

# **'Hippie Superannuated Leprechaun': Waldo Salt, Screenwriting and the Hollywood Renaissance**

**Oliver Gruner**

**Correspondence:** Oliver Gruner, School of Art, Design and Performance, University of Portsmouth, Eldon Building, Winston Churchill Avenue, Portsmouth, PO1 2DJ. E-mail: [oliver.gruner@port.ac.uk](mailto:oliver.gruner@port.ac.uk)

**Abstract:** Drawing on a range of draft scripts, correspondences, notes, trade and mainstream press reports, this essay examines the career of screenwriter Waldo Salt in the years surrounding the development and release of *Midnight Cowboy* (1969). While much literature has discussed Salt's communist affiliations and writing under a pseudonym for 1950s television, his 'rebirth' as one of Hollywood's most sought after screenwriters in the late 1960s and 1970s has received less detailed attention. Situating unproduced screenplays *Don Quixote* and *The Artful Dodger* as well as his acclaimed work on *Midnight Cowboy* within broader industrial, political and cultural developments of the period, I explore the ways in which Salt's writing and public persona responded to broader discourses then impacting upon screenwriters. In doing so, the essay reflects on key issues related to screenwriting during the late 1960s and 1970s 'Hollywood Renaissance', a period of film history still largely defined by a focus on a small group of 'superstar' auteur directors.

## **Introduction**

*New York* magazine's profile of screenwriter Waldo Salt introduced a larger-than-life eccentric, whose penchant for marijuana was matched only by his

tendency to miss writing deadlines. Published in April 1970, two weeks after Salt had received an Academy Award for his work on *Midnight Cowboy* (1969), the article lavished upon its subject the kind of groovy patter then associated with American youth: 'Waldo painted all weekend, rather stoned ... hallucinating Beethoven's Fifth ... you've been on the ultimate trip ... Sure, that's cool.'<sup>1</sup> Such antics, it seems, were just another day in the office for a man who had earned the nickname: 'hippie superannuated leprechaun.'<sup>2</sup> For the article's author, Catherine Breslin, as for others writing in the trade and mainstream press circa 1970, the fifty-five-year-old Salt was not only enjoying the fruits of a career revival, but appeared to be doing so at the vanguard of Hollywood's youth craze.<sup>3</sup> From *Midnight Cowboy* to *Coming Home* (1978), his screenplays and public persona became inextricably bound up with what was widely perceived to be a new, countercultural breeze blowing through the film industry.

As a contributor to several films of the late 1960s and 1970s – *Midnight Cowboy*, *The Gang That Couldn't Shoot Straight* (1971), *Serpico* (1973), *Day of the Locust* (1975) and *Coming Home* – Salt's name appears briefly in histories of the period. And yet, while academic studies have focused on his earlier left-wing political affiliations, blacklisting and subsequent writing for television in the 1950s, this lucrative 'rebirth' into the top echelons of Hollywood talent has received less detailed attention.<sup>4</sup> Born in 1914 and a veteran of the studio system, Salt does not perhaps align himself with standard discourses pertaining to creatives of the 1960s and 1970s. Too old to be a 'movie brat' or 'film school' alumnus, nor was he of the interwar 'television generation' that Peter Krämer argues to have energised the period's cinema.<sup>5</sup> However, to a degree rarely matched by *his* generational peers, Salt adapted to changed industrial, political

and cultural circumstances, becoming one of the era's most sought after screenwriters.

Drawing on a range of materials – draft screenplays, notes, correspondences, trade and mainstream press reports – this article provides a close analysis of Waldo Salt's career in the years surrounding the development and release of *Midnight Cowboy*. A major critical and commercial hit, and the only X rated film ever to win a Best Picture Academy Award, *Midnight Cowboy* has remained a flashpoint in popular and scholarly accounts of late 1960s Hollywood. By focusing on Salt's screenplays and public persona during the years 1965-1970, I offer fresh perspective on this iconic film and contribute to a body of academic literature concerned with screenwriting as both a practice and a 'discourse'.<sup>6</sup> Scholars such as Miranda J. Banks, Kevin Alexander Boon, Steven Price and Tom Stempel have begun to explore the status of screenwriters and their screenplays at a time of major transformation within Hollywood.<sup>7</sup> Building on, and contributing to this work, my focus on Salt offers a salient case study of the ways in which writers responded to changing exigencies of the period.

On one level, Salt becomes a lens through which to explore debates pertinent to screenwriting and the so-called Hollywood Renaissance. I follow Steve Neale in maintaining the term 'Hollywood Renaissance' throughout in reference to a cluster of late 1960s and 1970s films noted for their formal, stylistic and thematic innovations.<sup>8</sup> A contested term in itself – Neale points out that Hollywood Renaissance cannot be applied as a blanket to encompass the full diversity of filmic output at this time – it does nonetheless help one to distinguish between the pictures with which Salt was associated and other 'New

Hollywood' incarnations, especially the 'high concept' or 'blockbuster syndrome' often discussed in relation to films of the 1970s and beyond.<sup>9</sup>

On a second level, the article heeds Aaron Hunter's call to consider films of the late 1960s and 1970s as the products of multiple creative voices, as opposed to that of the ubiquitous director, still the standard point of reference in studies of the Hollywood Renaissance.<sup>10</sup> A close analysis of Salt's work allows us to 'discern traces of ... [his] ... authorship' across a range of productions.<sup>11</sup> Part One focuses on Salt's background, with a particular emphasis on his career in the run up to *Midnight Cowboy*. Discussing his work on unproduced screenplays such as *Don Quixote* and *The Artful Dodger*, I explore the ways in which they resonated with a host of shifting debates bedeviling screenwriters at this time. Part Two examines *Midnight Cowboy's* script development and the collaborations between Salt and others involved.

### **Writing the Renaissance: The Road to *Midnight Cowboy***

When *Midnight Cowboy* producer Jerome Hellman and director John Schlesinger first discussed hiring Salt, he had not had a feature film credit for three years. The search for a screenwriter to adapt James Leo Herlihy's 1965 novel about wide-eyed fantasist Joe Buck and his efforts at hustling in New York City had been underway since early 1966. Hellman and Schlesinger mooted various names: Truman Capote, Gore Vidal, and the, as yet relatively unknown, Francis Ford Coppola.<sup>12</sup> Ultimately, however, they settled in June 1966 on playwright Jack Gelber, whose drama about the drug-addled jazz scene in New York City, *The Connection* (1959), had been a major hit for the Living Theater. Gelber wrote

two drafts, neither of which was well-received by producer or director. The main issues were, firstly, what Hellman and Schlesinger believed to be Gelber's unwillingness to develop an emotional connection between the novel's key characters Joe Buck and Ratso Rizzo. At one point Gelber had even stated his intention to remove Ratso from the screenplay altogether.<sup>13</sup> Secondly, they felt that the writer's attempts at incorporating visual flourishes into the narrative were under-developed.

