

Femininity, stardom and the everyday : a comparative account of the French female cinema star and the Hollywood female cinema star in French cultural discourses of the 1950s..

Handyside, Fiona Jean

The copyright of this thesis rests with the author and no quotation from it or information derived from it may be published without the prior written consent of the author

For additional information about this publication click this link.

<http://qmro.qmul.ac.uk/jspui/handle/123456789/1694>

Information about this research object was correct at the time of download; we occasionally make corrections to records, please therefore check the published record when citing. For more information contact scholarlycommunications@qmul.ac.uk

Femininity, Stardom and the Everyday: A Comparative Account of the French Female Cinema Star and the Hollywood Female Cinema Star in French Cultural Discourses of the 1950s.

Fiona Jean Handyside

Queen Mary, University of London

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for PhD by research

October 2002

Abstract of thesis

This thesis explores the links between ideology, stardom, nationality and the everyday. It argues that as France underwent rapid economic expansion and technical modernisation in the 1950s, everyday life was subsequently rendered 'unfamiliar' whilst simultaneously retaining its banal quotidian nature or 'familiarity' – i.e. it became 'uncanny'. It thus became an object of intense critical inquiry and there was also a resulting object-fetishisation within mass culture.

The introductory chapter argues that in a climate of urbanisation, a new 'leisure' culture and the explosion of the mass media (women's magazines, news and picture magazines such as *L'Express* and *Paris-Match*, American cinema, the launch of *Cahiers du cinéma*, the beginnings of television) the American female star became newly visible in this 'uncanny' everyday existence. Her fetishised body thus became a privileged space for expressing the processes of Americanisation and modernisation in France. Each empirical chapter takes an aspect of how modernity effects the body (cleanliness, spatial positioning, clothing) and then explores in detail the different ways these attributes were inflected in representations of the female American star in France and her French equivalent.

My thesis thus engages with the ways in which cinematic representation effects the experience of and behaviour within everyday life, and how cultural discourses regulate both the individual and that national body. It closely examines Edgar Morin's writings on the mass media and also uses established theorists such as Henri Lefebvre in a new cinematic context. It also challenges the ways in which star studies generally concentrates on the star in their own culture in order to address stardom as an international phenomenon. It concludes that the presence of the female American star in France enabled the ideological management of the contradictory construction of femininity at this time.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	5
Chapter One: La vie quotidienne:- consumption, spectacle and objects.	
La révolution du quotidien: - France in the long 1950s	6-10
Baudelaire and the French tradition of everyday life	10-13
Henri Lefebvre and Edgar Morin: - the renegade communists	13-19
The imaginary and the real:- Morin's view of cinema and mass culture	19-27
Mass culture as critique or spectacle: - Lefebvre's dialectic	27-31
The new visibility of women	31-40
The privatisation of identity	40-44
The uncanny nature of everyday life	44-50
The object as fetish in 1950s France	50-56
Case study: - Les cadres – an example of an unreal everyday life	56-61
Theorising nationality and the role of the cinema	61-63
Chapter Two: Gentlemen Prefer Blondes	
Introduction	64-66
Red like the Republic: - modernity, hygiene and being clean	67-71
Will the French ever be clean?	71-77
Simone Signoret as French blonde	77-88
But do French Gentlemen Prefer American Blondes?	88-95
'Je ne sais pas ce que je suis, mais en tout cas, je suis la Blonde!' Marilyn Monroe as Hollywood blonde	95-104
'Elle incarne aux Etats-Unis l'idéal féminin'	104-112
Let's Make Love: - Montand and Monroe's affair, 1960	112-124

Chapter Three: Sex and the Single Girl, or The New Wave Star

The Street-walker	125-133
Painters of Modern Life: - Jules, Jim and Jeanne Moreau	133-141
The Deadly Image, the Damaged Woman	141-149
Deconstructing the Star: - <i>La Baie des anges</i> (Demy, 1963)	149-157
Jean Seberg, the American <i>flâneuse</i>	157-158
A Star is Burned	158-164
Negotiating freedom: - the case of <i>Bonjour Tristesse</i> (Preminger, 1958)	164-167
Matricidal texts	167-172
Beyond representation: - Michel and Patricia in <i>A bout de souffle</i> (Godard, 1960)	172-185

Chapter four: Fashioning femininity

Introduction	186-191
From Spectator to Star	191-199
From voyeur to object of desire, the best transformation of them all?	199-201
Caught in a masquerade: - Audrey Hepburn and the performance of femininity	201-209
Constructing modern femininity: - the role of fashion and the women's magazine	209-220
The real body: - Brigitte Bardot	220-227
Liberty, equality and modernity: - Bardot as a 'natural star.'	227-238
Bardot as colonised star	238-248
Conclusion	249-259
Filmography	260-262
Bibliography	263-279

Acknowledgements

A thesis is the culmination of three years' research and writing, a task that would be impossible without the financial, emotional and professional support of many people, whom I would like to thank here.

The biggest debt I owe is to my late supervisor, Professor Jill Forbes. Her enthusiasm and energy for this project were absolutely unflagging, and this thesis could not have been written without her. It owes much to her academic brilliance and her generous assistance. Thank you, Jill.

In the last year of my thesis two supervisors, Professor Peter Evans and Dr Sue Harris supported me. I thank them for the help they gave me with this project after coming in at such a late stage, in difficult circumstances.

I also benefited from the chance to share my work with the wider academic community both at the Queen Mary Graduate Forum and at the Institute of Romance Studies Graduate Forum. I thank those present for their thoughts and comments about my work in progress.

I was fortunate to receive financial support during my studies, in the first year from Queen Mary and Westfield College, as it then was, and in the last two years from the Arts and Humanities Research Board. Mr. Douglas Beath also generously provided financial help.

I would like to thank the girls, Lisa, Dena and Pria, for their friendship during this period in my life. Xxx. Special thanks are also due to Lisa for her proofreading of the thesis.

Lastly, as always, I should like to thank my parents, without whom...It is to them that this thesis is dedicated, with love.

La Vie quotidienne: consumption, spectacle and objects.

Il n'est pas rare de trouver dans une maison paysanne une cuisinière électronique [...] De même, un assez grand nombre de ménages ouvriers ont une machine à laver, un poste de télévision, une voiture [...] Que des paysans assez pauvres, ou des ouvriers, achètent un poste de télévision, cela prouve l'existence d'un besoin social nouveau. Fait remarquable.¹

La révolution du quotidien: France in the 'long' 1950s.

In her introduction to the *Yale French Studies* issue 'The French Fifties', Susan Weiner poses the question: how do we make sense of a decade? 'How do we retrieve its "feeling," the life of its times?' She then uses Frederic Jameson's concept of periodisation, the idea that one is able to identify breaks and homologies in and between the spheres of culture, politics and philosophy, as a means to assess the value of the exceptional against a certain conception of the historically dominant. Whereas Jameson carried out this task for the 1960s, Weiner argues that the 1950s are a decade equally ripe for the process of periodisation, which she locates in a French context as a time of renegotiation of national identity. In an increasingly unfamiliar and fragmented existence, commentators reassert a transhistorical and indeed exceptional Frenchness, against a modern, mobile America. At the same time, they look back to more fixed historical moments, citing Baudelaire, Stendhal, and even the Celts, realism and surrealism, the Terror and the Middle Ages as key reference points to anchor the 'seemingly vertiginous present'. France and Frenchness becomes a steady bulwark against the ebbs and flows of the early expression of post-modernism. In this periodisation, the 1950s questioning of and faith in an eternal French identity begins with the purges of accused collaborators in 1945-6, and expands with the tensions of the Cold War, the Algerian War, the myths and realities of Americanisation and consumerism, and the waning of Empire. The Evian Accords in 1962 serve as a logical but momentary endpoint to this process of global repositioning that France was

¹ Henri Lefebvre, *Critique de la vie quotidienne, vol. 1: Introduction* (Paris: L'Arche, 1958), p.16. Note on publication: Lefebvre first published *Critique de la vie quotidienne* in 1947. This was republished with a new introduction in 1958. All references are to the 1958 text.

forced to undertake.² This thesis examines these 'long' 1950s (i.e. 1946-1962) using Jameson's paradigm of periodisation as a concern for the ruptures and links between culture, politics and philosophy at a given moment. It takes one spectacular area of culture, the burgeoning cinema, placing it into a context of a flourishing mass media. It then places this into a political and philosophical context informed by Henri Lefebvre's and Edgar Morin's writings on the everyday. Everyday life is located as the site where the struggle between the belief in an eternal France and post-modern shifts in experience of time and space is felt most strongly.

France entered the 1950s as a country still tied to an identity forged over the centuries. She was the head of an Empire. She saw herself and the French language as the vector of universal ideals based on liberty, equality and fraternity. Despite nineteenth century industrialisation, the country remained predominantly rural. By the middle of the 1960s, France had become a 'modern' country. The former colonies had secured independence. In the case of Algeria, this had been a long and protracted battle that led to the formation of a new Republic in 1958 and accusations of torture perpetrated by the French paratroopers stationed there. France's future was no longer based in radiating her own glory, but was dependent upon finding a voice within the European Economic Community. She had embarked on a modernisation programme, initially funded by American money in the guise of Marshall Aid. Co-ordinated by five-year plans it led to a stunning rate of growth in the French economy of around ten percent a year from 1953 onwards. However, despite these massive changes in the political sphere, it was above all in the private sphere that life was revolutionised. This 'révolution du quotidien' attracted the interest of commentators Edgar Morin and Henri Lefebvre, whose views will be discussed below. The growth of new towns, the rise of the middle classes, the ensuing development of new consumption patterns, the arrival of mass visual culture that both reflected and aided the above processes, and their impact on everyday life, was catalogued and analysed.

Mass urbanisation had taken place with the creation of new towns, such as Mureaux in south-west France. A (sub)urban existence replaced the bucolic one. In 1954-7, six times as many people moved to cities than between 1945-9, the majority to the Paris area. Government housing programmes ensured the building of 200,000 more HLMs between 1952 and 1958. Consumption of products for the home rose rapidly. Homes took up an increasingly large proportion of the annual family budget, not because of rent

² Susan Weiner, 'Editor's Preface: The French Fifties', *Yale French Studies*, 98 (2000), 1-4.

rises, which were relatively small, but because of additional spending on cleaning products and above all on household 'labour saving devices.' The first advertisement for a washing machine was placed in 1949: it was the start of a relentless publicity campaign. Advertising for all home-use based products grew 110 percent between 1950 and 1957, with yearly increases of 15 percent from 1955 onwards. The *Salon des arts ménagers* became well established from 1950 onwards as both a shop window and a publicity fest for household goods. Those who remained in the countryside also had their lives transformed by the arrival of electricity, running water, and other home comforts. This was not a totally even and smooth transformation of people's living space: access to financial and cultural capital controlled how people participated in this consumption. Development in the countryside was marked by huge regional differences: for example, 45 percent of peasant homes in Brittany still had beaten earth floors and 15 percent of homes in the Limousin still had oil lamps in 1958. Meanwhile, the richer Vaucluse area was second only to Paris in departmental automobile traffic. This uneven distribution of new goods also fractured along class as well as regional lines. In 1954, whereas 8.4 percent of the French population overall owned a washing machine, this figure rises to 23.4 percent for those in the liberal professions and senior management, but falls to 1.8 percent for salaried agricultural workers. In 1959, 21.4 percent overall owned a washing machine, but again this was unevenly distributed through the population, with 45 percent of those in the liberal professions or senior management owning one, but only 13.4 percent of salaried agricultural workers doing so. Yet the most important figure to retain is probably that which reveals that despite these undeniable inequalities, French society was being transformed through rapid changes in consumption across the board. Every social category increased their ownership of washing machines during the period 1954-9, as they did also with products such as refrigerators, televisions and cars. Most noticeable of all, however, is the fact that a survey carried out by l'IFOP for the *Commissariat du Plan* in 1954 revealed that the French preferred to spend their money on products to improve their home than on prestige products. Asked what they would buy if their salary was increased by twenty percent, 32 percent chose household equipment, placing that category ahead of a new house or flat, (5 percent) a car (5 percent), a holiday or a television (2 percent).³ Whatever the truth of these claims if they were actually given the

³ These figures come from Jean-Pierre Rioux, *La France de la Quatrième République, vol.2: l'expansion et l'impuissance, 1952-1958* (Paris: Seuil, 1983), pp. 240-2 and 263-4.

money, the French dreamed of household comfort before anything else in the 1950s. The changes wrought upon society in the 1950s were felt in the very heart of the individual's life, his or her home. The individual had a new relation to his or her home, as a consumer. At the same time, this private space was relentlessly reified and brought into the public sphere in the first ever widespread advertising of household goods.

This emphasis on home life was hardly surprising, as leisure became increasingly important. Union action and reorganisation of working patterns made leisure a democratic right rather than feudal privilege. In the century between 1860 and 1960, the average working week in France dropped from 80-85 hours to around 40 hours. The third paid week of holiday was introduced in 1956. Rather than work being the centre of an individual's existence, the home and leisure time came to have a growing significance. Membership of a class became a lifestyle issue rather than based on profession (although the two are obviously linked).

