeless anarchism that does not know salvation.

This paper analyzes the use of eroticism and ambiguity of cinematographic language as tools for criticizing the conservative and bureaucratic system of the then Pro-Soviet Czech govern-

ment. The approach to the concept of eroticism by George Bataille helps to interpret the representation of the main characters of the film. In addition, this article explores the narrative resources that link the movie to other arts such as performance, following the discourse of the director and her adscription to the avant-garde movement of the Czech New Wave. *Daisies'* historic context will be discussed in order to examine the cinematographic language as a vehicle for understanding the ideology and posture of the filmmaker: the form as a weapon of subversion.

In comparison with other New Wave-Movements there are only a few English- and Spanish-language texts about Czech Cinema. Nevertheless this film has been discussed widely among international film scholars. Besides the reviews of Clouzot (1968) and Miljević (1995), Weidner (2016) discusses the topic of sustainability and the idea of Dadaism in *Daisies* comparing it with *Nova Express* (1964) by William Burroughs. Sorfa (2013)

analyzes the image of women in Chytilová's works and in *Loves of a Blonde* (Lásky jedné plavovlásky, Miloš Forman, 1965). On the other side, the paper *Banquet of Profanities* by Katarina Soukup (1998) searches for links between food and subversion.

Other books pick out as a central theme the phenomenon of the Czech New Wave and its representatives in general (HAMES, 2005; 2009; OWEN, 2013) and provide chronologies, ranging from the era of the Absurd, the avant-garde until Czech and Slovak Animation. Alice Němcová Tejkalová, Filip Šára and David Sorfa (2015) dedicate a chapter to Ester Krumbachová, the scriptwriter and art-director of *Daisies* who did not find the attention she deserves among scholars.<sup>2</sup> Šmejkalová (2001) examines censorship in Czech literature and the dissertation of Huebner (2008), which covers eroticism in the work of the surrealist artist Marie Čermínová, alias Toyen, who was a member of *Devětsil*, a surrealist group, of whom many people were suspicious for its bourgeois tendencies, its interest in jazz and the western popular filmculture (HUEBNER, 2008: 85). *Devětsil* was one of the inspirational sources for the Czech New Wave in the sixties. Despite the huge amount of literature about this movement there is little emphasis in eroticism as a tool for eluding censorship.

After focusing on the historic context of Czechoslovak culture in general, this paper analyzes the concept of eroticism of Bataille in order to apply it to the film *Daisies* and link it to the ambiguity of formal experimentation as a tool for subversion.

## HISTORIC CONTEXT

At first, *Daisies* passed all controls of the Czechoslovak Council for Publication and Information, which approved the screenplay. Yet, the film was largely improvised, using the script as only one element in the experiment (LÉGER, 2015: 63). Therefore, in the context of its premiere in May 1967, Jaroslav Pružinec, along with twenty-one members of the Czech parliament, accused the films

*A Report on a Party and the Guests* (*O slavnosti a hostech*) by Jan Němec and *Daisies* by Věra Chytilová for their waste of money. These works were produced and funded by the state in Barrandov Studios, but: «[...] don't have anything in common with our Republic, with socialism and the ideals of communism. [...] We have to ask Němec and Chytilová: Where is the learning effect in terms of labor, politics or even the entertainment for our workers in fabrics, the rural areas, construction sites or other places? We demand an explanation by the cultural workers: How long will you continue to bother the honest laborers and step on our socialist achievements? Why do we have soldiers at our borders that protect us from our enemies [...] while we pay huge amounts of money to the opponents inside the country that smash and destroy [...] the fruits of our work? (PRUŽINEC, 1967.)<sup>3</sup>»

The movie was considered inappropriate for Czech audiences, given the hard times local farmers were undergoing in that period (SEAL, 2012). Therefore, *Daisies* together with *A Report on a Party and the Guests* soon disappeared from national movie theaters and their international distribution was prohibited, although, due to its great popularity among workers, *Daisies* still would circulate from time to time in local theaters (SEAL, 2012; LIM, 2001: 37). The director Chytilová was punished with the prohibition of work between 1969 and 1975 by Miroslav Müller, an intransigent politician, responsible for cultural issues in the Czechoslovak Communist Party after the Prague Spring (RUPNIK, 1975).