Schlesinger had requested that in terms of style, Gelber 'throw caution to the winds and be bold.' Envisioning a film shot 'as much off the cuff as possible' he encouraged Gelber to depart from the novel 'whenever you think it necessary.'<sup>14</sup> Though Gelber's screenplays endeavoured to include experimentation, neither Hellman nor Schlesinger were happy with the result. Extensive references to jump cuts were dismissed as a 'hodge-podge' by the producer 'and most often fail to come to any dramatic point.'<sup>15</sup> By July 1967, Gelber had been removed from the project and the following month Salt was hired. Various accounts cite two unproduced screenplays as having impressed Hellman and Schlesinger enough to offer him the job. The first, an adaptation of Miguel de Cervantes' novel *Don Quixote* had been written through 1965 and 1966. The second, *The Artful Dodger* was an original story about a young man's attempts to avoid the draft.<sup>16</sup>

The appeal of both screenplays lay in their countercultural themes and what producer and director perceived to be exciting visual imagery. 'It was a pleasure to read something from a writer who really thinks filmically' wrote Schlesinger to Hellman. And, referring to *The Artful Dodger*, declared: 'he certainly knows the "hippy" scene alright.'<sup>17</sup> At a time when images of the

counterculture were flooding the national media – this was, after all, the height of the fabled ‘Summer of Love’ and *Time* magazine had, but a month before Salt was hired, devoted its front page to ‘Hippie: Philosophy of a Subculture’ – Salt’s work was felt to chime with a changing cultural landscape.<sup>18</sup>

Salt was no stranger to grappling with important issues of his day. Indeed, perhaps the most well-known aspects of his biography are his political affiliations. He joined the Communist Party in 1938, the same year as he received his first screenplay credit for romantic drama *The Shopworn Angel*. Paul Buhle and Dave Wagner contend that for much of the 1940s, ‘his reputation as a leading communist intellectual’ was ‘more impressive, to insiders at least, than his credits.’<sup>19</sup> Elected, in 1942, to the board of what was then called the Screen Writers Guild (renamed the Writers Guild of America in 1954) he was on familiar terms with other left-wing politicians active within that organisation.<sup>20</sup> Though not imprisoned or blacklisted after the original 1947 House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) investigations – Salt was one of the so-called ‘unfriendly nineteen’ and would have been the eleventh person to testify had the committee not been suspended after its morning session – the second round of hearings in 1951 led to his being cited for contempt.<sup>21</sup>

Like many fellow travellers, he spent the 1950s writing for television under various pseudonyms, and was a regular contributor to costume adventure series such as *The Adventures of Robin Hood* (1955-1959), *The Buccaneers* (1956-57), and *Ivanhoe* (1958-59).<sup>22</sup> Many of these series were British productions syndicated to the US, and produced by American progressive journalist and activist Hannah Weinstein at her company Sapphire Films.<sup>23</sup> ‘The creative team behind *The Adventures of Robin Hood*’, writes James Chapman, ‘represented not

only an Anglo-American partnership but also a coalition whose politics were left of centre.<sup>24</sup> The only 1950s credit Salt received post blacklisting was for a theatre production. Written in collaboration with folk musician Earl Robinson, *Sandhog* (1954) was a story of class struggle, chronicling the conflicts between urban miners and their bosses during the construction of the Holland Tunnel. The play premiered at New York's Phoenix Theater, ran for 48 performances and garnered much critical approbation.<sup>25</sup>

Interestingly, Salt's blacklisting ensured that he had a similar 1950s background to many of the Hollywood Renaissance's key creatives. As Krämer notes, the generation of filmmakers born in the 1920s and 1930s – Arthur Penn Mike Nichols, William Friedkin and so forth – usually received their apprenticeship in a medium other than film. Penn and Nichols worked in television and theatre and 'were used to the range of topics and the kinds of language that could be used in the theatre'.<sup>26</sup> In a more general sense, historians have argued that 1950s television was populated by a large proportion of liberal voices, intent on producing gritty, realistic portrayals of America at a time when they felt Hollywood cinema was recoiling from such content.<sup>27</sup> When Salt began working on *Don Quixote* and *The Artful Dodger* he was, much like Nichols with *The Graduate* and Penn with *Bonnie and Clyde* (both in development through the mid 1960s), attempting to bring some of these freedoms to the big screen.

The *Don Quixote* script was begun in 1965, with a draft completed by the summer of 1966.<sup>28</sup> In its narrative content and, by way of carefully described script directions, formal and stylistic quirks, the 1966 draft straddled two filmmaking traditions of the 1960s. On the one hand, its epic scale, salubrious locations and extended narrative (complete with intermission) aligns the film

with the 'roadshow' format that had proven so successful for Hollywood through the 1950s and 1960s.<sup>29</sup> At this time, Salt's reputation – as much as he had one – was for being 'a specialist in swashbucklers', having worked on successful films such as *The Flame and the Arrow* (1950) and *Ivanhoe* (1952).<sup>30</sup> The early 1960s had, however, seen him return to Hollywood with a series of critical and commercial failures, two of them historical epics with *Flame and the Arrow* producer Harold Hecht, *Taras Bulba* (1962) and *Flight from Ashiya* (1964). *Don Quixote* became a transitional text for the writer, where he used a format with which he had been associated (the epic swashbuckler) to carve a new direction defined by visual flourishes, references to sixties art, countercultural themes and a playful self-reflexivity more akin to the kinds of pictures associated with the Hollywood Renaissance.

In many different ways, *Don Quixote* resonated with broader developments impacting upon screenwriters of the period. Steven Price describes the 1960s as a period of 'relative freedom' to experiment with a screenplay's theme, form and style.<sup>31</sup> He traces the emergence of this new era back to the years immediately succeeding World War II. Crucial events – most notably, the consent decrees of 1948 that forced the majors to divest themselves of their exhibition chains – augured the breakup of the old studio system. In place of the 'self-contained' studio with its own contracted workforce, there emerged a mode of production that occurred on a film-by-film basis; what Janet Staiger calls the 'package unit system'.<sup>32</sup> A studio, agent or producer would bring together creative and technical personnel from an 'industry-wide' talent pool for one-off projects.<sup>33</sup> The implications of this mode – dominant by the mid 1950s – for screenwriters were far reaching. Firstly, 'the screenplay was no longer part of

a process that would be handled by an in-house story department or producer, but instead was a discrete property for promotion or sale.<sup>34</sup> The screenwriter was an autonomous agent whose scripts could entice other creative figures to join a project and/or simply act as a calling card that could lead to more writing assignments.<sup>35</sup>

Secondly, it has been argued that these industrial developments had some impact on the screenplay itself. With independent productions becoming the dominant trend, the uniformity associated with in-house story departments and studio 'identities' was less persistent. By the 1960s, writers 'could develop new kinds of screenplay unencumbered by the dictates of the studio.'<sup>36</sup> Price gives as examples William Goldman's script for *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*, which was formed of eight hundred and twenty three numbered shot specifications, *Easy Rider* (Dennis Hopper, Peter Fonda and Terry Southern) a loosely structured document, some of which was written after shooting had already taken place and *Bonnie and Clyde*, which began as a speculative treatment and, after attracting interest, was developed into a 'master-scene' screenplay that allowed its writers Robert Benton and David Newman to offer a range of visual and formal suggestions.<sup>37</sup> Furthermore, as David Bordwell observes, the 1960s are notable for a paucity of screenwriting manuals. While booms in guidebooks for writers occurred in the 1910s and after the coming of sound, few were published in the post-war years. Not until the late 1970s and the publication of landmark texts such as Syd Field's *Screenplay* (1978) and Robert McKee's *Story* (1980) was screenwriting turned into an 'academic enterprise ... characterized by rigid rules and a widely accepted canon.'<sup>38</sup>

It is clear from early notes that Salt intended *Don Quixote* to take advantage of this atmosphere of experimentation and reach audiences seeking an alternative cinema experience. His notes from July 1965 reflect on how the film's protagonist can be viewed as a contemporary, countercultural hero. Quixote embodies 'the need for a new kind of virility and spirituality ... the need for a set of principles which allow for heroism in poverty and defeat'.<sup>39</sup> In this way, Salt followed hot on the tails of *Man of La Mancha* (1965), the hit Broadway musical that had envisioned Don Quixote as embodying 'the counterculture's visionary desire for escape ... and the increasingly militant New Left's visionary agenda for change.'<sup>40</sup> With his unremitting, 'absurd' quest for heroism in a corrupt world, his strange visions and hallucinations, Quixote appealed to those invested in 1960s countercultural politics. 'Don Quixote sets out to live a little', wrote Salt, 'to gain fame and glory, to take arms against a desert of troubles.'<sup>41</sup> In order to emphasise this aspect of Quixote's character, Salt decided early on that the film needed an innovative visual style.