The creation of a consumer economy and the discovery of business management led to the expansion of the middle classes. They were employed in bureaucracy, administrative services, and similar services and led to the growth of a tertiary sector and an increase in remuneration in the form of monthly salaries as opposed to weekly wages. Less associated with authentic French identity than either the peasants or the manual working classes, the middle classes were the most dynamic of all social groups in France in the 1950s and 1960s. The middle classes underwent wholesale changes in their composition and role in society during this time.

Middle classes are notoriously hard to define. Generally speaking, the category encompasses small and medium-sized business owners, artisans, white-collar employees, and middle to senior management and various professionals (*les cadres*). Small business owners suffered as they were thrown into much more vigorous competition with larger manufacturers than even before with the development of mail order catalogues such as *La Redoute*, the growth in car use and the ending of price control. In the face of modernisation, this section of the middle classes became enticed by political philosophies such as Poujadism and its numbers decreased by about 300,000 from 1950 to 1962. Although these groups tended to push their children towards higher status jobs, such as the liberal professions, encouraging participation in higher education, they were also threatened by 'proletarianisation': by 1959, 4 in 10 of this group had become employees or factory workers. White-collar employees in contrast increased by about 400

000 over the same twelve year period. Offices supplanted shops as the main places of employment for the white-collar worker, with a huge exponential growth in the public sector at this time (the welfare state, urban planning, nationalisation of industry and so on). More than fifty percent of these workers were also women. This affected the status of these jobs, and tended to lead to a drop in salary, which would tend at least in financial terms to suggest a move to a more working class status. However, this group behaved as if it were a middle class entity, with a higher level of education, more leisure and holiday time, less populated living space and better equipped homes than skilled factory workers. Middle class status at this time is thus not just a financial concern, but an intellectual and cultural category that certain groups thrust themselves into whilst others may disdain it.

The dominant group in the middle classes was, however, *les cadres*. Their numbers increased by 400,000 between 1954 and 1962, by which time they numbered 1 500 000. The very modern nature of their employment is reflected in their main branches of employment: they were 3 percent of the workforce in the mines, for example, five percent in textiles, but close to twenty percent in electricity, oil, and banks. Heterogeneous in composition, they nevertheless had a strong sense of group identity. They were the symbols of the new, modern France, detached from old etiquette and professional tradition, with ostentatious consumption habits and an American management technique.⁴

This middle class kaleidoscope thus reveals the impact of modernisation upon French society. This social group grew in size and importance, and felt most keenly the effects of social mobility and the possibility for change. This leads to the possibility of aspiration: daily life is no longer a feudal given, but a plastic concept that can be remodelled. Advertising, American films filled with luxury products, and other forms of visual culture reflected and encouraged these changes. Everyday life re-entered discourse as the site of dynamic change in a rapidly modernising country.

Baudelaire and the French tradition of everyday life

‘Glorifier le culte des images (ma grande, mon unique, ma primitive passion).’⁵

⁴ Jean-Pierre Rioux, pp. 276-285.

⁵ Baudelaire, quoted by Jonathon Mayne, ed. Charles Baudelaire, *The Painter of Modern Life and other Essays* (London: Phaidon, 1964), p. ix.

Daily life had been criticised before these generations. Philosophy, Art, even war and exile can all be interpreted as an attack upon the daily life of a certain society. The common element of these critiques, however, was that they were the works of particularly talented and active individuals (poets, philosophers, warriors) who were thus in a particularly privileged position vis à vis their society. Lefebvre thus argues that this was essentially a class-based criticism that found its voice in the criticism of productive work. The Medieval criticism of the worldly was thus disdain for toil rather than an investigation of the category of the everyday, which irrupted into art and literature in the nineteenth century. Criticism of a given society's structure and way of life before this time was thus confined to the privileged and based on a feudal disdain for labour rather than an attempt to analyse the everyday's mainspring and its meanings. The concept of everyday life as a topic for investigation is thus a historically defined phenomenon.

'Daily life' first became a topic of investigation for artists, novelists, social commentators and political philosophers in the nineteenth century. Writing in the twentieth century, Lefebvre considers that Marx revealed the political implications of how people live their everyday lives:

Marx, dans le *Capital*, analyse d'abord ce qu'il y a de plus simple, de plus habituel, de fondamental, de plus fréquent dans les masses et dans la vie quotidienne [...] les rapports d'échanges commerciaux en régime bourgeois, l'échange des marchandises [...] ses analyses décèle dans ce phénomène [...] tous les antagonismes [...] de la société contemporaine.⁶

According to Lefebvre's analysis, then, Marx has located political unease and class struggle within 'the most habitual, the basic' mechanisms of mass everyday life. The Marxist struggle against class inequality begins through an awareness of how contemporary everyday life works. The everyday as a critical concept is thus revealed as a necessary construct to understand modern capitalist society. Capitalism creates the conditions in which everyday life can be opened up to critical and artistic investigation. It is rendered newly visible because as bodies are massed together in new urban centres, so the uniform and the repetitive aspects of human life become more prominent. New relationships based on exchange (both financial and sexual)

⁶ Henri Lefebvre, *Critique de la vie quotidienne*, vol. 1, p.9.

rather than feudalism open up lives to change and the possibility of social mobility. Everyday life is no longer a given, but can be investigated, changed and even threatened. As 'tradition' disappears, what was mundane becomes precious. Peasant 'authenticity' needs to be studied and preserved for future generations. Everyday life, the site of the material, the secular and the dull is located as the space of the most dynamic social and political struggles in contradictory concern for preservation, innovation, and revolution.

Modern writers such as Baudelaire and Zola catalogued the attractions and distractions of everyday life in the city while artists such as Manet and Toulouse-Lautrec left the salon and the studio in favour of the boulevard, the bar, and the brothel. Artistic creation nourished itself on the material of the everyday. In his eulogy to Constantin Guys, *Le Peintre de la vie moderne*, Baudelaire argued that beauty was composed of two elements: the ineffable, eternal, indefinable 'soul' and the relative, circumstantial, particular, material element linked to the age in which the beautiful object was produced. He goes on to say that the second, particular element allows the complete absorption and comprehension of the eternal beauty also evoked. Thus, for a painter to produce a beautiful artwork, it must contain both elements: that is to say, both a quality that transcends its time and place of production, and an element that is wholly contingent upon it. The most beautiful artwork will thus for example reveal both a spiritual truth about the human condition and a particular detail of fashionable dress. The quintessential painter of modern life will begin his work not by studying the ancient Masters (who will necessarily have their own particular contingency) but by plunging into the crowd and observing what he finds there (the painter of modern life is a man in Baudelaire's description, necessarily given the historical moment at which he was writing). These observations which thrill him with their sensory delights then undergo ordering and analysis, which will result in a beautiful art object produced from memory. Meaningful and beautiful images are thus understood to be those that offer both a reflection and a critical appraisal of experience gleaned in the everyday world. Lefebvre and Morin in their discussions of popular culture are thus in some ways continuing a tradition of criticism espoused by Baudelaire (Guys's sketches were after all predominantly produced for illustrated newspapers rather than galleries and museums). The anthropological 'plunge' into the crowd came to characterise Morin's work in the 1960s, with a filmed investigation carried out in Parisian streets, *Chronique d'un été*, and an exploration of a Breton village forming some of his major projects. Lefebvre's 'regressive-

progressive' method, which played a key role in his urban and rural sociology, was similarly based on close analysis of a particular incident or phenomenon.⁷ Images culled from observation of the crowd, the mass of people engaged in everyday activity, from the outward show of life, are taken to reveal something about the society from which they come. Films and picture magazines such as *Paris-Match* produce images that come from the everyday, from the plunge into the crowded street. They too paint modern life, and offer it up for both critical inspection and heady appreciation of its beauty. Baudelaire's emphasis upon modernity, both social and artistic, as based on the exploration and the cultivation of the local incident, the transitory moment, the speedy sketch rather than the considered portrait, finds an echo in the work of Lefebvre and Morin. In their work, a particular detail of life that may first appear as local colour is taken to be understood as the beginnings of a critical understanding of modernity and modernisation.

Henri Lefebvre and Edgar Morin: the renegade communists.

Encore un mot. Je ne pose pas à l'homme impeccable. Je ne suis pas un héros (et je n'aime pas les héros, surtout quand ils se survivent). Pourtant, en regardant de près, si mon honneur de philosophe n'est pas sans tâche (que les immaculés lancent la première pierre), si j'ai parfois reculé ou faibli, je ne crois pas avoir failli. Un chien ne vaudrait pas de cette vie là, a dit Faust. Je n'en veux pas d'autre.

Henri Lefebvre, in the aftermath of his expulsion from the PCF, January 1957.⁸

Henri Lefebvre (1905-1991)⁹ and Edgar Morin (1921-) were both members of the *Parti Communist Français*, (PCF). They were attracted to it as an/the alternative to fascism in the 1930s and 1940s and both expelled from it in the 1950s, increasingly disenchanted with its dogmatic Stalinist stance. (Indeed, Morin saw his leaving the Communist party in terms of breaking free

⁷ Michael Kelly, *The Historical Emergence of Everyday Life*, www.lang.soton.ac.uk/students/french/lefebvre/unrestr/lefeb3.html (accessed 1 December 2000).

⁸ Henri Lefebvre, 'Henri Lefebvre (né en 1905)', in *Les Philosophes Français d'aujourd'hui par eux-mêmes*, ed. by Gérard Deledelle and Denis Huisman (Paris, CDU: 1963), pp. 282-301 (p. 299).

⁹ Henri Lefebvre's birthdate is given as 1901 in some sources. He chose 1905 for himself and I have followed his convention.

from a prison of ideology).¹⁰ They both used their work to undermine fixed positions and cross artificial disciplines between subjects. Morin's work ranges over philosophy, the social sciences, the natural sciences, and French and European politics. In his own classification scheme for his work he assigns his two books on film, *Le cinéma ou l'homme imaginaire* (1956) and *Les Stars* (1957), to human sciences and the twentieth century respectively, illustrating the importance he gives to context over content. Morin's wide-ranging and sympathetic study of modernisation was informed by an anthropological, ethnographic and sociological approach. Lefebvre was a 'conducting wire'¹¹ for a core set of ideas about alienation and authenticity between various groups and generations: from the '*nouveaux philosophes*' to the Surrealists, from the Communists to the Situationists, from the students of May 1968 to fellow researchers in the social sciences. He has been considered a philosopher, a sociologist, a geographer and a cultural commentator.

The young Lefebvre was drawn to both the Dadaists and Saussurean linguistics as both suggested the possibilities of moments having a multiplicity of meanings. Saussure argued that the combination of letters used for a word was purely arbitrary and based on convention: a dog could just as well be a *chien*, or any other combination of letters, as long as the speakers involved agreed on what it referred to. This revealed the radical emptiness at the heart of words, and suggested ideas and concepts could be equally fluid and shifting. There could not be one interpretation of Marxism. Dadaism's nihilistic spirit, nurtured in the Cabaret Voltaire in Zurich during the First World War, seemed to confirm the ability to overcome the banal in the everyday. Alienation could be transcended in a sublime moment. 'This idea of a transcendent moment remained Lefebvre's fascination all his life. It kept him from simply being a Marxist.'¹² These moments were not divorced from the everyday, rather they overlapped with and illuminated it. Lefebvre, unlike the Surrealists, was not trying to transcend the monotony of everyday life in a personal, poetic revolution; he was seeking to banish it from all areas of daily

¹⁰ Morin left the Party before Lefebvre and delivered this verdict on him in *Autocritique*: 'Extraordinairement doué, intelligent, peut-être le génie s'il avait osé déployer ses ailes...Il déploya le drapeau de l'homme totale, mais il n'ose pas être totalement lui-même.' See Brian Rigby, 'The Notion of the Anthropological in Morin's cultural analysis', *French Cultural Studies*, 8:3 (24), (October 1997), 333-340, (p.336).

¹¹ Rob Shields, *Lefebvre, Love and Struggle: Spatial Dialectics* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), p. viii.

¹² Rob Shields, p. 57. Lefebvre's attraction to structural linguistics and surrealism became increasingly problematic as Stalinism attacked them as inherently bourgeois in the 1950s and the official aesthetic became socialist realism.

living.¹³ Lefebvre took Marx's concept of economic exploitation at work and extended it to all areas of everyday life, labelling it alienation.

Alienation is understood as an intensely lived experience that is felt as a separation or atomisation of the self. Alienation is perhaps endemic to the human condition. Self-conscious thought requires a critical split between subject and object. Living itself is thus the process of overcoming this alienation or splitting of the self to reach a deeper level of understanding, reconciliation and enjoyment. Modern capitalism makes this task more difficult as it relies on abstracting tasks and parcelling them into discrete units. Lefebvre argued that one of the reasons for such endemic alienation was the lag between growth and development in modernity. By this, he meant that whilst society as a whole prospered, certain groups were more 'backward' than ever before, a gap represented physically in the French landscape and which may partially account for his abiding interest in rural life. He argued that many people confused the speeding up of technological progress with rapid social and cultural development. On the contrary, Lefebvre maintained that an essential feature of modernity is the divorce between technological improvements and changes in people's living conditions. Consumerism, abundance and urbanisation had not lead to the eradication of poverty. The predominance of technology contributed to the survival, if not the salvaging, of capitalism. According to Marxist theory, the bourgeoisie can survive only by continually revolutionising the conditions of production to avoid the 'revolution.' Also there was a connection, yet at the same time a difference, between human technological control over the outside world and their appropriation of their own nature, their social existence, their everyday life and their needs and desires. Lefebvre sensed inherent dangers in the belief in technology 'freezing' into rival communist- and capitalist-armed camps, ignoring human needs in favour of belief in technology. Specific social groups such as technicians and bureaucrats tended to conceal these dangers and give the sense of an accomplished fact to what was only a disquieting possibility as they championed technology. Whilst control over nature was progressing, humans' appropriation of their own nature was stagnating or even regressing.¹⁴ Using similar metaphors, Morin also argued against the stunting, freezing effect of dogma. When the communist system fell apart, Morin

¹³ Although he always admired the Surrealists, Lefebvre also felt that their critique of the everyday was based on a disdain for productive labour, and that this marked the divorce between themselves and other proponents of change in daily life such as Marxists: see *Critique de la vie quotidienne*, vol. 1, p. 37.