Despite numerous invitations, Chytilová could not attend international festivals or be physically present when she was honored with the Grand Prix at the Bergamo Festival in Italy in 1966 for her movie. She was prohibited from engaging in her profession as a filmmaker and dedicated her life to her family until she appealed publically against the sanctions with a letter entitled "I want to work" addressed to Gustáv Husák (CHYTILOVÁ,

1976: 17-20). Due to these lines and the international pressure she finally could celebrate an artistic comeback with *The Apple Game* (Hra o jablko) in 1977. In the context in which the cinema industry was administrated by the State, the directors were employees of the state that maintained dependency with governmental authorities (ELSAESSER, 2005: 70). In addition, the producers of the films were identical with the censors and belonged commonly to the establishment of the Communist Party. According to Owen, the cultural censorship in Czechoslovakia, “especially after the onset of Normalization in 1969, frequently had more to do with the artist and his or her political sympathies, real or supposed, than with anything in the work itself” (OWEN, 2013: 10). Chytilová claimed that her work was misunderstood by censors who did not see that she condemned her protagonists (Chytilová cited in LIM, 2001: 38).

Returning to *Daisies*, there have been voices that criticized the waste of food, but, in fact, it was a matter of incomprehension due to the use of a revolutionary, unusual, circular dramaturgy without a clear message (“Where is the learning effect [...] for our workers”) that called the attention of the bureaucrats. The destructive potential of the film caused dislike, but what role did eroticism play in this movie full of nudity and seduction?

## THE ROLE OF EROTICISM IN THE FILM

Eroticism, in this case, is a mechanism for criticizing a system marked by the conservatism in Czechoslovakia of the sixties, where etiquette and good behavior, especially of women, was the guiding star. The main characters within their feminist liberation are shown as an opposing symbol to a static society and eroticism is their means to accomplish this goal. Their costumes, corporality and phonetics contrast radically with the habits of their masculine neighbors in suits.

Bataille argues that eroticism is a “disequilibrium in which the being consciously calls his own existence in question” (BATAILLE, 1986: 31). When the spectator looks at this surrealist world to which this couple guides him, he senses a loss of consciousness of the characters and their surroundings: now the girls are the masters of the senses and of reasoning. Through teasing and making fun of the desire they provoke in those men that never can take possession of them, the girls incorporate a critique to a corrupt society with its double moral standards. The bureaucrats they are relating with—those men in suits who are inviting them to fine restaurants—are the aim of their mockery, but the mechanisms of seduction used by the girls also work for the spectator, such as the censors that might have felt seduced and mocked at the same time. The daisies do not feel desire and everything they do is part of a strategy of seduction and subversive critique.

Their transgressive capacity and their apparent unconsciousness of limits are noteworthy. One of the aspects that Bataille points out is the anxiety that comes with transgressing or committing a sin. But the female characters do not feel this anxiety because it is transferred to their surroundings. Therefore all men close to the girls are mortified beings, except for the workers that ignore them.

In the film, there are three deadly sins of the daisies that challenge religion: Gluttony, Lust and Sloth. The girls are insatiable. Although this does not necessarily represent eroticism at first glance, the sensations are passing to those who surround them. Their way of eating does not become grotesque, but indeed is breaking with prohibition and etiquette. It is not a coincidence that deserts are their favorite feasts: their sweetness defines the double sense of moral and good behavior.

The daisies incarnate Lust. Bataille mentions that “the inner experience of eroticism demands from the subject sensitiveness to the anguish at the heart of the taboo no less great than the de-

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sire which leads him to infringe it" (BATAILLE, 1986: 38-39). The girls introduce themselves as the prohibition and as the desire. They are the unbreakable and untouchable limit that no one can reach. Julie, in this case, is, in the words of Bataille "the religious sensibility [that] always links desire closely with terror, intense pleasure and anguish" (BATAILLE, 1986: 39). Her lover complains how she treats him and she shows the limits with the butterflies that inhibit the access. The suitor will not possess her and she, at the end, will be the restriction, the pure eroticism. He can only show his anguish and dread for comprehending love in a different way. This game of seduction is aimed equally at the audience who might expect a sex scene but is left alone with the interruption and the failed act.