At various points in the narrative, Quixote and his surroundings morph into 'pop-art paintings' (as the screen directions put it), or segue into slow-motion, or become animated figures.<sup>42</sup> During a battle scene, there are references to freeze-frames; written text intrudes upon the action as a series of footnotes (accompanied by asterisks to direct the viewer to the text); the narrative is interrupted midway through (after the intermission) by a cartoon summary of events thus far; puppets replace real people during another conflict.<sup>43</sup> Playful in its narrative construction and making use of various media throughout, the *Don Quixote* script is a veritable 'postmodern' bricolage. 'The joy must be visual', wrote Salt in his notes.<sup>44</sup> It should be borne in mind that at this

stage there was no director attached to the project. As Claudia Sternberg points out, the first function of the screenplay is to be read.<sup>45</sup> It must appeal to, and entice, a potential collaborator (director, actor, distributor and so forth). The extensiveness of the visual description, the numerous references to art and artistic movements – pop-art, cubism, puppetry – the paragraphs of vivid exposition all suggest an effort on the part of the writer at going to town in demonstrating his virtuosity. The 1966 draft of *Don Quixote* might therefore be viewed as a provocation, a calling card for Salt and the producer that had hired him, Ronald Lubin.

In 1967 Lubin informed the *New York Times* that the screenplay was ‘not the straight classic drama of the book but a light and airy approach using a mixture of pop art, special effects, animation and music to achieve an artistic but respectful version of the novel.’<sup>46</sup> For both, the screenplay was self-promotion; evidence they were constructing a ‘new’ kind of epic, one which resonated with changing cultural circumstances and audience tastes. The critical and commercial success of *Tom Jones* (1963) – an adaptation of Henry Fielding’s similarly epic, episodic and comedic novel (influenced by *Don Quixote*) – might well have been in Salt’s mind as he put pen to paper. This film’s use of hand-held camera, jump cuts, freeze frames and other unusual formal devices intended to create what Sue Harper calls a ‘jokey modernist intimacy’ were well received in America.<sup>47</sup> Furthermore, as Jonathan Stubbs points out, such innovations ‘inspired American critics to reassess the standards by which they judged period films and literary adaptations.’<sup>48</sup> Thus was the groundwork already being laid for Salt and Lubin to build on this success with *Don Quixote*.

One month after Lubin's announcement, Salt began work on *The Artful Dodger*. Like *Don Quixote*, the script evinces a close attention to visual detail, offering an array of artistic flourishes and a main protagonist intended to stand in for the concerns of the 1960s counterculture. Focusing on the exploits of a character called Billy Shine, the screenplay swings from comedy to existential introspection as Shine's attempts to dodge the draft become increasingly absurd. The screenplay was Salt's first to focus on the contemporary (1960s) era, running the gamut of familiar touchstones: the Vietnam War, counterculture, music, drugs, political assassinations and cultural upheavals. Early on, an extended sequence sees Shine attend a physical examination at his draft board. The humour elicited from draftees clashing with military personnel – young men feigning insanity, making passes at sergeants and inventing physical ailments in order to avoid service – anticipates scenes in later youth-oriented films such as *Greetings* (1968), *Alice's Restaurant* (1969) and *Harold and Maude* (1971).<sup>49</sup> Later we are treated to a 'love in' with Shine and his hippie accomplices cavorting with a shaman engaged in a strange transcendental meditation.<sup>50</sup> Twenty pages later comes an LSD experience presented in split screen. Salt envisioned one side of the frame focusing on the actual events – Shine and his friends taking the drug and watching each other descend into a stupor – while on the other side we are presented with a surreal journey into a world of fantastical images and strange occurrences.<sup>51</sup> Allusions to the anti-war movement appear throughout the script. Salt's notes on the screenplay suggest that the political significance of the New Left became a major concern. 'I believe the ferment is primarily among the young intellectuals', he wrote, 'idealistic, quixotic, sometimes beautiful – but also unrealistic, doomed to terrible disillusionment.'<sup>52</sup>

Again, the 'quixotic' figure makes an appearance: doomed and determined, clinging, in a manner bordering on the absurd, to the last vestiges of nobility in a world descending into chaos. Notes on later writing assignments such as *Serpico*, which Salt was drafting through 1972 and 1973 suggest Quixote to have become the screenwriter's go-to archetype when crafting countercultural 'heroes' for contemporary America.<sup>53</sup>

Salt's experimentation with provocative subject matter – drug taking, anti-establishment sentiment, sexual themes – occurred in tandem with the relaxing of censorship in Hollywood. Changes to the Production Code in 1966, when the label 'suggested for mature audiences' was introduced in the wake of controversy surrounding Warner Brothers' release of *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf*, and introduction of a ratings system two years later was viewed by many screenwriters as a chance to push boundaries in terms of content and theme. In December 1968, two months after the announcement that a ratings system would replace the old Code, an open letter from Jack Valenti, president of the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA), was published in the Writers Guild of America West's *Newsletter*. 'The MPAA is determined to preserve the freedom of the screen', Valenti declared. But he followed this up with the assertion that there was 'a concurrent obligation to be responsible.'<sup>54</sup> Freedom and responsibility became common themes within debates amongst screenwriters over the ensuing years, accompanied by a feeling that, with the end of the Production Code, 'the moral compass of the screenplay shifted back into the hands of the screenwriter.'<sup>55</sup> Such developments, as discussed below, would have resonance for the writing and development of *Midnight Cowboy*.

Certainly, for Schlesinger and Hellman, the *Artful Dodger* screenplay evidenced someone capable of dealing with *Midnight Cowboy*'s subject matter. 'It was a street savvy movie', Hellman told Schlesinger biographer William J. Mann. 'And even though its subject was different [from *Midnight Cowboy*] it was crazy, it was alive, it was exactly what we needed.'<sup>56</sup> With the *Artful Dodger*, Salt became associated in their minds with youth-oriented fare. This was important, for late 1960s Hollywood is marked by a larger debate on 'youth' and a perceived generation gap emerging between older screenwriters and a new cohort of filmmakers more in tune with contemporary political and cultural trends. In many ways, this was more a case of perception than reality. While a 1967 survey commissioned by the Motion Picture Association of America had found the 16-30 demographic was now the most frequent cinema-going audience, those making Hollywood's successful youth-oriented films of the period were rarely of this cohort themselves.<sup>57</sup> Even in front of the camera, one need only look to the stars of films like *The Graduate* (Dustin Hoffman, b. 1937), *Midnight Cowboy* (Jon Voight, b. 1938 and Hoffman), and *Easy Rider* (Dennis Hopper, b. 1936) to see that a 'youth' sensibility was being propounded by those in their thirties and older.