¹⁴ Henri Lefebvre, *Sociologie de Marx* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1966), pp. 168-70.

described it as the melting of the icebergs, the bursting of the dams, the flowing of waters.

On entendait craquer les systèmes gelés sur lesquels les esprits traversaient les fleuves et les précipices. Dans le charroi et l'embouteillage des icebergs idéologiques, dans les gigantesques craquements joyeux d'un devenir retrouvé, nous nous apercevions que le roc de notre doctrine n'était que de la banquise.¹⁵

In these accounts, we can see the championing of action and the dialectical method, which prevents thought 'freezing' into set dogmas in this manner. Against the alienation endemic to modernity and the consumption that was meant to compensate for it, Lefebvre counterposed moments of presence and his ideal, integrated, 'total man' (sic). Alienation was overcome in an appreciation of the dialectic as a form of resolution.

Lefebvre argued that the very reason that everyday life had been hitherto ignored as a subject for study was because of a bourgeois abstracting rationalism which denied the totality of lived experience to promote a highly differentiated view of activity as divided into separate spheres of, for example, art, philosophy and science. Such an outlook denied the totality of existence. Previous generations, he argued, had enjoyed a unified life, with work, home, popular sociability and festivals co-joined. 'Les impératifs de la communauté paysan (le village) réglait autrefois aussi bien les fêtes que l'organisation du labour et celle de la vie domestique.'¹⁶ In Lefebvre's vision of a radically disalienated and rehabilitated everyday life, the Marxist critique would be extended beyond economic exploitation to an understanding of the everyday in all its richness. In response to the homogenising and reifying tendencies of modernity, the dialectic holds out hope of an understanding of life as an integrated whole.

Morin in contrast came to see the dialectic as a 'reassuring rationalisation'. He turned instead to the dialogic, a paradigm of complexity. He developed the concept independently of Bakhtin. He formulated it in response to what he saw as a 'crisis of meaning' in the sciences, where coherence seemed lost as scientific information ran into paradoxes, circularities and contradictions. Science offered both a promise of fulfilment and a crisis. It was this stance that made Morin antipathetic to Althusser and other 'scientific Marxists.' His *Autocritique* of 1959 became the classic

¹⁵ Edgar Morin, *Autocritique* (Paris: Seuil, 1959), p. 203.

¹⁶ Henri Lefebvre, *Critique de la vie quotidienne*, vol. 1, p. 39.

autobiography of the journey to the end of 'the Party'; it started Morin on his path in which interrogation of the world and of the self would be connected as an intellectual strategy. Questioning and self-reflexivity was the tone of Morin's work. He deliberately placed himself on the margins of French intellectual life, disowning the determinism of thinkers such as Pierre Bourdieu and arguing that the mostly self-appointed 'intellos' exploited their position. Intellectual power itself is both mythical and real, the one feeding of the other. Morin's 'outsider' status is perhaps also to do with his upbringing. He was the son of Sephardic Jews, Vidal and Lena Nahum. His father came from Salonica, a vestige of the Greco-Roman polyglot and his legacy was diaspora and cosmopolitanism. In the Resistance, Edgar Nahum took the French surname Morin. When Vidal died in 1984, Morin published an article as Morin-Nahum and finally he asserted his Sephardic roots when he wrote a family history, *Vidal et les Siens* (Paris: Seuil, 1989). Given this marginal position and his problems with conventional Marxism and the scientific Marxism in vogue at the time, his journal *Arguments*, founded in 1957, was his ideal intellectual space. *Arguments* was founded in an anti-chauvinistic spirit to function as a forum for open Marxism and undogmatic debate. (Lefebvre was initially involved, but left when it became clear that criticisms would extend to past Marxism). Although *Argument's* core concerns were those of the philosophies, institutions and movements connected to Marxism, several issues encouraged speculation on science, psychoanalysis, the modernisation of Eros, and other areas outside of the PCF's strictly economic remit. Morin's interest in science and myth can be traced back to various articles in the journal, to which he was the most prolific contributor until the decision was taken by all the co-founders to wind it up in 1962.¹⁷

Morin believed that 'total man', a man reconciled with nature and with his own Nature, was a religious myth. The power of myth was however in some ways enough for him: he sensed both the fullness of the myth and the depth of the void beyond. Morin had a commitment to science in which the mythology of the total man would come to be real, or at least a good deal more real than Marxism. Science, Morin argued, was poised to fulfil needs previously catered for by myths, such as doubles, telecommunication and the restoration of youth. Marxist reality had bankrupted itself by failing to comprehend that reality was permeated by imagination. Revolutionary action could not work through such a fragmented totality: it would have to make the

¹⁷ Myron Kofman, *Edgar Morin: From Big Brother to Fraternity* (London and Chicago: Pluto Press, 1996), p.7 and pp. 43–4.

imagination its guide, and realise also that such imagination was nourished by the complexity of real lives. Such an account, with its inherent appeal to the uncertain and the ineffable, placed Morin on the margins of 1960s intellectual currents as this was the last decade of intellectual certainty and ideological faiths.¹⁸

There are fundamental differences with Morin's and Lefebvre's positions in regard to orthodox Marxism and modernity. Taking an example of the effects of modernisation of 1950s France, a town dweller from the burgeoning suburbs around Paris could quite easily present a visitor with a cheese from the Pyrenees and say 'this cheese comes from my region. You can't get it anywhere else.' Lefebvre would read this in terms of a typically modern dialectic between alienation and disalienation in the everyday modern world. The fetish object, the cheese, is made to stand for spatial alienation (distance from the original region), temporal alienation (nostalgia) and contradictory yet linked disalienation (affirmation of identity). Morin would read it as an example of the complicated relations between the real (the existence of the cheese, the identification with a 'lost' region) and the imaginary (projection back into the region which is now a memory rather than a home). Yet both were more interested in the fluid dialectics of longing expressed by this remark than the thundering dogmas of Stalinism that were unable to comprehend these remarks, restricted as they were to political economism. It was their ability to comprehend the changes modernity wrought, to step beyond conventional boundaries into a new arena of thought, that makes them such powerful theorists of the everyday, and more specifically, the effects of visual culture upon it. Their open minded and free flowing thinking opened them up to the possibilities of change occurring not in The Revolution, but in another revolution of everyday life.¹⁹ Both thinkers were free to embrace the utopian potential in the changes modernisation wrought. Outside of the economic and political confines of the PCF, both were acutely aware of the effect images were having on French everyday life. The French tradition of exploring and critiquing modernity and the everyday

¹⁸ Myron Kofman, p. vii.

¹⁹ Lefebvre goes so far as to argue that the Communist revolution in Russia, 1917, has not transformed the everyday as would be hoped. A political revolution should destroy the superstructure, empty out its content (i.e. the State, property laws) and reconstruct new superstructures from the grassroots to the highest echelons of society. However, in 1950s Communist countries the political and ideological superstructures were ahead of the economic base because communism tended to happen in 'undeveloped' agrarian countries. This change then goes from the stratosphere down to the masses, rather than vice versa. Yet socialism ('a new society') can only concretely be defined by changes in everyday life. The transformation of everyday life is still to be completed, although political transformation of the superstructure has occurred. *Critique de la vie quotidienne, vol 1*, pp.58-59.

through visual culture was continued by these two thinkers as they examined the burgeoning mass visual culture of the 1950s in France.

The imaginary and the real – Morin’s view of cinema and mass culture

‘Il faut aimer flâner sur les grands boulevards de la culture de masse.’²⁰

This was a society whose very character was thus being decided in visual culture. Both Lefebvre and Morin were interested in exploring the extent to which this culture determined both individuals and the society within which they lived their lives. Morin analysed first cinema in *Le cinéma ou l’homme imaginaire* [1956] and *Les Stars* [1957], then mass culture in *L’Esprit du temps* [1962]. He argued that cinema was by its very constitution a reflection upon the nature of reality. Both the brain and the mind do not in fact directly experience reality – they receive sense signals that are transformed into representations, that is to say images. The mind itself is a representation of the brain, as the brain itself is a representation of the mind. ‘Autrement dit, la seule réalité dont nous soyons sur, c’est la représentation, c’est à dire l’image, c’est dire la non-réalité, puisque l’image renvoie à une réalité inconnue.’ Images are organised by exterior stimuli, and also logic, ideology and culture.

Tout le réel perçu passe donc par la forme image. Puis il renaît en souvenir, c’est dire image d’image. Or le cinéma, comme toute figuration (peinture, dessin) est une image d’image, mais, comme la photo, c’est une image d’une image perceptive, et, mieux que la photo, c’est une image animée, c’est à dire vivante. C’est en tant que représentation de représentation vivante que le cinéma nous invite à réfléchir sur l’imaginaire de la réalité et la réalité de l’imaginaire.²¹

Cinema thus operates in yet another dialectic produced by modernity, the distinction between and confusion of the real and the imaginary. The spectator goes to the cinema to enjoy the illusion of reality, and whilst he or she knows that it is really only an illusion, this knowledge does not kill the feeling of reality. Cinema becomes almost an uncanny form, rendering the

²⁰ Edgar Morin, *L’Esprit du temps* (Paris: Grasset, 1962), p. 18.

²¹ Edgar Morin, *Le cinéma ou l’homme imaginaire* (Paris: Minuit, 1956), p. 6.

familiar unfamiliar and yet also making it more real as the perceptive image becomes an objective image. Certainly, when it was originally invented it was intended to be a scientific tool similar to a microscope, to slow fast moving objects such as waves and allow them to be studied. Yet it slipped almost inevitably into a role of spectacle and magic, with the metamorphoses of Méliès. (Morin compares to this favourably to the fate of the aeroplane, invented at a similar time, and belonging to the world of dreams and myths such as Icarus, only to become dragged into practicality and the everyday as the most efficient way to travel. It shrank the world rather than expanding it to the stars – a task instead carried out by cinema).²² Perhaps even more impressively, the cinema also endows the everyday with a kind of magic. The spectacle of cinema was not that of the freak show: as Morin amusingly expresses it, early cinema goers were as happy to see clean shaven ladies and one headed cows as their freak show equivalents. The Lumière brothers were not so much allowing the discovery of an unknown world, as the *vision* of the known world. Whilst people had seen a train leaving a station hundreds of times, the *image* of a train leaving a station exercised a fascination. This fascination is defined as '*photogénie*' and still existed in the 1950s. The very idea of the photogenic is that of a poetry revealed by the camera (as opposed to the picturesque, which invites painting because its attractiveness is predetermined). The photogenic allows the photograph to reveal something that was not previously visible. The term first entered usage in 1839 with the invention of the camera, and its use can be extended to the cinematographic image as both have the common trait of making present that which is absent. There is an intuitive feeling that the original is incarnated in the image (think of the display of photographs in the family home: one will say, 'this is my mother, these are my children' when in fact, of course, these are mere images of the (possibly dead) people concerned). This powerful effect of calling up moments and people from the past that photographs have gives them a spiritual nature, still felt consciously in societies that are more archaic. Photographs are framed, cherished, fetishised.

D'où vient ce rôle? Non pas évidemment d'une propriété particulière au collidon humide, au gélatinobromure, à l'acétocellulose, mais de ce que nous y mettons nous mêmes [...] tout se passe comme si cette image matérielle avait qualité mentale. Tout se passe [...] comme si la photo révélait [...] une qualité de double.²³

²² Edgar Morin, *Le cinéma*, pp. 1-14.

²³ Edgar Morin, *Le cinéma*, p. 23.

Morin began studying the cinema because of his interest in anthropology. Cinema, he argues, allowed the re-birth of archaic models within society. Cinematographic images, like the primitive's double, have the ability to provide a seen presence and a real absence. They re-awaken the double, the phantom, others who can live for us, and show us our non-lived life, but designed for a collective gaze (rather than the private one of photo albums). Cinema, he argues, through this marshalling of the collective gaze in a darkened room, conjures up visions of a primitive, primeval magic.