At least, Sloth is a sin that counters work as an element that "does make it impossible to respond to these immediate solicitations which could make us indifferent to the promised desirable results" (BATAILLE, 1986: 41).

The sexual desire is contrasted by the labor of the proletariat and this establishes the limit between the desire and the act. If work does not misplace the erotic thinking completely, at least it insulates it. Reasoning makes it possible to create parameters about what is the right thing to do. This is one possible critique on this collective, consumed by work for the nation. Absorbed and without soul, the workers lost their nature and their minds. "There is in nature and there is

in man a movement which always exceeds the bounds, that can never be anything but partially reduced to order" (BATAILLE, 1986: 40). They have lost their impulse to overcome limits.

At work, reasoning comes first, which is not the case with the daisies. "Most of the time work is the concern of men acting collectively and during the time reserved for work the collective has to oppose those contagious impulses to excess in which nothing is left but the immediate surrender to excess, to violence, that is" (BATAILLE, 1986: 41). The girls have been neglected, because the workers have not been infected by their impulses. They do not even see them, because they are invisible in the presence of the reasoning of labor. This neglect leads to the girls' wish to go back to their oneiric, self-centered world where they personify the limit and the transgression. They are the party *par excellence* and the call for unlimited and restless celebration. They are the embodiment of wastefulness and, therefore, the contrast to the representation of a communist society, symbolized by its labor. From Bataille's point of view the criticism of the system of production in this case is evident: «Sacred days though are feast days. Then things which usually are forbidden are permitted or even required, though the upheaval is not necessarily as total as that following the death of a King. The values of a workaday world are inverted. (BATAILLE, 1986: 68).»

Through their acts of wasting, the daisies represent the sacredness of the celebration and therefore they are untouchable. Bataille makes reference to a concrete period, but for them, the festivity is endless. On the other side, the responsibility for everyone else to work is perpetual and goes along with rigid prohibitions.

Each of the daisies can be considered as a nymph-<sup>4</sup>, this "little deadly demon among the wholesome children" (NABOKOV, 1975: 11), as Nabokov would call them. Therefore it establishes the rule that men must be at least ten years older than the girls in or-

der to fall for their sexual tricks and to obey. As we can see they seduce everyone only to abandon them afterwards. Through their phony childishness they catch men that get lost in their sacrilegious games of sensuality that spills over between etiquette and good behavior. They incite the transgression of limits established by a society they are not part of, but which they wish to destroy in one way or another.

Finally, when Chytilová with her deified voice (omniscient and omnipotent) wants to drown them in an attempt to punish them for their actions, an ultimate exposition of eroticism can be observed: the sacrifice. Bataille says that “if it is an intentional transgression, sacrifice is a deliberate act whose purpose is a sudden chance in the victim” (BATAILLE, 1986: 90).

The characters do not die literally. They transfigure to another form, but the fact that they do not de cease explains their condition of being without life and without soul. They are dolls and products of Chytilová’s imagination that reveal the hypocrisy of the system. They are chrysalis that broke their bud and emerge from the water to reconstruct what they have destroyed, but it will not be the same as before, yet now everything is deformed and this new representation makes us doubt of what is correct.

Because of this distinction from the socialist ideal, this movie was and continues to be controversial half a century after its release. What did Věra Chytilová do with this film that made it through the stages of censorship although it does not share the socialist precepts? The key points are three ingredients that are combined in *Daisies*: apart from eroticism, the ambiguity and its experimental form.