Nonetheless, as a general term, youth was a big issue amongst Hollywood screenwriters in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Young writers became something of a buzzword, with studios and producers clamouring to work with the latest hot arrival on the scene. In December 1969, trade magazine *Entertainment World* ran an article devoted to the future of screenwriting. The screenwriters quoted dwelt at some length on the positive and negative repercussions that they felt the youth craze had wrought on filmmaking. 'As I see

it, and I know the industry sees it', observed Frank Tarloff, 'the pictures that in some way relate to young people are the ones that do well.' Or, as *From Here to Eternity* (1953) scribe Daniel Taradash put it, 'I think a lot of people who have been writing for many years are going to be tested by this to some extent.' And evoking images of generational divide he quipped that 'it'll be interesting to see if some of the older writers can bridge the gulch.'<sup>58</sup> Neither *Don Quixote* nor *The Artful Dodger* ever went into production, let alone reached the big screen. Yet for Waldo Salt, they very much served a gulch-bridging function. They established his credentials as both a writer in tune with late 1960s youth culture and one willing and able to experiment in terms of form, style and theme – an appealing prospect for Hollywood Renaissance filmmakers. On 21 August 1967 Schlesinger had read Salt's first notes on *Midnight Cowboy*. 'Much impressed', he wrote. 'Would engage him immediately.'<sup>59</sup>

### **Where's Waldo? Writing *Midnight Cowboy***

Unlike *Don Quixote* and *The Artful Dodger*, Salt joined *Midnight Cowboy* with a director already attached to the project. We know from Schlesinger's correspondences that one of the greatest difficulties he had with his previous screenwriter, Jack Gelber, was what he perceived to be Gelber's unwillingness to collaborate and/or respond to suggestions.<sup>60</sup> A far more amicable relationship quickly developed between Schlesinger and Salt. Indeed, the screenplays produced through late 1967 and 1968 are marked as a collaborative enterprise, with Salt's writing providing less a concrete blueprint for production than a forum in which Schlesinger – as well as, at times, producer Jerome Hellman and

actors Dustin Hoffman and Jon Voight – could exert some of their own influence. With Hollywood Renaissance directors often expecting to have a far greater role in script development than was previously the case, the screenplay was a ‘site of contention’, where questions of input could have resonances for a filmmaker’s professional standing.<sup>61</sup> It is therefore important that many of Salt’s ideas began as extensive notes shared with director and producer and even as prose passages intended to allow the actors freedom to create their own dialogue.

Salt’s relationship with Schlesinger *et al* on the *Midnight Cowboy* project sheds interesting light on questions of authorship, very much a hot topic in the late 1960s. As is well known, ideas associated with the ‘auteur theory’ were ‘internalized’ by a new generation of directors enamoured by what they perceived to be its focus on the singular creative vision, and by marketers seeking to sell their product to a cine-literate young audience.<sup>62</sup> But even in the 1960s, the term ‘auteur’ was a discursive construct, mobilised in different ways dependent upon whom was speaking. Importantly, as screenwriting scholars attest, the auteur theory had as profound an impact on Hollywood scribes as it did upon directors.<sup>63</sup> Boon argues this was often more about popular understandings of auteur theory than the ‘nuanced’ ideas developed by its advocates.<sup>64</sup> Nonetheless, it quickly gained traction in the press, accumulating, for screenwriters, a range of negative and positive connotations.

Articles in trade publications veered from the satirical – ‘Always Use Chi-Chi Vocabulary If Posing as a Foreign Film Buff’ declared one 1965 caustic arraignment of auteurism – to serious analysis of the tensions it was stoking within the industry.<sup>65</sup> In 1966, a three-way squabble between the Writers Guild of America West (WGA/w), the Producers Guild of America (PGA) and the

Directors Guild of America (DGA) reached boiling point. The WGA/w had managed to negotiate a clause with the PGA, which prohibited possessive credits – e.g. ‘Alfred Hitchcock’s *Marnie*’ – unless the director had also written the film. According to one *Variety* report, this contentious practice ‘stems from the *auteur* (author) theory which was developed in Europe, a theory which assigns major creativity to the directors, the great one’s rating “pantheon” status.’<sup>66</sup> As Banks points out, by 1970, the PGA was in the process of reneging on this deal. And with the WGA unsuccessful in many subsequent petitions, the conflict has raged ever since.<sup>67</sup> Many mainstream press outlets took a similarly negative stance. To provide one representative example, in 1966 *Los Angeles Times* correspondent Kevin Thomas declared that ‘among the major contributors to the making of a movie, the screenwriter is the most unsung.’ And, continuing in what would become a familiar vein, he attributed this to ‘younger critics who are influenced by France’s *auteur* theory’.<sup>68</sup>

At the same time, however, there were rumblings that the writer’s status was on the ascendant in Hollywood. Much was made in 1967 of the unprecedented \$400,000 plus a percentage of net profits William Goldman received from 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox for his *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* script. ‘Screenwriters and their agents are mightily encouraged – and somewhat aghast in a pleasant sort of way’, reported *Variety*, ‘for vibrations of the deal are bound to be felt all the way down the line.’<sup>69</sup> In May 1968, reports emerged that Paramount was beginning a new film slate where the ‘story was star.’ As Paramount Vice President Robert Evans told *Boxoffice* magazine, ‘The new system will place maximum emphasis on story development and will in effect elevate many of the writers working on major properties to “star status”’.<sup>70</sup> This

slate of forty-one new films included both familiar names and untested talent. Among the latter were: Elaine May (*A New Leaf*, 1971), Arnold Schulman (*Goodbye, Columbus*, 1969) and Haskell Wexler (*Medium Cool*, 1969). In a more general sense, the auteur theory's emphasis on film as an art form meant that 'the screenplay became an artistic document in its own right'.<sup>71</sup>

Salt's work on *Midnight Cowboy* very much encapsulated these conflicting debates on authorship as they pertained to the screenwriter. Draft scripts and notes evidence a careful balancing act between his own rhetorical flamboyancy (vivid literary scene directions, visual metaphors etc.) and an explicitly-stated openness to the contributions of others. On 18 July 1967, Schlesinger composed an extensive report on the Gelber second draft that was forwarded to Salt when he joined the project. The report focused on characterisation and lack of a fully realized 'world' in which the action takes place. On the final point, Schlesinger declared that 'it is essential to develop considerably the world against which Joe Buck moves'. And he suggested that the New York milieu could be constructed out of 'the press-button images of TV, radio, the cinema.'<sup>72</sup> Agreeing with Schlesinger's criticisms, Salt began emphasising and expanding the film's ideological terrain. Indeed, we can say that one of Salt's major contributions was to add a more strident social critique than had existed in Gelber's drafts or in Herlihy's novel.<sup>73</sup> 'If the focus remains narrow', he wrote in early notes, 'we miss the real point – that Joe's illusions are in fact the absurd reality of our time.' Thus the cowboy's 'pelvic stance' equated to 'the bellicose posture of our foreign policy ... the paranoid commercialism which judges value by price, popularity by sales' and a host of other contemporaneous social ailments.<sup>74</sup>

References to Senators 'selling America', casualties in Vietnam, and corporate malfeasance appear with regularity through Salt's drafts.<sup>75</sup> An early sexual liaison in New York was to be intercut with footage from the war, metaphorically linking Joe Buck's doomed fantasies with broader 'fantasies' about America's role in Vietnam.<sup>76</sup> In a general sense, Salt, as he had with *Don Quixote* and, especially *The Artful Dodger*, envisioned *Midnight Cowboy* offering a scathing critique of America at the decade's end. But while his previous two screenplays remained unencumbered by the necessities of production – time considerations, commercial potential, ideas and changes made by others – *Midnight Cowboy* was going to happen, with or without Salt. Some compromises would be required. In November 1967, Schlesinger was already highlighting the need to focus on 'Joe's feelings rather than too much objective comment'.<sup>77</sup> While both screenwriter and director intended *Midnight Cowboy* to offer some form of social critique, much of the above material was cut. It quickly became clear to both that this critique had to manifest itself through the emotional relationship between the two key characters: Joe Buck and Ratso Rizzo.