Si l'on ajoute que les conditions d'obscurité, favorables à la projection, le sont corrélativement à la magie de l'ombre, il faut constater que le cinématographe est beaucoup plus marqué que la photographie par la qualité de l'ombre. [...] Le cinématographe s'est inscrit dans la lignée des spectacles d'ombre [...] Nous saisissons mieux désormais la parenté indiquée plus haut: de cavernes en cavernes, depuis les cavernes de Java, celles des mystères helléniques, celle mythique de Platon, jusqu'aux salles obscures, se retrouvent animées, fascinantes, les ombres fondamentales de l'univers des doubles.²⁴

The image and the double are reciprocally modelled on one another (and Morin goes on to comment that the split between a star's private life and on-screen persona suggests a further doubling). In ancient societies, the double was the reflection caught in rivers and lakes, and the self seen in dreams. The image has the magical spiritual quality of the double but is interiorised and subjective. However, both the image and the double allow the dual sensation of identity (that reflection is me) and otherness (yet it is not me, as I am here).

Effectivement c'est un double à l'état naissant qui se révèle à nos yeux sur l'écran; c'est pourquoi, plus que celui de la hallucination, il est proche du double que découvre l'enfant dans le miroir ou l'archaïque dans le reflet, étrange et familier, affable et protecteur, [...] c'est pourquoi nos réactions courantes sont plus riches en plaisir et émerveillement qu'en gêne et en honte [...] c'est pourquoi les gens filmés dans la rue par les opérateurs de chez Lumière accourent aux salles de projection.²⁵

²⁴ Edgar Morin, *Le cinéma*, pp.34-35.

²⁵ Edgar Morin, *Le cinéma*, p. 37.

This all occurs within a totally modern technical framework. Cinema operates as a set of ironies, being both an art and an industry, both productive and creative, both ancient and modern. Cinema is a relatively autonomous aesthetic form but it also operates within a multi-dimensional socio-cultural system. The social real is partly the product and the productivity of the cinematic imaginary. Everyday reality emerges from cultural imagination. Reality is made up of culturally received facts and opinions, narrated and reified in the process.

Morin argues that cinema has thus to be understood on both a sociological and psychological level. It is a cultural reality that operates upon the social imaginary i.e. that cinema and other 'new' media change perceptions people have themselves and of each other. He comes to the conclusion that the role of cinema and other visual media in dictating social change is not a simple one of the powerful producer and the passive consumer.

The role of cinema in social change cannot be studied in isolation, he argues. One film in isolation could have only limited effects – it is unlikely, for example, that one film could encourage Anti-Semitism. Also, the viewer is far less passive than is supposed and has a relative autonomy in how they interpret a film. Morin argues that they can assert this autonomy in three main ways; by leaving a film they aren't enjoying; by reacting to a film in a way other than that envisaged by the studio/director, such as laughing at a supposedly erotic film (*'l'effet boomerang'*), and by exercising critical judgement. In a competitive system, this relative autonomy is a problem. Cinema cannot be conceived of as a uniform influence of the producer upon the consumer. This is an area of reciprocal influence. Although in the first place it would appear that the producing studio is more important, even if the spectator is forced to watch a film (for propaganda purposes, for example) his or her reaction still cannot be controlled. He concludes that to investigate the effects of cinema, the image of the wax spectator modelled by the film must be rejected in favour of seeing the spectator as an actor in a strange dialogue. This dialogue may seem radically unequal as a film can produce a discourse, have a message, introduce themes and characters and so on, whereas the spectator's most extreme reaction can only be refusal. However, this relationship can be better understood not as one spectator watching a film, but in the context of an industry predicated on supply and demand. The extreme success of the Western and the fading of the melodrama is a good example of the effects of consumer demand.

These consumer needs do not arise from nowhere, however. The preferences cannot be isolated from sociological determinants – spectators are products of the society and the moment in which they live. Therefore, the question of the role of the cinema is framed as a global dialectic between the film and the public, and between these two and the global social structure from which they emerge. Films tend to erase difference, unifying across class difference and nationality. Cultural differentiation is in a dialectic relationship with the development of the world market that is creating a world economy and a world mass culture to accompany it. Cinema's influence and thus be judged both horizontally (in terms of globalisation) and vertically (in terms of social stratification).

Cinema's influence thus acts both upon individuals and upon the societal framework to which they belong. Individuals react to films through a process of identification and projection. For example, in film A, which features a rich man, the rich viewer will identify with the rich man and his problems (stress, hard work). The poor viewer will project onto the rich man (his own desire for comfort, security). In film B, which features a poor man, the rich viewer will project onto the poor man (his own desires for liberty, lack of responsibilities). The poor viewer will identify with the poor man (his lack of material comfort). Film A will give the poor man a time to escape his own worries and film B will to some place him up against his own real problems. Reversing the films, the effects will be the same for the rich man. In one case, the film will be exemplary, in the other cathartic.

They will also effect 'real life' both socially and psychologically. For example, before seeing the film, the rich man may have turned away from the poor man in disgust. Now he may show compassion. Equally, it is possible that the rich man will admire the Henri II furniture in the rich man's apartment in the film and go and buy some for himself. The poor man after watching film B may decide to live his life with the same insouciance. This rather oversimplified example amply illustrates the point that films can have mimetic effects. Films thus have an effect upon 'the real': everyday life is made up of an interaction between the imaginary and the real. In general, films encourage identification, mimetics, and exemplarity; or projection, catharsis and exoneration. This could to a certain extent be true of much cultural production. However, Morin argues that what sets cinema apart is the way that projection and identification occurs around certain poles. Violence has long been a given in popular culture, from Greek tragedy to Elizabethan theatre. The new element that entered mass culture in the 1930s

was the idea of the 'happy end'. Instead of suffering, the hero overcomes adversity and the film finishes with a kiss of love. This is not the peaceful content of the fairy tale, rather a promise of happiness both instant and eternal. Violence is preserved for projection, and the themes of love and a happy private life are for identification.

The stars who appear in these films also have a private life that can be read about and experienced vicariously. This leads once again to the privileging of the private sphere: indeed, one could argue that stars completely blur the boundaries between the private and the public spheres, with their work seeming an uninterrupted leisure and their private lives opened up to public scrutiny. Furthermore, cinema has developed within a capitalist system that aims to appeal to as wide a market as possible. It is the substitution for traditional models of behaviour such as family, school, province, class, even nation. Cinema, unlike the theatre, is attended by all social classes in urban areas. The cinematographic imaginary englobes social strata and difference. The themes and myths of cinema such as success in love, an ideal of well-being and a belief in individual happiness become obsessive cultural themes throughout society and regardless of class. The models and myths of cinema diffuse identical cultural models to different social layers. The effects on praxis cannot be measured, as so much depends on the individual and the film concerned, but what is sure is that a new cultural mode has been invented which orients the social and cultural imaginary towards a new belief system, an ideology of happiness.²⁶ Cinema diffuses myths, models and values that encourage the development of a consumerist society oriented towards comfort and leisure through the acquisition of goods. New technology creates a new mythology that turns human time into a constant present of self-gratification and liberates personal life from the burdens of state or religion in favour of individual salvation. Cinema transforms the social imaginary (from self-sufficient peasants to happy home owning couples) and cultural mythology (from belief in God to belief in the consuming self) of the French nation.

Ils vont dans le sens d'une culture fondée sur les valeurs de la vie privée, essentiellement le bonheur. Ils concurrent à former un type d'homme vivant dans le présent quotidien, voué à la recherche de la jouissance consommatrice, cherchant le sens de sa vie dans le loisir et l'amour [...] Ce mouvement est celui-là même de la civilisation occidentale et le cinéma, mêlé aux autres mass-

²⁶ Edgar Morin, 'Le rôle du cinéma', *Esprit*, 28:6 (juin 1960), 1069-1079.

media, donne des figures, des images, de formes et des héros à ce mouvement global.²⁷

Morin argues in his next major work, *L'Esprit du temps*, then, that cinema is just one particularly privileged member of a popular culture that posits happiness as coming from 'love and leisure'. Mass production and credit open up the possibility of mass consumption of household goods. There is 'a civilisation of well-being' predicated on comfort and leisure in the home. Leisure formerly concerned a collective community-based participation in festivals. Now it focussed on couples and families in their own homes. Modern leisure time was the space where people could affirm their individuality (away from automation and factory lines in such activities as DIY, collecting antiques, and so on). Modern leisure appeared as the tissue of personal life, the space where people could affirm themselves as individuals. Mass culture focussed on this leisure time, ignoring work related problems to concentrate on the home and family togetherness.

Celle-ci ne fait pas que meubler le loisir (par les spectacles, les matchs, la télévision, la radio, la lecture des journaux et des magazines) elle oriente la recherche du salut individuel dans le loisir, et de plus, elle acculture le loisir qui devient style de vie.²⁸

Leisure is now an aim in itself, a former of values. The seeds of a Lefebvorean type alienation (or indeed, an existential inauthenticity) can be seen in this – for the home, the private sphere, was in a simultaneous movement, becoming an '*ailleurs*', with newspapers, television and radio entering this space and mediating between the individual and the world. Morin believes that everyday life comes to consist of a series of mirrors and windows, such as cinema screens, TV monitors, glass windows of modern houses, car windscreens, aeroplane portholes, the tourist coach windows. There is always something transparent and reflective that separates the individual from material reality. People become more abstract. The spirit of the spectator becomes an invisible ghost among proliferating images. This invisible membrane isolates the spectator yet at the same time allows them to see further than ever before, into other individuals' private lives, and allows them dreams of a different existence that would have previously been unknown. 'Effectivement, à travers la transparence d'un écran, l'impalpabilité

²⁷ Edgar Morin, 'Le rôle du cinéma', 1078.

²⁸ Edgar Morin, *L'Esprit du temps*, p. 88.

d'une image, une participation par l'oeil et par l'esprit nous ouvre l'infini du cosmos réel et des galaxies imaginaires.'²⁹ So, in the 1950s proliferation of mass media, different lifestyles for the French could, for the first time, be suggested in visual culture, which provided images to appropriate and models with which one could aspire and identify.

Morin defines a culture as a complex body of norms, symbols, myths and images that structure the individual, guide his or her behaviour and orient his or her emotions. This works through the processes of projection and identification described above. These polarise onto real or mythical people who incarnate certain values (gods, ancestors, and heroes). Culture is always an exchange between reality and imagination. A culture furnishes an imaginary guide to practical experience, and a practical guide to the imaginary.

Ainsi la culture nationale, dès l'école nous immerge dans les expériences mythico-vécues du passé, en nous liant par des rapports d'identification et de projection avec les héros de la patrie (Vercingétorix, Jeanne d'Arc) qui eux-mêmes s'identifient au grand corps invisible mais vivant qui, à travers les siècles d'épreuves et de victoires, prend figure maternelle (la Mère Patrie, à qui l'on doit amour) et paternelle (l'Etat, à qui l'on doit obéissance).³⁰

Mass culture is also a culture, with its own heroes and heroines and promotion of values, such as leisure, a happy end and a stable private life. It operates outside of national cultures, however. Mass culture in the 1950s was also the first universal culture, first developed in America and mainly exporting American values. Nor was this culture policed by 'taste' or intellectual prestige. Culture was just another commodity, like washing powder. Creation was '*désacralisée*'. Cinema and other forms of mass culture thus provided poles of identification and projection for the French that were produced outside of national institutions. Lifestyles were promoted through the promotion of leisure and the private sphere, rather than the collective and the public. The State no longer had the monopoly on identity creation. Other behavioural paradigms could be suggested within a universal visual culture that opened practical lives and the social imaginary to new vistas. Therefore, it is evident from Morin's position that visual culture transformed the everyday and the aspirations of those living within it. Culture oriented

²⁹ Edgar Morin, *L'Esprit du temps*, p. 90.

³⁰ Edgar Morin, *L'Esprit du temps*, p. 12.

individuals by identification and projection. Mass culture thus provided a new performative paradigm attached not to the nation but to a 'global' Americanised centre that operated within the private sphere rather than the public sector. Identification and projection happened not with national heroes but with cinema stars who acted out a new way of living the everyday.

Mass culture as critique or spectacle: Lefebvre's dialectic

Lefebvre is not as well known as Morin for his interpretation of visual culture. He did not dedicate specific works to the phenomenon. However, in his extending of the concept of alienation from the domain of work in the particular to the everyday in general, he turned his attention to the realms of leisure and consumption (the whole of his 1958 preface to *Critique de la vie quotidienne vol. 1* focuses on this). He argues that the critique of leisure begins with the recognition that leisure holds within itself a spontaneous critique of everyday life. Modern technological advances such as televisions, fridges, and modern electrical equipment, that create and fill extra leisure time, do not mask the everyday, but rather reveal it to itself, as a self-regarding and critical gaze.

Loin de supprimer la critique de la vie quotidienne, le progrès technique moderne la réalise. A la critique de la vie par le rêve, ou les idées, la poésie, ou les activités qui émergent au-dessus du quotidien, cette technicité substitue la critique interne de la vie quotidienne: sa critique par elle-même, celle du réel par le possible et d'un aspect de la vie par un autre aspect.³¹

So the reality of everyday life is challenged by the opening up of new possibilities through technology and the leisure culture it inaugurates. Technology promises a life of ease, allowing the comparison of one's actual experience with a promised better experience (through consumption). This 'impossible-possible' is buried within even the everyday's most commodified forms, such as women's magazines. Leisure activities are a particularly appealing paradox to Lefebvre – they are a critique in so far as they are other to everyday life, and yet as they are also part of everyday life, they are alienation. Leisure represents a dialectic between work, non-work, and their synthesis, creative work or 'play'. Play becomes the site of subversion, resistance, and fulfillment.