### **THE AMBIGUITY AND FORMAL EXPERIMENTATION AS SUBVERSIVE ELEMENTS**

Ambiguity appears ever since the aperture sequence with a sort of intellectual montage<sup>5</sup> that suggests a distorted and interrupted martial tone:

parts of the film alter rhythmically and show a gearwheel in even movement with archive material of explosions and bombings from the air. The images of the detonations are shown in silence. After the opening credits we see for the first time the daisies in a two-dimensional and symmetrical shot, both sitting in plaid bikinis and exaggerated makeup. The girls move and talk without looking at each other. It is a theatrical mannerism, far away from the purpose of a realistic portraiture. The sound again establishes a game of synchronicity, replacing the real ambience by sounds of creaking wood in the acoustic foreground that matches with the girl’s movements. This mannerist montage proposes a certain idea of the representation of the protagonists: they are dolls, puppets or simply alienated and bored.

The renegade personality of the female characters is presented from their first action: they pick their noses, which is followed by a dialogue that clarifies the starting point and the aim of the protagonists: play and destroy established patterns. Since they can’t do anything—here the shot of the two girls is juxtaposed to archive material of a wall falling down—they decide to play to be virgins, to be girls and to be bad in a world that is bad and does not comprehend them. They recite this text with theatricality and a deliberate phoniness, acting without the purpose of realism. Each completes the sentences of the other, only to break later with complicity and proximity through apparent dramatic and violent accents that end up with being a part of the game.

It is a play for the audience. Neither the protagonists reveal a psychological depth nor the credibility that normally is needed in order to involve the audience in the story through a process of identification with the main characters.<sup>6</sup> They seem spoiled dolls or puppets of the director as a tool to seduce the audience only to incommode later on for not giving what is expected. In his paper “Alienated Heroes: Marxism and the Czechoslovak New Wave”, Hames (2014) links Věra Chy-

tilová's movie with the topic of alienation through the connection of the story with Marxism: «Chytilová focuses on two teenage girls who seem to live in a kind of vacuum and decide that since the world has been spoiled, they will be spoiled as well. Neither is given any developed psychology and the two are basically interchangeable. The film resembles a fragmented collage of short episodes in which they engage in destructive activities (HAMES, 2014: 162-163).»

Hames understands the acts of the main characters as a sign of their alienation, but does not reflect on how this reflexive, episodic and ludic form of the film uses the protagonists as pawns of the director's game. They are part of the landscape and only a few times they seem to show a will and, practically never, a desire: «While there has been much debate about the role of the heroines (Chytilová says she intended to criticise them), and the film is open to many interpretations, it makes sense to see their behaviour in the wider social framework—the emptiness of a world with false values (HAMES, 2014: 163).»

The discontinued narration structure promotes an effect of *collage* and reflexivity. The experimentations with color, speed, exposure and movements reaffirm this. The story is organized in impressionist fragments of the girl's actions and their live *performance* that consists in seduction, cheating and humiliation of men with the promise of sexual consummation in order to obtain satisfaction, fun, food and subversion.

As there is no super-objective in the dramaturgy, the action does not proceed towards a climax. It is a succession of *actus interruptus* that structure the narration without crescendos, but with accumulation. The fascination operates on the same level of distance between the director and the protagonists. She does not let us get close to become acquainted to the girls and avoids triggering empathy with their vulnerability, but instead insinuates a nearness through the game played in the movie with the spectator. The girls rebel

against a hypocrite society. They “go bad” voluntarily to give answers to a corrupt world and this makes them likeable, even heroic—dramaturgically speaking—, but without the elixir. They do not do anything for others and only kill time. They are irreverent, insolent and lack of transcendent motivation, which obliges us to give up upon the classic formula of narration.

The lack of motivation keeps us away from the socialist ideal and separates the film from this ideal of representation, because no one punishes or redeems the girls. There is no obvious critique of the bourgeoisie, of the bureaucracy or the ochre of the Czech society of the sixties. It is not straightforward and without a message. The symbolism is maintained in a state of suggestion and works on different levels. The girls eat the apple, but do not have desires. Her actions are marked by the intention of rebelling, of misbehaving, but they do not get any satisfaction, they do not change nor have an epiphany. There is no salvation in existential repetition without an ultimate objective and this pessimistic view on society and on the future is completely the opposite of the Socialist realism spirit, the triumphalist discourse of communism.