The film's opening sequence is indicative in this respect. Salt's first effort was penned in October 1967. Early on a catalogue of visual and aural cues present Joe as, literally and metaphorically, a 'product' of his time. Its opening paragraph situates the protagonist within a broader culture of consumption. 'A pair of feet ... seen in the triple fitting mirror – the right foot wearing a gleaming new black cowboy boot with a yellow sunburst at the ankle, the left foot wearing a warped loafer with round heel and curling toe.'<sup>78</sup> This is the start of Joe's transformation, from struggling dishwasher to the 'Midnight Cowboy'. A 'kind of square dance' ensues between the shiny-booted right foot and its worn-out

partner. This playful back-and-forth concludes with the ringing of a cash register. Running over three pages, the remainder of the sequence sees Joe dressing himself in brand new cowboy attire intercut with brief scenes in the cafeteria at which he works and the repeated statement (which remained in the finished film): 'where's that Joe Buck.'<sup>79</sup> Repeated allusions to body parts suggests a fetishized image of Joe at this stage; a man being 'rebuilt' within the maelstrom of consumption-obsessed America.<sup>80</sup>

This sequence went through several rewrites during its journey from script to screen. In November 1967, a new opening contained faux documentary footage lamenting a generation of rich, powerful and sexually frustrated women, let down by their weak male partners. Weaving Joe's arrival around this footage, the scene announces both the death of the old-style alpha male and its rebirth by way of Joe Buck.<sup>81</sup> In January 1968, Schlesinger noted that this new introduction was 'all too jumpy and objective'.<sup>82</sup> And though some similar footage does remain in the finished film – during Joe's journey to New York a series of interviews ask women about their 'ideal man' – it is ultimately reframed as another of the protagonist's fantasies. What might otherwise have appeared as a quasi-authoritative comment on late 1960s American sexual relations becomes instead a metaphor for Joe's own deluded outlook. The finished film's opening scene drew upon Salt's concept of the fetishized Joe Buck, the 'production' of a *Midnight Cowboy*, while adding – Schlesinger's idea – an introductory shot of a blank drive-in movie screen, intended to emphasize the power of media imagery in the shaping of illusions.<sup>83</sup> Time and again, we see something similar happening as *Midnight Cowboy's* screenplay was developed. Initial ideas on the film's social commentary were drafted into visual concepts by Salt, and then modified, cut

and/or telescoped into the film's protagonists in discussion with Schlesinger. This tension between 'objective' commentary and psychological complexity was central *Midnight Cowboy's* production, manifesting itself in different guises across the film's screenwriting phase.

As Lawrence Webb has argued, *Midnight Cowboy* was one of a cluster of Hollywood Renaissance films to mediate popular ideas of 'urban crisis' engulfing American cities through the late 1960s and 1970s.<sup>84</sup> New York City becomes a 'character' unto itself; a scattered collection of symbols intended to evoke a sense of modernity gone awry. In Salt's first draft, Joe's arrival in the Big Apple is accompanied by visual iconography that paints a landscape of hopeless dreams. We read of 'phallic' shaped buildings, endless television screens selling products or lifestyles or people, skyscrapers emblazoned with the word 'Mony' [sic].<sup>85</sup> The film's other lead character, Ratso, is introduced as a product of urban decay. To Joe's dream of big city life, he is the reality. 'Just as Joe sees sex as the way to fame and fortune ... Ratso sees commerce and the big con' wrote Salt: 'The commercial organization of America ... propaganda, lobbies, political machines, stock manipulation, monopoly and price fixing'.<sup>86</sup> But, again, such explicit political commentary is manifest only as the occasional symbolic gesture – if at all – in the finished film.

We first meet Ratso in a seedy New York bar. His eyes are described as 'at once wise, sick and tough'. He begins by 'studying Joe speculatively' while warning him that people rob you 'blind in this town if you don't know your way around.' Then Ratso's eyes move to focus upon a pile of dollar bills lying on the bar beside Joe. Again, he refocuses on the cowboy, paying him a compliment – 'I'm just admiring that colossal shirt.' Finally, Salt provides the script direction:

'Joe focuses on his reflection in the mirror behind the bar, nodding, glancing at Ratso with a modest grin.'<sup>87</sup> The three glances, from Buck, to the pile of money, and then Buck's clothing connect Ratso with a range of ideas: acquisitiveness, a culture of consumption, sexual desire and narcissism. That Joe observes Ratso in the mirror is suggestive of the close relationship about to transpire; Ratso here is presented as a reflection of Joe, a kindred spirit – another outsider cast aside in the rough and tumble of modern life.

Seemingly minor visual cues such as these played a central role in Salt's drafts, and many remained in the finished film. The 'towering' figure of Joe marching alongside the diminutive Ratso; the 'clacking' of Joe's boots in time with that of Ratso's – touches like these enhanced, through economical means, the sense of a relationship unfolding and deepening as the narrative progresses.<sup>88</sup> Salt also played a central role in working with actors Jon Voight and Dustin Hoffman. He created a questionnaire for the Joe Buck screen test, which was designed to encourage improvisation.<sup>89</sup> Salt acted as the interviewer during these tests, with the idea that the successful candidate would be able to improvise scenes with Dustin Hoffman, which could be incorporated back into the screenplay.<sup>90</sup> One scene that made it into the finished film is notable for its revisions on this front. Set in Ratso's decrepit flat, the two men begin discussing their sex lives. Ratso taunts Joe for his lack of hustling acumen and suggests they escape to Florida: 'Miami Beach, that's where you can score. Anyone can score there, even you.' An arch back-and-forth ensues between the two men. Hacking away at a coconut, Ratso turns his insults toward Joe's cowboy act: 'they're laughing at you on the streets.' After several attempts at scripting this scene, Salt eventually wrote a prose description around which Voight and Hoffman would

improvise.<sup>91</sup> All the thematic content is there in the description, but the dialogue itself was created by the actors, recorded and written down afterward. The very fact that Salt would happily discuss this in interviews (and these improvisations have since become part of *Midnight Cowboy* lore) again established his credentials as a willing collaborator, someone who may be able to offer other creative figures an opportunity to publicly impress their own stamp upon a film's artistic development.