³¹ Henri Lefebvre, *Critique de la vie quotidienne, vol. 1*, p. 16.

Lefebvre argued that modernity had had a fragmenting effect upon praxis. A man no longer defined himself by his profession. He would not 'be' a waiter or a writer: rather, this was a role he played for a certain amount of time, then he went home and became a husband and/or a father. Family life was separated from productive life. Leisure belonged to a different category again. The everyday united work, leisure and family life, it was the common denominator to all three states/activities. However, the defining characteristic of leisure in the 1950s was that it should provide a rupture from the everyday. This rupture should be complete, providing an escape from family life and work, liberation from worry, a distraction and a relaxation. Leisure therefore could not be a work of art, as a painting was simply inserted into the everyday (hung onto a wall in the lounge, for example). Nor could it be a book, unless this was a simple wish-fulfilment tale or a comic. Leisure was almost by definition found in images and film. Images were the primary sources of this evasion of the everyday:

Comme il se voit dans nombreux films, [...], où le déploiement de luxe prend un caractère presque fascinant, le spectateur est arraché à sa quotidienneté pour une quotidienneté autre. L'évasion dans cette quotidienneté illusoire et cependant présente, la fascination d'objets habituels dans lesquels éclatent la richesse, la séduction qu'exerce la vie apparemment profonde et intense des femmes et des hommes qui se meuvent parmi ces objets exliquent le[ur] succès...³²

It is not only through an opulent mise en scène that films can provide an escape from the everyday into its illusory Other. Much of Art can in fact operate as a spontaneous critique of the everyday as it criticises the real by demonstrating the possible. This possible can function as a negative image or a positive one. For example, Chaplin's films offer a critique of the everyday. In contrast to the bourgeois world of closure and achievement, Chaplin offers the image of the 'pauvre type', a hopeless vagabond unable to exploit technology yet also a product of it. He is the inverse image of the successful bourgeois. He represents the possibility of failure contained within the reality of the everyday. Images can also represent the possibility of success, such as advertisements, or women's magazines. These aspirational images suggest deeply felt needs that are not met within the 'average' everyday existence. These 'inverse images' are a critique of the everyday yet they also function

³² Henri Lefebvre, *Critique de la vie quotidienne*, vol. 1, p.16.

within daily routines. The images that surround individuals allow them some critical purchase on their own existence. 'L'homme de nos jours, auteur ou non, poursuit, à sa manière, spontanément, la critique de sa vie quotidienne. Et cette critique de la vie quotidienne fait partie intégrante de la quotidienneté; elle s'accomplit dans et par les loisirs.'³³

Modernity and mass culture provide an alienation effect that allows a critique of the everyday. The technology of modernity itself on some level exposes the everyday. The everyday is so familiar that it can escape unnoticed. Image-making technology renders visible the everyday and thus exposes it to critical thought (though if it remains an image, it cannot necessarily be converted to revolutionary thought). Yet, in a dialectical move, the image can also offer a diverting spectacle that veils the everyday from critical knowledge.

The everyday is covered by a surface: that of modernity. News stories and the turbulent affectations of art, fashion and event veil without ever eradicating the everyday blahs. Images, the cinema and television divert the everyday by at times offering it up to its own spectacle, or sometimes the spectacle of the distinctly non-everyday; violence, death, catastrophe, the lives of kings and stars – those who we are lead to believe defy everydayness.³⁴

Here, the image has offered up the everyday for inspection as spectacle. This spectacle however, veils rather than reveals the fundamental mechanisms of the everyday. Its meaning is hidden behind its representation of itself. Maurice Blanchot, discussing Lefebvre's arguments, sees this as a depoliticisation:

Whatever its other aspects, the everyday has this essential trait: it allows no hold. It escapes. It belongs to insignificance, and the insignificant is without truth, without reality, without secret, but perhaps also the site of all possible signification. The everyday escapes. This makes its strangeness – the familiar showing itself (but already dispersing) in the guise of the astonishing.³⁵

³³ Henri Lefebvre, *Critique de la vie quotidienne*, vol. 1, p. 38.

³⁴ Henri Lefebvre, 'The Everyday and Everydayness', trans. by Christine Levich in 'Everyday life', ed. by Alice Kaplan and Kristin Ross, *Yale French Studies*, 73 (1987), 4-11, (p.6).

³⁵ Maurice Blanchot, 'Everyday Speech', trans. by Susan Hanson in 'Everyday Life', ed. by Alice Kaplan and Kristin Ross, *Yale French Studies*, 12-20, (p.14).

The everyday escapes because it is the unperceived, taken for granted. It can not be seen at first glance, and when an attempt is made to see it a second time, it is already mediated. The illusion of it is already in place. The everyday becomes a series of events relayed in images at dizzying speeds. The politician becomes 'the entrepreneur of spectacle', the citizen transformed into the voyeur.³⁶

This discussion of mass culture as both a critique, and a veiling of, the everyday is a typical Lefebvorean position, positing as it does a potential dialectical state. The experience of watching film can be alienating. Let's take the example of the two films used to illustrate Morin's arguments earlier. Suppose that the rich man decided he had had enough of money, and film B gave him the idea to leave everything behind and become a traveller, but he did not have the strength to do so. Suppose the poor viewer continued to dream continuously of riches illustrated by film A. Here, the two films would have provoked a sort of disturbance. Watching the film would be an alienating rather than a cathartic experience. Lefebvre argues that much of everyday life is alienating. He defines it thus: 'est aliénée toute activité vivante et consciente qui se perd, s'égaré, se laisse arracher à soi, et par conséquent se détourne de sa plénitude.'³⁷ This figures alienation as inevitable. That which is posited as the vehicle for the disalienation of the worker – his or her leisure – holds the possibility of alienation; either through inducing dissatisfaction, as above, or passivity, or non-participation, or boredom. Everyday life is dialectic between these two states. Modernity supports technological alienation, so the need for disalienation is all the more pressing. Leisure and mass culture entertainment becomes increasingly important. Yet the processes of disalienation hold the fruit of alienation as well.³⁸

It is the potential dialectic that saves leisure culture for Lefebvre. On the one hand, daily life is the trivial and the insignificant, something that as soon as it is spoken of is no longer truly everyday as it has entered a new level of consciousness. The spectacle is the ultimate alienation, in which one's identity and dreams are commodified, turned into spectacularised lifestyles and images and sold back to one. People experience their own everyday reality second hand, as a dream that has already been dreamt for them in advertising and films. Lefebvre maintains that this is so, provided people can afford to buy these lifestyles. 'Par rapport aux niveaux inférieurs et dégradés,

³⁶ Maurice Blanchot, 'Everyday Speech', p.13.

³⁷ Henri Lefebvre, 'Introduction à la psycho-sociologie de la vie quotidienne', [1960] in *Du rural à l'urbaine*, ed. by Mario Gaviria (Paris: Anthropos, 1970), pp. 89-108 (p.102).

³⁸ Henri Lefebvre, *Introduction à la modernité* (Paris: Minuit, 1962), p. 228.

la vie quotidienne supérieurement équipée prend la distance et l'éloignement et l'étrangeté familière du rêve'.³⁹ Lefebvre suggests that American cinema's success is due to its presentation of objects. It allows the French to revel in objects, to revere them, to incorporate them into their everyday lives, to overcome the traumatic changes taking place in their country as they are transfixed by the wonder of the commodity fetish.

Yet the everyday is also the site of the authentic experience of the self and engagement with others. The self hurrying along the street is part of the spectacle of the everyday, but is also participating in it. The spectacle can be recuperated for Lefebvre as not only a stilling commodity form but also an image that invites critical thought and revolutionises the everyday. In Lefebvre's position, we have a concept of the image as a motor of change in the everyday. The Americanised lifestyles sold to the French have an air of unreality about them, but they also provide a critical lever and a chance to grasp the very meaning of the everyday by their presence.

The new visibility of women

It is generally argued that capitalism has led to a highly differentiated society, with the separation of activities between the masculine public sphere of work, politics, war and adventure, and the feminine private sphere of the home, the family, the maternal and the prosaic. Such an analysis of society fits in with Lefebvre's beliefs about the dislocation and abstraction of modernity leading to separation of activities: spheres and types of behaviour, places and people, work and home. Activities have been hurled randomly outwards in time and space. He argues that in this context the intermediaries between disjointed elements (means of communication, roads, streets, codes) become privileged players in the semantic field of the everyday. Intermediaries in France at the time included the mass media (cinema, magazines, radio and television), the street and businesses (where there are both customers and producers). These activities form themselves around consumption and spectacle, and the spectacle of consumption. One of the first civic buildings erected in Moux was a shopping centre. Advertising was growing at an exponential rate. Consumerism and visual culture were developing throughout France. It is hardly surprising that Lefebvre saw the urban street as the quintessential space of the everyday, dedicated as it was, with its plate-glass windowed shops, to the combination

³⁹ Henri Lefebvre, *Critique de la vie quotidienne vol. 1*, p. 16.

of display and consumption. The street functions as a microcosm of the everyday:

Intermédiaire très privilégié entre les secteurs du quotidien – les lieux du travail, la demeure, les endroits de distraction – la rue représente la vie quotidienne dans notre société [...] La rue se répète, et elle change, comme la quotidienneté: elle se réitère dans le changement incessant des gens, des aspects, des objets et des heures [...] Elle offre aussi le spectacle de tous les biens de la terre, offerts aux regards et aux convoitises, objets des désirs. Derrière les vitrines, les objets vivent de leur vie souveraine. Ils y atteignent la plénitude de leur existence, en tant que marchandises et valeurs d'échange: dans leur trajet entre la production et la consommation, ils règnent sur la rue, intermédiaire entre les hommes [...] par les objets et leur beauté et leur offrande et leur refus, la rue devient le lieu du rêve le plus proche de l'imaginaire, et aussi de la plus dure de la réalité, celle de l'argent et de la frustration.⁴⁰

The street is the unknowable, forever changing, never still. It evades description, as it is a place of passage, a 'nowhere' that links 'everywhere', it can never be totally understood or analysed. It (literally) has its grubby back passages that are too dark and forbidding to explore. It is uncanny, both the familiar location of the everyday walk; and also the locale of an ever changing, ungraspable, unknowable stream of daily life. It is this uncanniness that is compensated for, as in psychoanalytic theory, by the privileging of objects. In the street, the object is the king. It is the object that endows the street with meaning and its beauty (some streets themselves become fetishised because of the quality of goods they display, such as Bond Street or la rue Saint Honoré). The street is the plaything for the object, where it is whole – both desirable and desired, both a spectacle and a commodity item (once bought, it loses this quality, no longer able to be both display item and functional object). The street also blends the real and the imaginary. Both are part of its experience. Daily life offers dreams and frustrates them, as the street offers up myriad possibilities and simultaneously denies them on the basis of capital. Everybody can consume the objects in the street, however. Even if they cannot purchase them, they can look at them. Spectacle and consumption become entirely confused in the coveting of the king-object, which is an attempt to overcome the uncanniness of the street, of the life that

⁴⁰ Henri Lefebvre, 'Introduction à la psycho-sociologie de la vie quotidienne', pp. 98-101.

is lived in it and that it perfectly represents.⁴¹ The street is also conveyed as a series of actions – travelling, buying, meeting and so on. Everydayness is grasped at the level of movements, gestures and practices. As everyday life is transformed, so are the gestures that perform it.

Lefebvre credits women with the ability to perform better than men in the street. He argues that women undoubtedly have a greater understanding of street dynamics and meanings than men do:

Le spectacle de la rue forme le regard et stimule l'esprit d'observation. Combien de femmes savent classer une femme, d'un coup d'œil, en appréciant ses chaussures, ses bas, sa coiffure, ses mains et sa démarche, sa robe ou son manteau? Beaucoup, et certainement plus que d'hommes et mieux que les hommes.⁴²

This would appear to place women in a position in control of the social text, able to control their own meanings and discern those of others. Yet Lefebvre cannot ultimately conceive of women as anything other than victims of daily life, in its most repetitive and banal aspects. Women are closer to the everyday than men, who can (it would appear) be lifted into a sphere of heroic action and dramatic decisions.

C'est sur chaque femme isolément et sur l'ensemble des femmes que pèse la quotidienneté, de tout son poids. Elles éprouvent le plus lourd, le plus pesant, le plus morne et le plus répétitif de la vie quotidienne, tout dans le travail ménager et dans les gestes exigés par les enfants que dans les travaux sociaux qui leur sont réservés.⁴³

Rather than engaging with the prospect of women and men sharing the burden of these banal yet necessary tasks, Lefebvre can see the only escape route for women as being a return to tradition, and 'renouvellement' in maternity, although consumption is posited as one of the more positive

⁴¹ In the street where daily life is familiar and forms part of tradition, i.e. the rural street, the object obviously does not have a role, as there is no unfamiliarity to overcome. 'Passage pour les gens et les bêtes qui vont de la maison et de l'étable vers les champs, elle se soumet aux rythmes du monde, qui dominant la vie et se soumettent encore les hommes.' Henri Lefebvre, 'Introduction à la psycho-sociologie de la vie quotidienne', p. 101. Here it is time that dictates the rhythm of the street and its meanings – hours, days, weeks, months, seasons rather than space – organisation of objects in shops, window displays, lighting arrangements, street patterns and pedestrianisation, for example.