Besides, the heroines are marginalized individuals that search for separation from the masses, for individualization up to the final consequences. The moral dilemma, they claim to have, is just another cynic masquerade of their point of view on reality and themselves. The director also pretends to punish them in the scene close to the end in which she threatens them to let them drown only to rescue them under the condition of repairing all the damages they had caused and to “be good girls.” In the *dénouement* they appear wrapped in newspapers, moving mechanically on the tables when they repair the broken plates, murmuring their remorse and their promises as a final and ambiguous game, but deliberately ironic and phony. At last, the chandelier falls down in a stylized way—again with a deceiving effect—and seems to

end their lives, but the director uses the Kuleshov Effect<sup>7</sup>. It is a “prohibited montage,” because “the essence of the scene demands the simultaneous presence of the two or more factors in the action,” so that “montage is ruled out” (BAZIN, 2005: 50)<sup>8</sup>. We never see the collision in one single shot and can infer it because of the juxtaposition of the shot of the lamp, the shot of the astonished girls and the abrupt cut. This is a trick that intentionally extends the masquerade and the game even in the *dénouement* with the disguise of a moral posture of the author that hides another oblique critique and an open end. It is not by chance that Chytilová disdains the credibility when she uses “prohibited montage.” because that way she offers hints to the irony of her own story and the representation, where she opens up the possibility of distance.

Another point of contact between critical ambiguity and formal experimentation is the performative character of the acting and the unreality of the character-dolls of the daisies. Weibgen (2009) describes the *performance* scene of the sixties in Czechoslovakia, indicating a before and after of the self-immolation of Jan Palach at the Wenceslas Square in 1969. Weibgen explains that the act of Palach invited “his audience to view him not only as a person, but as a painting among others” (WEIBGEN, 2009: 63) when he relates it to the performance works of following artists:

Presented by each of these artists as an unfixed and alterable entity, the body becomes a tool for reckoning with the world: not a border zone through which information passes between self and society, but a billboard upon which meaning may be inscribed and displayed (WEIBGEN, 2009: 55).

In case of the film of Věra Chytilová the protagonists are bodies and no real persons. They are beautifully colored images that assemble this work of art with a technique of arranging and overlapping like in a collage. At the same time, the daisies are bodies that take pleasure in a sensorial experience, which they ritualize through an ex-

cess of this experience, bringing us closer to the logic of a *performance*. They seduce with a conventional beauty of bodies, but they use the excess of a corporal experience—eating and drinking in a constant and disproportionate manner that culminates in a banquet of waste—as a protest and a subversion of the status quo.

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**THERE IS NO SALVATION IN EXISTENTIAL REPETITION WITHOUT AN ULTIMATE OBJECTIVE AND THIS PESSIMISTIC VIEW ON SOCIETY AND ON THE FUTURE IS COMPLETELY THE OPPOSITE OF THE SOCIALIST REALISM SPIRIT, THE TRIUMPHALIST DISCOURSE OF COMMUNISM**

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Weibgen cites the art-theorist Miško Šuvaković to reflect on the scene of the *happening* and the *performance* in communist Czechoslovakia and its political meaning: “In such an environment, ludism, individual anarchism, and experimental art were viewed exclusively as a political provocation and an attack on social normality” (Šuvaković en WEIBGEN, 2009: 58). The experimental form of the dramaturgical structure, the montage and, in general, of the discontinuous and strident representation is a stake for the rupture with everything conventional. Nevertheless, Weibgen brings up the term “provocation” in order to separate the artistic intention from the straight political act of Jan Palach that indeed had a clear message.

The other quality of the national *performance* that we see in *Daisies* is the merge of “Christian and pagan elements into a spiritually and politically charged scene” (WEIBGEN, 2009: 63). The character of martyrs has an ironic and ludic aspect, a postmodern appearance. It is part of a simulacrum without depth or solemnity. The mood

changes of the main characters—from tears to mechanic laughter and jumping—indicate this sense of a simulacrum that underlines the whole representation. The holiness of the floral wreath that should have transformed the girl into a virgin and the contrast to the religious allegories or the mockery of love in the castration scene accomplish the same goal. The director communicates with her characters through a typewriter and the letters appear on screen as shot with a machine gun. Her handwriting emerges also with the parts of intellectual montage in which the solemn burden relaxes and diminishes its importance. The meaning of denunciation gets lost with the association of simulacrum and fiction, but especially with the ambiguity of the story and the posture of its author.