*Midnight Cowboy* was the first of a string of major commercial successes released in 1969 to incorporate extensive imagery associated with the 1960s counterculture. Reaching cinemas in May of that year, it was followed in July by *Easy Rider*, and September by *Bob & Carol & Ted & Alice* (all of which were in the top ten grossers for the year).<sup>92</sup> This was the high point of the 'youth cult' boom pervading Hollywood, which Salt had anticipated in his *Midnight Cowboy* first draft.<sup>93</sup> Such material was particularly apparent in the scene where Joe and Ratso attend a party hosted by underground filmmakers Hansel and Gretel MacAlbertson. As it appears in the finished film, the MacAlbertson party becomes a kaleidoscopic portrayal of New York's counterculture scene. It is a Warhol-esque affair in more ways than one. Joe and Ratso arrive at a loft apartment reminiscent of the artist's famous studio The Factory. A veritable happening is in full swing, complete with psychedelic projections, drug consumption, and appearances from some of Warhol's own entourage (Viva and Ultra Violet). Hansel and Gretel stroll about the venue filming its guests, their responses presented in the form of grainy, hand-held camera images.

What in Herlihy's novel and Gelber's script is presented as simply a gathering of New York's counterculture, is transformed, in Salt's first draft, into

the set of an 'underground film'.<sup>94</sup> All those present have been selected to appear as dress extras in Hansel and Gretel's production. Hippies, dropouts and a host of other 'freaks' mooch amongst the strange props, pot dens and colourful lights. The party's hosts are even presented in terms that would influence the final shooting: 'Hansel and Gretel are standing together, in almost identical poses, like two ballet dancers poised for a pas de deux'.<sup>95</sup> There appears to be a deliberate artificiality to the scene, as if Hansel and Gretel are, like Joe Buck, two more 'products' of consumerist America. In his own notes, Salt described the scene as 'being a large commercial shuck selling hippiedom, flower children, love ... an extension of the media thing.'<sup>96</sup> In this sense, Salt does appear to have tapped a broader narrative of the 1960s counterculture then prominent amongst political, cultural and intellectual elites. As has been well-rehearsed, late 1960s articles, essays and films such as *Easy Rider* and *Alice's Restaurant* presented despondent epigraphs on the death of the hippie dream.<sup>97</sup> *Midnight Cowboy* was no exception; Salt's draft, while emphasising countercultural themes, also appeared to be drawing on the popular idea that America's flower children were rapidly descending into parody and self-destruction.

Other political and/or social issues were cut or curtailed during script development. Both Salt and Schlesinger confess to having toned down the potential for reading Joe Buck as a gay man, cutting lengthy sequences present in Herlihy's book. As Salt put it in one interview, to include all of this material would have been too 'specific' as to Joe's sexuality.<sup>98</sup> Joe may sympathise with and nurture Ratso at times, but when accused of homosexuality, or in the presence of a gay man (the young man in the cinema, the encounter with an older man, Towny, late in the film) he expresses disgust at himself through

violence. *Midnight Cowboy* began development when the Production Code was still in force and Schlesinger and Hellman certainly discussed the potential difficulties such content might cause.<sup>99</sup> And even while Salt and Schlesinger worked on the screenplay through 1967 and early 1968, there was as yet no replacement for the Code (the ratings system was not announced until October of that year). Perhaps the fear of censorship, or just the general reticence on the part of filmmakers – even at a time of relative openness toward sexual themes – to grapple with gay relationships meant that this aspect of the film was less emotionally developed.

What is apparent in the final scene, however, is the end of a deep, powerful (platonic or otherwise) connection. Salt's first draft created the images of Joe dumping his cowboy attire in the trash, symbolically killing off the *Midnight Cowboy*.<sup>100</sup> What is mentioned briefly in the novel – Joe tossing his 'stained' jacket in the 'trash receptacle' – becomes a full-blown act of symbolic self-destruction in the screenplay, with hat, boots and jacket all being disposed of.<sup>101</sup> Joe declares his hustling days are over; he will secure a regular job when they arrive in Miami. Interestingly, and while much of the dialogue of this speech was adapted from Joe's thoughts as presented in the novel, there was one significant addition. Added in February 1968, Joe concludes his speech: "That's what I'm gonna do ... Okay Rico?"<sup>102</sup> This is the first time that Joe has referred unprompted to Ratso by his friend's preferred name. It becomes a poignant symbol of the two men's relationship having reached emotional climax, but is also bitterly ironic in the fact that it has come too late. Ratso is dead. As the bus rides into Miami so ends one of cinema's most renowned tragic double acts. And so began Waldo Salt's renown as 'a very hot screenwriter'.<sup>103</sup>

## Conclusion

By February 1970, when Salt received a letter of congratulation from fellow screenwriter and blacklistee Dalton Trumbo, he was already riding high on a wave of critical and commercial success. As well as praising *Midnight Cowboy*, Trumbo added that there was 'something extraordinary about men who stand in the dark for 15 or 20 years only to emerge in their middle fifties with films like *Midnight Cowboy* ... films that have as large an appeal to the young as those written by the young.'<sup>104</sup> From the dark days of the blacklist to the dizzying heights of countercultural renown, Salt's comeback was complete. He became one of a small cluster of blacklisted writers – Trumbo (*Papillon*, 1973), Ring Lardner Jr. (*M\*A\*S\*H*, 1970) and Abraham Polonsky (*Tell Them Willie Boy is Here*, 1969) – to enjoy a second wind during a 'time of renewed political dissent'.<sup>105</sup> More so than Trumbo, Lardner and Polonsky, however, Salt's continued successes through the 1970s with films such as *Serpico*, *Day of the Locust* and *Coming Home* have come to define him, in the eyes of many, as a Hollywood Renaissance screenwriter. 'He is so indelibly linked with the work he did on *Midnight Cowboy*', declared one contemporaneous account, 'each time a man wearing a ten gallon hat and cowboy boots walks into the Beverly Hills Polo Lounge ... I expected him to be Waldo Salt.'<sup>106</sup> A bizarre, surreal pronouncement this may be, but there is certainly something about the way Salt assimilated himself and embraced the countercultural vibes – 'the acrid odor of cannabis and tear gas' as Peter Biskind would have it – then pervading certain Hollywood enclaves.<sup>107</sup>

As this essay has shown, however, Salt's career revival was down to more than just a 'with-it' mentality. Responding to changed industrial and cultural discourses – the rise of independent production, the auteur theory as a popular concept, the writer-director collaboration and Hollywood's obsession with 'youth' – he was able to re-align his screenwriting and public persona with changed exigencies of the period. Through *Don Quixote* and *The Artful Dodger* he established his credentials as both a visually experimental screenwriter and one in tune with the countercultural *zeitgeist*. On the *Midnight Cowboy* project, he similarly demonstrated these skills while also embracing other contributors (director, actors, producers). In this way, he began to forge on-going relationships with Schlesinger (*Day of the Locust*) and Hellman (*Day of the Locust, Coming Home*, and the unrealised project *The Lonely Passion of Judith Hearne*, 1970) as well as making himself an appealing prospective collaborator for many others in Hollywood.

In his analysis of 'multiple authorship' and the films of Hal Ashby, Aaron Hunter makes the case for revisiting screenwriters of the Hollywood Renaissance. 'If New Hollywood films continue to be understood to concern such themes as alienation, cynicism, or loneliness', he writes, 'it makes sense to look to the writers who developed these themes'.<sup>108</sup> I would add that a focus on screenwriters and script development can also illuminate the complex dynamics existing between creative personnel, between word and image as a film travels from script to screen, and between filmmakers and wider industrial and cultural discourses of any given period. Clearly, the above has only offered a small contribution to this project. There remains much to do on the careers of all those writers who helped give shape to the era's cinema. And yet Waldo Salt's career

revival does offer a striking example of the pressures exerted on writers during the late 1960s and the responses and strategies adopted to gain and/or maintain status within Hollywood. Against a backdrop of industrial, political and cultural upheaval a 'superannuated hippie leprechaun' was born.