⁴² Henri Lefebvre, 'Introduction à la psycho-sociologie de la vie quotidienne', p.99.

⁴³ Henri Lefebvre, 'Introduction à la psycho-sociologie de la vie quotidienne', p.103.

feminine roles. Women are in an ambiguous position, he argues. They have acquired citizen status and a better 'statut', and 'beaucoup d'hommes jugent que cette poussée inquiétante recèle la possibilité d'un nouveau matriarcat, dont les symptômes s'observaient dans les sociétés industrielles les plus développées.'⁴⁴ It is difficult to discern here whether Lefebvre counts himself among the 'many men' who find feminine social progress worrying. Yet he also acknowledges that femininity (which he confuses with 'women') is constructed by popular culture. Women, he thus concludes, are formed by popular culture, and live in confusion between waking dreams and the practicalities of daily life. Femininity is formed through mass production and mass reproduction, disseminated through endless images of female glamour and female domesticity. Women are thus both the most natural and the most artificial participants in the everyday: 'les femmes, éléments les plus naturels de la vie quotidienne, ne portent-elles pas en même temps la plus grande facticité: la mode, les manières, l'esthétisme le plus artificiel?'⁴⁵

Lefebvre is correct to locate an ambiguity in the construction of femininity in the media at this time as women are called upon to be both glamorous (attracting the gaze) and entirely located within the domestic space (hidden from view). (This is a particularly acute contradiction in the case of female cinema stars, as will be discussed in my next chapter). However, despite his radical philosophical position, he appears unable to transform this realisation into a concrete plan for more equitable division of roles and spheres between men and women. Nor does he consider the idea that women are not 'naturally' more linked to the everyday, but that their identification with the domestic and the maternal may in fact be the result of many years of patriarchal division of labour. It has to be remarked that in his *Critique de la vie quotidienne*, when discussing women and the everyday, he fails to mention, let alone analyse, one of the greatest changes in women's relation to their post-war everyday, that is to say their newly granted ability to transform it through the electoral process. The role women played in his own intellectual development is neglected. Lefebvre dictated at least two book-length manuscripts a year to his female partners. Although he tended to regard these typists as a muse rather than an active intellectual force, much of his work reads as dialogue and these women actively collaborated in his thought. This was acknowledged toward the end of his life when his wife and typist Catherine Régulier is credited with co-authorship, but this was certainly was

⁴⁴ Henri Lefebvre, 'Introduction a la psycho-sociologie de la vie quotidienne', p.104.

⁴⁵ Henri Lefebvre, 'Introduction à la psycho-sociologie de la vie quotidienne', p.104.

not the case in the 1950s and 1960s. His multiple liaisons were half-sexual, half-business, and were fecund both intellectually and in terms of children. Lefebvre himself acknowledges their presence in life but at the same time dismisses them in near-comic fashion in his autobiographical statement: 'Je ne dirai pas ici, simplement faute de place, combien de femmes j'ai aimé, combien j'ai eu d'enfants ou de maitresses.'⁴⁶

Rob Shields argues that Lefebvre viewed women as mediators between the world and ideas.⁴⁷ This mythical reading of the role of women led to a sexist belief in the eternal feminine. Lefebvre goes so far as to argue that the eternal feminine is a myth that can be used by both men and women to enrich the everyday with splendour and beauty. Women, then, can transform their everyday life through aspiring to intemporal beauty rather than through political change.⁴⁸ This explains his insistence upon women as closer to the everyday and further from the highly valued masculine sphere of adventure and political change. Quite simply, he seems to see women as intellectually inferior, only too happy to escape into romantic daydreams at any possible opportunity.

Les femmes portent plus que les hommes le poids de la quotidienneté: elles cherchent plus ardemment à émerger de cette grisaille; elles suivent aisément les ambiguïtés de demi-rêveries: moitié pratique, moitié fiction, ce que leur apporte la presse dite féminine ou de coeur.⁴⁹

It obviously never occurred to him that women may use their leisure time to read *Critique de la vie quotidienne*!

This is not, however, to deny the importance of women's magazines in the 1950s. *Marie France* was founded in 1944, *Elle* in 1945, *Femmes d'Aujourd'hui* in 1950 and *Marie Claire* in 1954. In France, ten to fifteen million copies were sold weekly of 'la presse féminine', covering titles such as *Marie-Claire*, *Elle*, *Femmes d'Aujourd'hui* and *Marie-France* (magazines) *Nous Deux*, *Confidences*, and *Festival* (the so-called *presse de coeur*). They contributed greatly to the paradoxical position of women as both exceedingly visible and exceedingly contained within a demarcated domestic space. In the

⁴⁶ Henri Lefebvre, 'Henri Lefebvre (né en 1905)', p.285. In fact, he had at least eight children, by at least 3 women, mentioned in private correspondence with his friend Norbert Guterman Rob Shields, p. 19.

⁴⁷ Rob Shields, p. 14.

⁴⁸ Henri Lefebvre, 'Les mythes de la vie quotidienne', in *Cahiers Internationaux de Sociologie*, vol. 33, (juillet/ décembre 1962), 67-74.

⁴⁹ Henri Lefebvre, 'Introduction à la psycho-sociologie de la vie quotidienne', p. 91.

burgeoning popular press and film industries, women became more visible than they had ever been before. 'Aux Etats-Unis, le visage de la cover girl a succédé au visage du pioneer puritan et du businessman énergique.'⁵⁰ Morin argues that mass culture, the culture of the everyday where spectacle and consumption meet, was dominated by 'feminine' values. Whilst sport and some films retained 'virile' elements (those of projection) the majority of films and all of the press promote feminine values (those of identification).⁵¹

Both Lefebvre and Morin argue that the press was dominated by feminine values. The popular press had a specifically feminine sector (there were no specifically male sectors). Furthermore, even the press not specifically aimed at women such as *Paris-Match* or *Jours de France* seemed to promote these 'feminine' values of practical advice, home comfort and romanticised reality. Even press that was dedicated to information had begun to promote emotion under the 'human interest' angle. For example, Morin reports that 'la catastrophe de Fréjus' was illustrated by talking about a couple affected on the eve of their wedding day. 'Ainsi, les thèmes fondamentaux du cinéma – l'aventure, l'exploit, l'amour, la vie privée – sont également privilégiés au sein de l'information.' Not only this, but these values were promoted as feminine and a woman was chosen to visualise them, in the form of a cover-girl. All the feminine press and photo magazines predominately used women. Morin argues that this was a double calling up of the woman into society – as an identificatory subject for other women and as an object of desire for other men. This subject-object position assures the hegemony of the feminine face and by extension, feminine values. 'Il n'y a pas de modèle identificateur masculin qui s'impose concurremment.'⁵²

The most important magazines offered the whole range of information needed by the 'modern woman' – itself an invented concept – organised through three imperatives: to seduce, to love, and to live in comfort. Twenty-five to forty percent of information was dedicated to relationships, twenty two to thirty percent was on fashion and beauty, six to eight percent on recipes, and twelve to twenty percent on films, books and so on.

⁵⁰ Edgar Morin, *L'Esprit du temps*, p. 189.

⁵¹ Morin comments that the photo-stories aimed at women may appear models for projection rather than identification, with their orphans, castles, pure hearts and deadly villains, contradicting the above statement. He argues that this sector, although still popular, is regressing, selling only five million copies a week, compared to over six million for the 'grands magazines.' It is therefore undergoing a 'modernising pressure' which makes these stories models of identification rather than projection, with sports champions, singers, and starlets and affirming the importance of love as the supreme value. *L'Esprit du temps*, p. 195.

⁵² Edgar Morin, *L'Esprit du temps*, p. 197.

Les deux grandes thèmes de la presse féminine, d'une part, la maison, le bien-être, d'autre part la séduction l'amour, sont effectivement les deux grands thèmes identificateurs de la culture de masse, mais c'est dans la presse féminine que ces thèmes communiquent avec la vie pratique: conseils, recettes, patrons-modèles, bonnes adresses, courrier de coeur orientent et guident le quotidien savoir-vivre.⁵³

In this description, Morin agrees with Lefebvre, seeing femininity as formed around the twin poles of glamour and domesticity. He argues that feminine culture is essentially practically oriented around the household, well-being, fashion and eroticism. It is located in the imaginary through romantic heterosexual love, but even here, practical advice is offered by a series of tutors such as Françoise Giroud, Marcelle Segal and Hélène Lazareff. Publicity takes this same seemingly disinterested advisory stance and exploits it to sell products. Morin argues that advertising uses the same lexicon as mass culture concerning the promotion of individual comfort and wellbeing and a mix of practical advice (identification) and promotion of glamorous lifestyles (projection). In this way, advertising is a central feature in mass culture, sponsoring the editorial texts that form it, promoting the same set of values (comfort, happiness, personal liberation, prestige, middle class lifestyle) and locating the realisation of these values in specific objects that can be used by a private individual.⁵⁴

By rendering highly, glossily, visible these overwhelmingly private concerns centred on the family and the home, magazines blurred the outlines between the private and the public sphere, and valued the former over the latter. This is a political route that Lefebvre both derides and seems to find threatening. He writes that the café was a valuable social space and explains certain types of (male) sociability among the intelligentsia in the eighteenth century and youth in the nineteenth century. It was valuable precisely because it was neither a wholly private nor a wholly public space: rather it allowed spontaneity stifled by the State in the public sphere and by morality in the private sphere. It was a 'lieu de rencontres poussées jusqu'à la promiscuité, lieu de la fantaisie greffée sur la répétition quotidienne.'⁵⁵ The fact that women's magazines as analysed by Lefebvre above played a very similar role for women as the café played for men (a meeting place for many different types of woman, a fantasy escape from the everyday) is neglected. In their

⁵³ Edgar Morin, *L'Esprit du Temps*, pp.191-2.

⁵⁴ Edagr Morin, *L'Esprit du Temps*, p. 137.

⁵⁵ Henri Lefebvre, 'Introduction à la psycho-sociologie de la vie quotidienne', p. 102.

rendering visible of the private sphere, they seem threatening to Lefebvre's vision of revolution and action carried out in the public sphere.

As was discussed earlier, Lefebvre located the possibility of a radical disalienation of everyday life as coming from the creation of 'total man', that is to say a man reconciled both to nature and his own nature. He analysed women's magazines as enacting a perversion of this glorious cause by creating the total woman, that is to say the woman who produces and consumes, who makes and brings up children, who governs the family and renders masculine spheres of interest such as politics, war and intellect 'sterile games'. The complete feminine world reified by these magazines imposes its image over the public world of men and replaces philosophical action with romanticised myths.

L'illusion a changé. L'image de l'homme totale fut politique et révolutionnaire. Elle héritait d'un long passé de gloire. Elle ne voulait pas séparer la virilité et la masculinité, la vertu et l'habileté, la force des mains et celle de l'esprit; elle ne prétendait pas les unir aisément. L'Etat et l'histoire, les guerres et la philosophie avaient passé par là et laissé des traces, opérant une dure sélection. L'image de la femme totale est nettement réformiste et a-politique, confuse et syncrétique.⁵⁶

In this description, the importance accorded to the domestic and the familial in women's magazines is seen as undermining 'male' (confused with masculine by Lefebvre) areas of interest and influence. The increased visibility of the 'female' (read feminine) sphere is seen as in a direct relationship with the loss of male power in the public sphere. The whole passage seems infused with the fear of impotence, with reference to loss of virtue and virility, and sterility.

Lefebvre argues that the modern, fresh feminine world of the magazine avoids philosophy and accepts ancient myths of women as beautiful but enslaved when these images are outmoded. It is an ambiguous world in which the familiar is talked about as if it were sublime and the sublime talked about as if it were familiar – for example, a recipe will promise divine food and a cinema star will be discussed as if she lived next door to the reader. This ambiguity allows the same themes to be treated again and again, as the tone in which they are talked about will vary. The same love story could suggest

⁵⁶ Henri Lefebvre, *Critique de la vie quotidienne*, vol. 2 *Fondements d'une sociologie de la quotidienneté* (Paris: L'Arche, 1961), p. 87.

either erotic liberty or the need for strict moral guidance, depending on the tone. Lefebvre argues that this leads to a situation in which the moral order is felt as the accepted wishes of all rather than an imposed ideology and that happiness is reduced to a series of technologies of comfort, well-being, security, and sexual compatibility.

Magazines undoubtedly did promote a view of the domesticated sublime and played a leading role in disseminating and normalising the State-led modernisation effort. What is troubling in Lefebvre's analysis is his antagonism toward this new visibility of women and their role in the everyday. He dismisses female emancipation as women being duped by modernity:

Plus on considère celle-ci [female emancipation] plus elle paraît incertaine, base ou 'fondement' ambigu de l'ambiguïté. La fin d'antiques servitudes, telles que la douleur de l'enfantement, ne supprime pas les liens spécifiques de la fémininité avec la nature et les rythmes. Un grand espoir apporta beaucoup d'échecs et de désillusions, celui des femmes quand elles crurent que le travail leur donnerait l'emancipation. Après quoi elle découvrirent que le travail à l'usine ou au bureau n'était guère moins monotone que le labeur ménager, d'ailleurs facilité par des techniques nouvelles, et qu'elles risquaient de cumuler les deux.⁵⁷

Women are here denied their possibilities of escaping the everyday that Lefebvre claims for men. Their entrance into the public sphere of work is tied back into the repetitive tasks of social reproduction rather than Lefebvre acknowledging its difference as paid labour. Women are also attached to bio-rhythmic cycles which are seen as a resistance to the project of emancipation, rather than a realisation that regardless of gender, people experience both cyclical and linear change (for example, women age and die as well as men, a very linear change, and men work in the week and stay at home at the weekend, a cyclical routine.)