The eroticism leans on the convention in order to subvert it, just as the filmic form does. The daisies are young and desirable girls because of their conventional beauty that, besides, interpret a infantilized role in which they seduce elder men, only to bid farewell before consuming the sexual act and to mock them—and us—with an excess, simulated emotions and profligacy. Their overacting and the interferences of the author question this status quo and, at the same time, pretend to criticize the main characters. The filmic language parts from the melodramatic convention of telling a story with some protagonists that have an apparent mission, but the narration circles again and again in a ludic manner over the same situations, leaving the act of seduction unconcluded. The characters do not make progress or change, although they seem to radicalize in their excess of destruction. This could be interpreted as an urging to death, but, again, they only simulate this desire and even their mortality. They cannot die, because they are not alive. They are brushstrokes of the author in order to express an opaque critique through ambiguity of the avant-garde and experimental form that could be sensed and intuited, but stays in the level of interpretation.

The film is an experimentation with eroticism and form and therefore it creates an ambiguity that leaves the censor with a dilemma. Chytilová opposes to the classical style of narration and dramaturgy in film and favors a non-linear and cyclic structure unlike the movies of the Socialist Realism. The lack of clearness, the incomprehension, the elements of Dadaism and Surrealism in this piece of art do not leave transparent what message the director wanted to divulge. Therefore, neither the Member of Parliament Pružinec nor the contemporary literature could decipher it in all its complexity. The eroticism in the film leans on the convention in order to subvert it. The desire and admiration end without the consummation of the sexual act with mockery, excesses and profligacy. There is no progress and no change. There is not even death for the protagonists.

At the end, it is not clear if *Daisies* is an attack on capitalism or socialism, if it has feminist tendencies or it criticizes feminism for the abundance of destruction. The film is like a slippery fish that resists classifications and totalizing interpretations. ■

## NOTES

- 1 John Seal explains that despite several papers and reviews of the movie that erroneously call the protagonists Marie I and Marie II (SORFA, 2015; NĚMCOVÁ, ŠARA Y SORFA, 2015; LIM, 2001) the characters are named Jarmila and Jitka (SEAL, 2012). Our analysis discovers that the girls use multiple names: in one scene they are called Jirinka (the dark haired girl) and Jarmila (the blond one). In the scene of the butterflies and in the castration-scene its Julie and when the man knocks persistently on the door she converts to Marie.
- 2 An exception are two papers of Petra Hanáková »Voices from Another World: Feminine Space and Masculine Intrusion in Sedmíkrásky and Vražda ing. Čerta« (2005) and »The Feminist Style in Czechoslovak Cinema: the Feminine Imprint in the Films of Věra Chytilová and Ester Krumbachová« (2014).



3 Own translation: "Vážené Národní shromáždění, podávám interpelaci jménem 21 poslanců, v níž bychom chtěli ukázat, jak se plýtvá penězi, které by státní rozpočet potřeboval.

Podle zásad práce a usnesení NS se má NS vyjadřovat k zásadním otázkám ekonomického, politického a kulturního života naší republiky.

Jsme přesvědčeni o tom, že 2 filmy, které jsme viděli a které podle Literárních novin mají mít premiéru v tomto měsíci, ukazují "zásadní cestu našeho kulturního života", po které žádný poctivý dělník, rolník a inteligent jít nemůže a nepůjde. Protože dva filmy "Sedmikráska" a "O slavnosti a hostech" natočené v čs. ateliérech na Barrandově nemají s naší republikou, socialismem a ideály komunismu nic společného.