## Acknowledgements

My thanks to the archivists at UCLA's Charles E. Young Research Library and the British Film Institute, especially Julie Graham and Jonny Davies, for all their assistance. I am also grateful to Peter Krämer, Yannis Tzioumakis, Maggie and Peter Gruner who read and commented on various drafts of this manuscript, and to all those present at Bangor University's conference 'The American New Wave: A Retrospective' (4-6 July 2017) for their feedback on an early version. Research leave provided by the University of Portsmouth's Faculty of Creative and Cultural Industries enabled me to complete this project.

## Notes

---

<sup>1</sup> Catherine Breslin, 'The Artful Dodges of a Very Hot Screenwriter', *New York*, 26 April 1970, 50, 51, 57.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 58.

<sup>3</sup> 'Tells College Kids: "You're All Cop-Outs"', *Variety*, 8 April 1970, 2; Harry Clein, 'Waldo Salt', *Entertainment Weekly*, 23 January 1970, 14.

<sup>4</sup> James Chapman, 'The Adventures of Robin Hood and the Origins of the Television Swashbuckler', *Media History* 17:3 (2011): 273-287; Steve Neale, 'Pseudonyms, Sapphire and Salt: "un-American" contributions to television costume adventure series in the 1950s', *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 23: 3 (2003): 245-257; Neale, 'Swashbucklers and Sitcoms, Cowboys and Crime, Nurses, Just Men and Defenders: Blacklisted Writers and TV in the 1950s and 1960s', *Film Studies* 7 (2005): 83-203. Paul Buhle and Dave Wagner devote a short section to Salt's post-blacklist career. See Buhle and Wagner, *Hide in Plain Sight: The Hollywood Blacklistees in Film and Television* (New York, 2003), 208-214. But their film analyses are brief, and they do not examine Salt within broader debates on screenwriting of the period.

<sup>5</sup> Peter Krämer, *The New Hollywood: From Bonnie and Clyde to Star Wars* (London, 2005), 84.

<sup>6</sup> Steven Maras, *Screenwriting: History, Theory and Practice* (London, 2009).

<sup>7</sup> Miranda J. Banks, *The Writers: A History of American Screenwriters and Their Guild* (New Brunswick, 2016); Kevin Alexander Boon, 'The Auteur Renaissance, 1968-1980', in Andrew Horton and Julian Hoxter (eds), *Screenwriting* (New Brunswick, 2014), 81-100; Steven Price, *A History of The Screenplay* (London,

---

2013), 182-199; Tom Stempel, *FrameWork: A History of Screenwriting in the American Film*. Third Edition (Syracuse, 2000), 155-238.

<sup>8</sup> Steve Neale, "'The Last Good Time We Ever Had?': Revising the Hollywood Renaissance', in Linda Ruth Williams and Michael Hammond (eds), *Contemporary American Cinema* (Maidenhead, 2006), 91.

<sup>9</sup> Geoff King, *New Hollywood: An Introduction* (London, 2002), 49-84; Thomas Schatz, 'The New Hollywood', in Julian Stringer (ed.), *Movie Blockbusters* (London, 2003), 15-44; Justin Wyatt, *High Concept: Movies and Marketing in Hollywood* (Austin, 1994).

<sup>10</sup> Aaron Hunter, *Authoring Hal Ashby: The Myth of the New Hollywood Auteur* (New York, 2016).

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 165.

<sup>12</sup> Correspondences between John Schlesinger and Jerome Hellman are available in the John Schlesinger Papers (JRS), British Film Institute, London. See JRS 6/14: Hellman to Schlesinger, 30 March 1966; JRS 6/14: Schlesinger to Hellman, 15 April 1966.

<sup>13</sup> JRS 6/8: Schlesinger to Gelber, 12 April 1967.

<sup>14</sup> JRS 6/8: Schlesinger to Gelber, 31 October 1966.

<sup>15</sup> JRS 6/14: Hellman to Schlesinger, 28 July 1967.

<sup>16</sup> William J. Mann, *Edge of Midnight: The Life of John Schlesinger* (London, 2004), 295; Breslin, 'Artful Dodges', 58.

<sup>17</sup> JRS 6/14: Schlesinger to Hellman, 11 August 1967.

<sup>18</sup> *Time*, 7 July 1967.

<sup>19</sup> Buhle and Wagner, *Hide*, 208.

<sup>20</sup> 'Mary McCall Voted Writers Guild Prexy', *Variety*, 18 November 1942, 6; Patrick McGilligan and Paul Buhle, *Tender Comrades: A Backstory of the Hollywood Blacklist* (Minneapolis, 2012), 405-406.

<sup>21</sup> Larry Ceplair and Steven Englund, *The Inquisition in Hollywood: Politics in the Film Community, 1930-60* (Urbana, 1983), 282, 367.

<sup>22</sup> Neale, 'Pseudonyms', 245-257.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 246.

<sup>24</sup> Chapman, 'Adventures', 278.

<sup>25</sup> Keith Newlin, *A Theodore Dreiser Encyclopedia* (Westport, 2003), 5.

<sup>26</sup> Krämer, *New Hollywood*, 84.

<sup>27</sup> Buhle and Wagner, *Hide*.

<sup>28</sup> Waldo Salt Papers (WSP), Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA, Los Angeles. See WSP 23/8.

<sup>29</sup> Krämer, *New Hollywood*, 21-22; Sheldon Hall and Steve Neale, *Epics, Spectacles and Blockbusters: A Hollywood History* (Detroit, 2010).

<sup>30</sup> Chapman, 'Adventures', 278.

<sup>31</sup> Price, *Screenplay*, 199.

<sup>32</sup> David Bordwell, Janet Staiger and Kristin Thompson, *The Classical Hollywood Cinema: Film Style and Mode of Production to 1960* (London, 1985), 330.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 332.

<sup>34</sup> Price, *Screenplay*, 183.

<sup>35</sup> David Bordwell, *The Way Hollywood Tells It: Story and Style in Modern Movies* (Berkeley, 2006), 27.

<sup>36</sup> Price, *Screenplay*, 195.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 189-195.