This stands in stark contradiction to his earlier assertion that women are moving toward a neo-matriarchy, a claim once again upheld in *Les Mythes de la vie quotidienne*.⁵⁸ The heroic life, the sphere of danger, violence and the courting of risk is contrasted to the feminine/female sphere of everyday life, reproduction and care. Although Lefebvre posits a utopian impulse in the

⁵⁷ Henri Lefebvre, *Critique de la vie quotidienne*, vol. 2, p. 91.

⁵⁸ Henri Lefebvre, 'Les mythes de la vie quotidienne', 67-74.

everyday, he is unable to extend this to the possibility of moving beyond a gendered view of the everyday as predominantly feminine. The increased visibility of the everyday becomes in this way problematic, as change is located not in the communal Revolution but in the prosaic (and yet possibly more far reaching) emancipation of women through paid work, contraception and technical progress. The images of women in magazines do not necessarily always move beyond objectification, and they undoubtedly had an ambiguous message, but they did create a community of female readers who found a space for expression that was neither wholly private nor wholly public. In positing the very meaning of existence as coming from the private sphere, along with other areas of the mass media, women's magazines 'feminise' the everyday and rob the collective, public, political project of Marxism of its universal force. In its emphasis on the individual, this type of media may have ultimately sown the seeds of identity politics⁵⁹, a long way from the glorious, virile, universalist adventure of political revolution so admired by Lefebvre. While his concepts of Marxist revolution needing to go beyond changes in the political superstructure to providing an individuated, fulfilling, unabstracted everyday provide the theoretical base for an equitable sexual and racial politics, he seems unable to move beyond a homogenising view of how the Revolution should proceed.

The privatisation of identity

Everyday life can thus be argued to be (at least perceived as) feminine in nature during this period in France. Obviously, this does not mean men were excluded from it. Rather it means that the dialectical play between nature and artifice, dreams and reality, activity and passivity, and the high degree of repetition that modern everyday life required had 'feminine' overtones. Lefebvre argued that men were identified with linear time and women with cyclical time. Yet industrialisation and urbanisation meant that

⁵⁹ Morin appears more aware of the revolutionary possibilities contained within the apolitical, syncretic world of the feminine-value-dominated movies and magazines. In their mix of practical advice about love and relationships and their aspirational images, eroticism and the heart have become synthesised. An original feminine type is now promoted in the cinema – the 'good-bad girl'. The original of this was probably Rita Hayworth in *Gilda*, but Marilyn Monroe (chapter 2) also incarnates her. This girl has the appearance of a whore or a vamp, but the heart of a virgin who is only looking for true love. 'Cette image cinématographique est la représentation sublimée de la femme moderne: fardée et parée en poupée d'amour, mais recherchant le grand amour [...] une révolution dans le domaine de la féminité.' The Christian virgin-whore dichotomy has been overcome. In mass culture, old sexual taboos are being attenuated. Men are encouraged to be more tender and sentimental, women to be more autonomous and self determined. *L'Esprit du Temps*, pp.198-99.

men were just as tied to repetition as women: the daily commute, Taylorization. In Lefebvre's gendered view of the world, such repetition itself is seen perhaps as feminine. Yet women were not presented with the same opportunities for escape as men. Despite dreams of seduction and happiness, they were thoroughly grounded within a day-to-day materiality. The fear of these commentators seems to be that the 'privatisation of the everyday' with its emphasis on the role of women and their increased visibility leads to depoliticisation. In great historical transformations, the everyday is opened on to history: that is to say, its privileged sector, private life, is reduced. Maurice Blanchot's discussion of Hegel's interpretation of the Terror during the French Revolution illustrates this point perfectly. This was a wholly public event, in which the very fact of being a private individual and therefore having some oblique existence independent of the State is enough to make one suspect. From having an individual perspective, the subject does not totally identify with the State and brings its claim of universalism into accusation. Each subject accuses the one who governs as he or she reveals the governor to have also a particular will that usurps the appearance of the universal. The private and the everyday become suspect, challenging even in their indifference.⁶⁰ In 1950s France, however, the everyday was to be transformed not through historical action, but at the level of the private. The everyday is a concept, providing a path for critical enquiry into the private life of human subjects. The private sphere is now the active arena of political, cultural and social transformation.

There is a paradox at the heart of this privatisation of identity. Mass culture in all its forms – pulp fiction, women's magazines, films, television programmes, newspapers – has been demonstrated as privileging 'feminine' emotion and private life as the mainspring of one's identity and happiness. Yet the very technologies that have encouraged the privatisation of identity should have opened up private life to greater social and political influence. Television and radio brought the public sector into the individual's home. The spread of global culture through these mass forms had paradoxically encouraged a greater concentration on the home and the individual. 'Dans son fauteuil, l'homme privé – qui ne sent même plus citoyen – assiste à l'univers sans avoir prise sur l'univers et sans en avoir le souci. Il regarde le monde. Il se mondialise, mais en tant que pur et simple regard.'⁶¹ In this way, new mass media privatises the individual in both senses of the term – making them a

⁶⁰ Maurice Blanchot, 'Everyday Speech', 12-20.

⁶¹ Henri Lefebvre, *Critique de la vie quotidienne*, vol. 2, p. 94.

homeowner rather than a citizen, and *depriving* them of active participation in the world. Lefebvre claims that a benefit of this privatisation of identity is that gives the individual 'un certain goût et une certain habileté dans l'usage des objets quotidiens.'⁶² These objects are part of a world that is contemplated in a state of passivity, the attention perhaps held by the objects rather than the huge technological, social, political, economic and cultural changes underpinning their arrival.

The public sphere becomes emptied of meaning in the face of such depoliticisation as wealth and power appear an obtainable part of the everyday, rather than the result of hierarchical structures. Political and public life has become filled with images borrowed from the private sphere. Lefebvre argues that 'public' men and women have long had the role of 'lieux communs' who appeared to belong to everyone. This illusion was part of the political constitution, and these representatives of the State and culture were both above and part of society. In modernity, this illusion has been sustained and even enhanced by the illustration of the social and practical life of kings and queens, stars, millionaires and so on. Even heroes have an everyday life. 'Nous "connaissons" maintenant presque aussi bien leur salle de bain que la nôtre, leur château que notre appartement, leur corps que le nôtre.'⁶³ This knowledge is based upon the image. The image is what makes the celebrity, as well as the celebrity making the image. The two live in a symbiotic relationship.

Bref, sous cet angle, le sublime et la grandeur sont restitués à la quotidienneté. Le public devient privé et le privé public, mais seulement dans l'apparence, le pouvoir gardant ses propriétés et la richesse ses possibilités [...] La scission du privé et du public n'est surmontée qu'en une apparence. Le dépassement du conflit entre ces deux aspects de la pratique sociale n'est qu'illusoire.⁶⁴

Yet illusion is everything. Whilst, as Lefebvre argues, the peasant retains his status, even if he does 'know' the queen, this illusion of shared everyday experience blurs the distinctions between the aristocrat and the peasant. The knowledge of Princess Margaret's tortured love life (an obsession for *Paris-Match* in the early to mid 1950s and 'pendant plus d'une année, *France Dimanche* et *Ici-Paris* nous entretiennent de pseudo-

⁶² Henri Lefebvre, *Critique de la vie quotidienne*, vol. 2, p. 94.

⁶³ Henri Lefebvre, *Critique de la vie quotidienne*, vol.2, p. 95.

⁶⁴ Henri Lefebvre, *Critique de la vie quotidienne*, vol.2, p. 95.

rebondissements dans les rapports quadrangulaires entre Margaret, Elizabeth, Tony, Philip'⁶⁵) does not in fact change the material conditions of existence for the peasant. It does, however, alter the imagined relationship between the two of them into one of identification and projection. The mass media has created a new space that hides or denies the conflict between the two spheres and between classes. Anyone that has their image used becomes a celebrity, and the celebrity appears to overcome the conflicts between classes and spheres as they straddle their boundaries.

The very nature of image making seems to turn everyone in the public sphere into a celebrity; a spectacular being whose private life is lived under the public gaze.

La politique elle-même entre partiellement dans le champ de la culture de masse, notamment aux Etats-Unis: la bataille électorale prend de plus en plus la forme d'une compétition télévisée, où les qualités sympathiques du candidat, son visage, le sourire et la beauté de sa femme, deviennent des atouts politiques. La culture de masse intègre à elle les grands hommes politiques, non tant en exultant leurs qualités suprêmes de chef [...] mais en révélant leur goûts privés, leur intimité.⁶⁶

Such a concentration on the private life of that most public of individuals, the politician, leads to an inevitable depoliticisation. Mass culture needs stars to survive. It won't compare Nixon or Kennedy, or even Khrouchtchev and Eisenhower, as this is outside its frame of reference. All will be exalted for the grandeur, their embodiment of the new visibility of the private sphere. Meanwhile, political allegiances and abilities are relegated to the background.

In the Irwin Shaw novel '*Ondes troubles*' analysed by Lefebvre, women shop for cocktail dresses, 'empaillée, mince, montée sur des hauts talons, fortement maquillée, permanentée, au regard brillant' while in the background behind the racks and the shelves, bombs are exploding, cities crumbling, scientists testing tritium and cobalt levels.⁶⁷ This is a perfect metaphor for the feminisation, privatisation and commodification of the everyday. Spectacular shopping women hold the gaze (of both men and each other) while life-threatening 'public sphere' political decisions are made (literally) behind closed doors, hidden away both by and from the distractions

⁶⁵ Edgar Morin, *L'Esprit du temps*, p. 133.

⁶⁶ Edgar Morin, *L'Esprit du temps*, p. 131.

⁶⁷ Henri Lefebvre, *Critique de la vie quotidienne vol. 1*, p.36.

of the commodity fetish. The public and the private do seem in this way turned upside down. The 'nuclear' bomb, the most political and public of projects, is hidden away in laboratories and bunkers. The 'nuclear' family, in its private, domestic space, has its every need met by a singular object with a new slogan. Women are encouraged to buy these objects in promotional and editorial material throughout the popular media. How the fetish object came to play this dominating role will be investigated in the next sections.

The uncanny nature of everyday life

In the 1950s, the everyday thus became visible. As in the nineteenth century, through images everyday life was revealing its plasticity, its potential for change, because of the rapid post-war modernisation France was undergoing. Everyday life had become unrecognisable from that of just fifteen years before, a process reflected and reified in the popular media. Commenting on the American 'nouveauautés intéressantes' that will 'finiront inévitablement en France' the 8 June 1956 *L'Express*, quoted by Lefebvre to illustrate how modern technology was being applied in the private sphere of the everyday as well as in business, wrote that 'la cuisine perd son caractère de cuisine pour devenir objet d'art'.⁶⁸ As kitchens were transformed by electric ovens, refrigerators, and all the other 'gadgets' that would become indispensable, so they became works of art, subjects of wonder and investigation rather than invisible because so embedded into what it is to be human. The process of Americanisation seemed to be turning French daily life inside out: what was most natural and normal was revealed by Barthes to be a set of mythologies, even down to the food one ate or the beverage one drank. That which was habitual became obsolete with the arrival of new household goods. That which appeared to be a matter of free choice was exposed as the most determined behaviour of all. Lefebvre quotes from *Madame Express* to illustrate how this penetration of technology into everyday life orders certain behaviours.

Il faut à une femme une volonté de fer pour empêcher un coiffeur de raccourcir ses cheveux. Rien n'est plus convaincant qu'un coiffeur convaincu. Ils ont d'autre part de puissants moyens d'action: les cover-girls, les actrices, toutes celles pour qui le problème économique ne

⁶⁸ Henri Lefebvre, *Critique de la vie quotidienne*, vol. 1, p. 14.

joue pas et dont l'image quotidiennement répandue, a plus d'effet que tous les discours.⁶⁹

The everyday is thus not just a lived experience, it is also a critical concept that articulates the technological and sociological changes occurring in France. It has an intellectual status and has entered discourse. For Lefebvre, the everyday is both low-level activity, the residue that remains when all specialised activities have been taken away, and a nourishing soil where political change may begin. He embarked on an ambitious critique whereby he attempted its retrieval from its modern state of colonisation by the commodity form and other modes of reification. This critique was generated by a kind of alienation effect, insofar as the everyday was put into contact with a radical other – the eradicated past of 'folk' culture, or some imagined future. Yet as has been shown above Lefebvre also acknowledged that the critique of the everyday appeared widespread in 1950s France, although this critique remained stilled at the level of images rather than moving on to a higher phase of political consciousness.