Žádám proto ministra kultury a informací s. Hoffmana, kulturní výbor NS a Ústřední komisi lidové kontroly a vůbec celé NS, aby se radikálně zabývaly touto situací a vyvodily patřičné závěry proti všem, kteří tyto filmy připravovali a zejména proti těm, kteří byli ochotni tyto zmetky zaplatit. Ptáme se režiséra Němce a Chytilové, jaké pracovní, politické a zábavné poučení přinesou tyto zmetky našemu pracujícímu lidu v továrnách, na polích, na stavbách a na ostatních pracovištích. My se ptáme z tohoto místa všech těchto "také kulturních pracovníků", jak dlouho ještě všem poctivě pracujícím budete otravovat život, jak dlouho budete ještě šlapat po socialistických vymoženostech, jak dlouho si budete hrát s nervy dělníků a rolníků a vůbec, jakou demokracii zavádíte? My se vás ptáme, proč myslíte, že máme pohraniční stráž, která plní těžký bojový úkol, aby se k nám nedostali nepřátelé, zatímco my, soudruhu ministře národní obrany a soudruhu ministře financí, platíme královské peníze vnitřním nepřítelům, necháváme je šlapat a ničít, soudruhu ministře zemědělství a výživy, v našich plochách práce" (PRUŽINEC, 1967).

4 The name which the protagonist Humbert of the novel *Lolita* (NABOKOV, 1975) used to make reference to Lolita and, in general, to all young girls that provoked sexual desire in elder men.

5 Intellectual montage is one of the methods formulated by the Soviet film director Sergei Eisenstein. Through a dialectic collision of two images a new idea or sense is

created. One of these images is external to the situation of the narrated scene.

6 According to the conventional interpretation of the model of Aristotelian drama, a profound description of the characters is requested in order to make them believable, to create identification with them and to reach the point of catharsis during the climax.

7 Allude to a meaning that is not contained in none of the images juxtaposed. The montage creates a meaning through association.

8 When the essence of a situation depends on the coexistence of the elements of a shot, one should not cut, nor fragment the action to avoid a negative effect on authenticity.

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## EROTISM AND FORM AS SUBVERSION IN DAISIES

### Abstract

Erotism, ambiguity and experimentation convert the movie *Daisies* in such a subversive work that even after fifty years it is worth to talk about. The existentialism and the disillusionment of this avant-garde-piece are expressed through the performance of its main characters: two dolls, two images or two contemporary artists that mock and destroy everything that is considered as normal and correct. Věra Chytilová's critic on Czechoslovakian society of the sixties is oblique, but latent in every gesture, every composition and every mean of montage. In this article we track down the strategies of this director from the Czech New Wave to create a revolutionary artwork that turns away from the representation of the socialist realism. It is a critical film towards all conventions that makes it impossible for censors, spectators or critics to straitjacket it. Our analysis reveals its mechanism, which creates fascination and rejection through seduction and estrangement in an ambiguous manner.

### Keywords

*Daisies*; Subversion; Censorship; Czechoslovakia; Věra Chytilová; Czech New Wave.

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## EL EROTISMO Y LA FORMA COMO SUBVERSIÓN EN LAS MARGARITAS

### Resumen

El erotismo, la ambigüedad y la experimentación hacen de *Las margaritas* una película tan subversiva que a sus cincuenta años sigue dando que hablar. El existencialismo y el desencanto de esta obra de vanguardia se expresan a través de la *performance* de sus personajes principales: dos muñecas, dos imágenes o dos artistas contemporáneas que se burlan y destruyen todo lo que se considera normal y correcto. La crítica de Věra Chytilová a la sociedad checoslovaca de los sesenta es oblicua, pero está latente en cada gesto, composición y en cada recurso de montaje. En este artículo rastreamos las estrategias de esa directora de la Nueva Ola Checa en su creación de una obra revolucionaria sin adscribirse a la representación del realismo socialista. Es una obra crítica hacia todas las convenciones que no permite a los censores, espectadores y analistas ningún encasillamiento. En nuestro análisis desvelamos los mecanismos que hacen funcionar la fascinación y el rechazo a través de la seducción y el distanciamiento de manera ambigua.

### Palabras clave

*Las margaritas*; subversión; censura; Checoslovaquia; Věra Chytilová; Nueva Ola Checa.

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