- 
- <sup>38</sup> Bordwell, *The Way*, 34.
- <sup>39</sup> WSP 23/8: Waldo Salt, 'Notes', 30 July 1965, 3-4.
- <sup>40</sup> John Bush Jones, *Our Musicals, Ourselves: A Social History of the American Musical Theater* (Hanover, 2003), 238-39.
- <sup>41</sup> Salt, 'Notes', 30 July 1965, 4.
- <sup>42</sup> WSP 28/1: Waldo Salt, *Don Quixote*, 22 January 1966, 1.
- <sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 6, 9, 27, 82; WSP 29/2: Salt, *Don Quixote*, 10 July 1966, 94, 100.
- <sup>44</sup> Salt, 'Notes', 30 July 1965, 8.
- <sup>45</sup> Claudia Sternberg, *Written for the Screen: The American Motion-Picture Screenplay as Text* (Tübingen, 1997), 48-49.
- <sup>46</sup> A.H. Weiler, "'Quixote" with a Pas de Deux or Two', *New York Times*, 7 May 1967, D11.
- <sup>47</sup> Sue Harper, 'The Price of Oysters: *Tom Jones* (1963) and Film Finances', *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 34:1 (2014): 77.
- <sup>48</sup> Jonathan Stubbs, "'Steeped in Tradition, Seized by Change": "Swinging London" and the American Reception of *Tom Jones* (1963)', *Journal of Popular Culture* 47:2 (2014): 374-376.
- <sup>49</sup> WSP 59/2: Waldo Salt, *The Artful Dodger*, 27 June 1967, 12-17. (N.B. Salt's draft screenplays are interspersed with notes and rewrites. The stated page number often differs from where it appears within the folder. Every page is, however, dated and arranged chronologically. I have therefore also included dates for each citation).
- <sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 5 August 1967, 79.
- <sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 7 August 1967, 98.
- <sup>52</sup> WSP 59/1: Waldo Salt, '3<sup>rd</sup> April 1968 notes', 4.
- <sup>53</sup> WSP 6/5: Waldo Salt, 'Notes on Approach', 10 November 1972, 5.
- <sup>54</sup> 'The New Code/Rating Bit', *Newsletter*, December 1968, 2.
- <sup>55</sup> Boon, 'Auteur', 87.
- <sup>56</sup> Mann, *Edge*, 295.
- <sup>57</sup> Krämer, *New Hollywood*, 12-13.
- <sup>58</sup> Rudolph Roderick, 'Oscar Winning Writers on the Future of Screenwriting', *Entertainment World*, 30 December 1969, 17.
- <sup>59</sup> JRS 6/8: Schlesinger to Hellman, 26 August 1967.
- <sup>60</sup> JRS 6/14: Hellman to Schlesinger, 19 Jan 1967.
- <sup>61</sup> Price, *Screenplay*, 195.
- <sup>62</sup> King, *New Hollywood*, 35; Timothy Corrigan, 'Auteurs and the New Hollywood', in Lewis (ed.), *New American Cinema*, 40.
- <sup>63</sup> Boon, 'Auteur', 81; Sternberg, *Written*, 7; Price, *Screenplay*, 195.
- <sup>64</sup> Boon, 'Auteur', 82-83.
- <sup>65</sup> 'Always Use Chi-Chi Vocabulary If Posing as a Foreign Film Buff', *Variety*, 2 June 1965, 18.
- <sup>66</sup> 'DGA Awakes to No Top Credit', *Variety*, 3 May 1967, 3.
- <sup>67</sup> Banks, *Writers*, 162.
- <sup>68</sup> Kevin Thomas, 'Screenwriter – an Unsung Hero with Plenty of Ideas', *Los Angeles Times*, 8 June 1966, 80. See also, A.D. Murphy, 'The Now Movie', *Saturday Review*, 28 December 1968, 21-22.
- <sup>69</sup> 'Original Sold to Fox for \$400,000', *Variety*, 15 November 1967, 3.
- <sup>70</sup> 'Paramount Pictures Starts Program to Give Film Writers Star Status', *Boxoffice*, 6 May 1968, W-1.

- 
- <sup>71</sup> Boon, 'Auteur', 83.
- <sup>72</sup> WSP 3/1: Schlesinger, "'The Midnight Cowboy": Notes on Second Draft Script', 18 July 1967, 1-15.
- <sup>73</sup> JRS 6/3: In a letter to John Schlesinger in February 1968, Herlihy himself commends Salt for doing 'a towering job of indicting the entire society'. Herlihy to Schlesinger, 10 February 1968.
- <sup>74</sup> WSP 1/1: Waldo Salt, 'Notes on *Midnight Cowboy*', 30 October 1967, 1-2.
- <sup>75</sup> WSP 1/1: Waldo Salt, *Midnight Cowboy*, 7 November 1967, 15; WSP 1/2: Waldo Salt, *Midnight Cowboy*, 21 November 1967, 41 and 17 December 1967, 131.
- <sup>76</sup> JRS 6/13: 'Midnight Cowboy: Cass Sequence', 1 February 1969.
- <sup>77</sup> WSP 1/2: John Schlesinger, 'Midnight Cowboy', 22 November 1967, 1.
- <sup>78</sup> WSP 1/1: Salt, *Midnight Cowboy*, 2 October 1967, 1.
- <sup>79</sup> Ibid., 1-3.
- <sup>80</sup> Ibid., 3.
- <sup>81</sup> WSP 1/1: Salt, *Midnight Cowboy*, 3 November 1967, 1-3.
- <sup>82</sup> JRS 6/2: Salt, *Midnight Cowboy*, 22 November 1967- 15 January 1968, 1.
- <sup>83</sup> Michael M. Riley, 'An Interview with John Schlesinger', *Literature/Film Quarterly* 6:2 (1978): 107.
- <sup>84</sup> Lawrence Webb, *The Cinema of Urban Crisis: Seventies Film and the Reinvention of the City* (Amsterdam, 2014), 9-10.
- <sup>85</sup> WSP 1/1: Salt, *Midnight Cowboy*, 16 October 1967, 59.
- <sup>86</sup> WSP 1/2: Waldo Salt, 'Midnight Cowboy – Notes on Joe-Ratso Sequence', 28 November 1967, 2-3.
- <sup>87</sup> WSP 1/2: Salt, *Midnight Cowboy*, 22 November 1967, 52.
- <sup>88</sup> Ibid., 6 December 1967, 90.
- <sup>89</sup> WSP 3/7: Waldo Salt, 'Joe Buck Test Interview'.
- <sup>90</sup> Mann, *Edge*, 307.
- <sup>91</sup> WSP 4/2: Waldo Salt, 'Coconut Scene Revised Plan', 1 May 1968, 1-4.
- <sup>92</sup> Krämer, *New Hollywood*, 107.
- <sup>93</sup> David Cook, *Lost Illusions: American Cinema in the Shadow of Watergate and Vietnam, 1970-1979* (Berkeley, 2000), 162-172.
- <sup>94</sup> WSP 1/2: Salt, *Midnight Cowboy*, 17 December 1967, 124.
- <sup>95</sup> Ibid., 125.
- <sup>96</sup> WSP 1/2: Salt, 'Notes', 28 November 1967, 1.
- <sup>97</sup> Peter Lev, *American Films of the 70s: Conflicting Visions* (Austin, 2000), 10.
- <sup>98</sup> Clein, 'Waldo Salt', 14.
- <sup>99</sup> JRS 6/14: Richard Gregson to Jerome Hellman, 'The Midnight Cowboy', 4 April 1966.
- <sup>100</sup> WSP 1/2: Salt, *Midnight Cowboy*, 19 December 1967, 167.
- <sup>101</sup> James Leo Herlihy, *Midnight Cowboy* (London, 2002), 252.
- <sup>102</sup> WSP 1/3: Salt, *Midnight Cowboy*, 2 February 1968, 118.
- <sup>103</sup> Breslin, 'Artful Dodges'.
- <sup>104</sup> WSP 81/10: Dalton Trumbo to Waldo Salt, 16 February 1970.
- <sup>105</sup> Mark Shiel, 'Hollywood, the New Left, and FTA', in Frank Krutnik, Peter Stanfield, Brian Neve and Steve Neale (eds), *"Un-American" Hollywood: Politics and Film in the Blacklist Era* (New Brunswick, 2007), 211.
- <sup>106</sup> Clein, 'Waldo Salt', 14.

---

<sup>107</sup> Peter Biskind, *Easy Riders, Raging Bulls: How the Sex 'n' Drugs 'n' Rock 'n' Roll Generation Saved Hollywood* (London, 1998), 14.

<sup>108</sup> Hunter, *Authoring*, 165.