Everyday life offered itself up to critique and inquiry by all those who experienced it. This is because the relatively late and quick entry of modern technology into French everyday life had the effect of rendering it unfamiliar or 'uncanny' to all those living within it. The reason the French were capable of analysing their daily life is because it was constantly disappearing, slipping away, as modes of behaviour changed so quickly. Every week brought new distractions and new goods.

Si nous prenons conscience aigüe de la quotidienneté, n'est-ce pas que déjà l'aventure humaine la déborde? Si nous concevons aujourd'hui le monde humain, la terre des hommes et la pratique quotidienne, ne serait-ce pas parce-que l'homme et les techniques et les possibilités dépassent déjà ce que nous sommes sans que nous sachions où elles vont?⁷⁰

In this speeded-up existence, folklore and culture became equally outmoded in the face of rapid technological advances. Everyday life is now lived without being known. This uncanniness means that the everyday, the familiar and the intimate, are also the location of the obscure and the hidden. It is presented as a play of items revealed and concealed. Images both reveal some truth about the everyday and hide it under a shiny gloss. 'The everyday

⁶⁹ Henri Lefebvre, *Critique de la vie quotidienne*, vol. 1, p.15.

⁷⁰ Henri Lefebvre, 'Introduction à la psycho-sociologie de la vie quotidienne', p. 89.

is the most universal and unique condition, the most social and the most individuated, the most obvious and the best hidden.'⁷¹ Morin argued in *L'Esprit du temps* that modernisation of contemporary France (urbanisation, widespread private cars, standardised leisure, telecommunications, etc) transformed what he categorised as 'une culture du hic et du nunc.' Despite his sympathy towards the appeal of modernisation, in what he judged to be entropic drift, cultural specificity of time and space were being imperilled in processes of homogenisation whereby the hic was *relativisé* and the nunc *cosmopolitanisé*. 'Such a teleology of globalisation is perceived as a recasting of the dialectic of familiarisation and defamiliarisation.'⁷² So, in both Lefebvre and Morin's analysis of modernisation in French everyday life, there are distinctly Freudian overtones.⁷³ On one Sunday afternoon, Lefebvre is about to enter a country church.

J'hésite devant l'humble porte sans ornement: une sorte d'appréhension me retient. Je sais ce que je vais trouver: un espace vide et sonore, mais aux recoins peuplés de cent objets dont chacun crie cet appel muet qui fait de lui un signe. Quel pouvoir étrange! Je sais que je ne puis m'empêcher de comprendre les 'significations', puisque autrefois elles me furent dites.⁷⁴

Lefebvre's moment of apprehension at the doorway of the country church can act as a metaphor for his uncanny notion of everyday life. The reader is caught between the unknown and the familiar, emptiness and fullness, the small and the vast, concealment and discovery, silence and speech. The uncanny everyday is both revealed and concealed, both known and unknown, both familiar and strange. Freud considered the word uncanny as redolent with meaning. It had to be thoroughly investigated before its true meaning could be reached. He concludes:

⁷¹ Henri Lefebvre, 'The Everyday and Everydayness', 4-11, (p.10).

⁷² Charles Forsdick, 'Plonger dans un milieu réel: Edgar Morin in the Field,' *French Cultural Studies*, 8:3 (24), (October 1997), 309-332 (p. 310).

⁷³ Lefebvre himself may well have been aware of the Freudian analysis his work invites, but such a concept could only ever be implicit while he remained a member of the PCF. During the 1930s Soviet orthodoxy espoused Pavlovian theory, based on physiology of conditioned reflexes, and declared individual psychology to be a petit bourgeois self-indulgence. Georges Politzer abandoned psychoanalysis in favour of political economy. Lefebvre violently disagreed, but having lost the political argument, could not openly link Marx and Freud. Michael Kelly, *The Historical Emergence of Everyday Life*, <http://www.lang.soton.ac.uk/students/french/lefebvre/unrestr/lefeb3.html>, p.3. (Accessed 1 December 2000).

⁷⁴ Henri Lefebvre, *Critique de la vie quotidienne*, vol. 1, p.228.

the word *heimlich* is not unambiguous, but belongs to two sets of ideas, which, without being contradictory, are yet very different: on the one hand it means what is familiar and agreeable, and on the other, what is concealed and kept out of sight. '*Unheimlich*' is customarily used [...] as the contrary only of the first signification of *heimlich*, and not of the second. [...] thus *heimlich* is a word the meaning of which develops in the direction of ambivalence, until it finally coincides with its opposite *unheimlich*. *Unheimlich* is in some way or other a sub species of *heimlich*.⁷⁵

Unheimlich thus picks up several shades of meaning. It means that which is unfamiliar, strange, or spooky, from contradicting the first meaning of *heimlich*. It however is used exchangeably with the second meaning of *heimlich*, to mean that which is hidden, concealed, secret, unknown. At the very heart of the definition of the word there is a kind of unease which is carried over into its application. Freud places the emotions of fear, uncertainty, unfamiliarity and strangeness into the heart of the private sphere, the home (*heim*). Its emotions are inchoate, the result of a trauma of strangeness taking place in that which should be the most familiar, the most known, the most safe.

'Uncanniness' (the widely agreed translation for the German *unheimlich*) is thus not only unfamiliarity. It suggests horror and confusion, including that, central to modernity, between the human and the automaton. Lefebvre argued that modernity was lived as a series of dialectical tropes, between for example, town and countryside, reality and imagination, and alienation and disalienation that, because they were thought of as discrete entities, made modernity dislocated, confused and jumbled. 'Au cours de la croissance du pouvoir de l'homme sur la nature – dans le développement économique et sociale – il vient un moment où toutes les puissances s'accroissent pour elles-mêmes, de façon quasi-autonome [...] Tout se sépare et cependant se totalise.'⁷⁶ This sense of abstraction and atomisation within the everyday is felt to be most acute in the new town.

In the new town, the most potent symbol of change and modernity in 1950s France, a visible mark of the process the entire country was undergoing, everyday life is presented at its most banal and trivial. Lefebvre analysed everyday life as consisting of a series of 'social texts' (one of which

⁷⁵ Sigmund Freud, 'The Uncanny', in *Art and Literature*, vol. 14, *The Penguin Freud Library*, translated by and under the general editorship of James Strachey (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1990), pp. 112-173.

⁷⁶ Henri Lefebvre, *Introduction à la modernité: Préludes* (Paris: Minuit, 1962), p.125.

is the street, discussed above). Each of these texts was made up of a series of signals, signs and symbols. Everyday life seems on one level very poor and empty, made up of repetitive gestures such as getting up, making coffee, going out, walking, reading the same paper and entering the same door into the same office, every day. Young people age and die, able to realise only a small number of their possibilities. Yet daily life is also very rich; relationships, going to the cinema, going on holiday, are also all part of the everyday. This is because social texts are made up of a series of interlinking meanings, 'a semantic field.' Signals are precise, simple and bare. They order certain behaviour. Signs are more vague and more complex and operate in an open system. A piece of clothing could be a sign, as could a gesture. Objects have a use but are also signs – for example, frying pans and saucepans in the kitchen suggest culinary skill of some description. If one is incapable of understanding these signs, then one is considered 'bizarre, étranger, béotien.' There are also symbols, such as peoples' faces or famous monuments. These generate rich, full meanings. Notre Dame, for example, consists both of Paris now and the Paris of the past, it symbolises history, faith and Paris itself. It floats above the city endowing its streets (signs) and its traffic lights (signals) with a special atmosphere. This concept of signals, signs and symbols devised by Lefebvre can be interpreted as both a reaction to and a furthering of the importance of objects. It is a full acknowledgement that they have acquired a narrative status as fetishes. If there are too many symbols, then the social text becomes opaque and unreadable – one is the lost foreigner. If there are too many signals, then the text is banal, trivial and uninteresting. Both extremes are alienating.⁷⁷

In the new town, the entire text is alienating, as it exists only on the most open and readable level. Lefebvre was born in Hagetmau, a small village in the *département* of *Les Landes*, just north of the Basque Pyrenees. Although early in his career he was eager to stay at the heart of intellectual debate in Paris, to the extent that he took a job teaching in a lycée rather than risk returning to a provincial university, Lefebvre settled in the area as a member of the Resistance during the Second World War. During this time he was exposed to ruins of mountain villages and the traditions of independent Cathar thought dating back to at least the Dominican inquisition. This heresy chimed with his independent intellectual stance and he discovered an interest in rural sociology which was to become a major source of irritation between himself and the PCF (especially given the consistently poor harvests in Soviet

⁷⁷ Henri Lefebvre, 'Introduction à la psycho-sociologie de la vie quotidienne', pp. 89-110.

Russia). Lefebvre finally defended his *Thèse d'Etat* on the *Peasant Communities of the Pyrenees* in 1954.⁷⁸ He thus had both intellectual and biographical links to the area. The building of oil wells and refineries at Lacq, near Pau, gave rise to the new town of Mourenx, very close to where he grew up. The jarring contrast between the village and the new town was obvious for all.

Paris-Match ran an extensive article on the building of the new town on the 24 January 1959. The change in lifestyle was represented in terms of the differing generations in a family. The elderly father was shown in black and white farming his *champs de maïs*. He was sat on a tractor wearing a beret and smoking a cigarette, the incarnation of the paysan. The *jeunes mariés*, his son and daughter-in-law, were shown in colour in their 'maison toute neuve, [...où] après huit heures de travail aux puits, diner en musique dans la cuisine.' Their happiness was completed when 'le Relais du Pic du Midi a permis l'installation de la télévision.'⁷⁹ *Paris-Match* contents itself with pointing out (in so obvious a fashion it now seems nearly comic) the rapid changes that made one family representative of both tradition and modernity. For Lefebvre, this contrast is between a way of life that is authentic, rooted in history, and has a sense, and Mourenx. 'J'arrive à Mourenx et je m'effraie.'⁸⁰ Mourenx dedicates itself to functionality. Every object in this town has its own function, and constantly proclaims it. It can mean only itself. In this way, all the signs in this town are operating as signals, in a system of closure and materiality. The text of the town is totally legible, impoverished and trivial. Here, everyday life becomes oppressive, a massive weight of trivial functions and at the same time almost disintegrated, nothing but fragmented gestures and repeated actions. 'La vie quotidienne a perdu une dimension: la profondeur. Ne reste que la trivialité.'⁸¹ Here, all hope of disalienation seems lost. Leisure time serves only to confirm the alienation of the individuals living in the new town: the man returns exhausted after eight hours of non creative work to sit passively in front of the television. The wife, less likely to be able to work in a town dedicated to industry, reads the agony aunt columns in her favourite magazines. It is a life lived in an 'uncanny' environment, where everything is new and yet strangely familiar. Everything is mechanised – the houses referred to as 'machines à habiter', the factories dedicated to

⁷⁸ Rob Shields, p. 85.

⁷⁹ Dominique Lapiere, 'Il vit dans le monde de demain mais à deux pas retrouve la ferme familiale', *Paris-Match* (samedi 24 janvier 1959), 9-15.

⁸⁰ Henri Lefebvre, *Introduction à la modernité*, p. 123.

⁸¹ Henri Lefebvre, *Critique de la vie quotidienne*, vol. 2, p. 83.

efficiency and functionality. 'La ville et l'usine se complètent en s'alignant sur l'objet technique.'⁸² It is in the new town that technology is experienced as its most terrifying: dehumanising, atomising, alienating. In the world of functional objects, surface becomes everything. The everyday is everywhere, enveloping experience and creating alienated boredom. It is also nowhere, escaping articulation and definition.

Ailleurs, autrefois, la quotidienneté existait. Elle vivait. [...] Et maintenant, sous les yeux, qu'as-tu? La vie quotidienne écrasante réduite à son essence, à ses fonctions banales [...] La vie quotidienne [...] elle est là, dans son pesant ennui, réduite à la seule platitude. Et cependant elle n'y est plus, réduite à une mince et opaque matière humaine, privée de ses jeux et plaisirs spontanés.⁸³

Lefebvre was in many ways anticipating the discoveries of the 1970s when it was realised that high rise blocks did not preserve community feeling and in fact aggravated depression and aggression, the so-called 'sarcellite.' However, the hidden fear is perhaps also of the growth of the everyday meaning that, as with magazines discussed earlier, the private sphere becomes more important and more visible, to the detriment of masculine public sphere of adventure and political change. 'Ainsi modifiée par les techniques modernes, la quotidienneté n'a pas disparu. Si les problèmes ont changé, par bien des côtés ils se sont aggravés. Témoins privilégiés: les villes nouvelles. Ici, la quotidienneté règne pour ainsi dire à l'état chimiquement pur. [...] Ici, la vie quotidienne se rétrécit jusqu'à la vie privée.'⁸⁴ It is just because this situation is so uncanny, where everything is new yet overwhelmingly familiar, where everything is known and yet provokes terrible unease, that there is this emphasis on the private sphere and the surface appearance of technical objects. In the uncanny situation of everyday life in 1950s France, be it in the new town or the street, objects function as commodity fetishes, fusing consumption and spectacle and compensating the alienated voyeur-citizen.

The object as fetish in 1950s France

Foucault, quoting Freud, described fetishism as 'the model perversion', one that served as a guiding thread for modern Puritanism and its

⁸² Henri Lefebvre, *Critique de la vie quotidienne*, vol. 2, p. 84.

⁸³ Henri Lefebvre, *Introduction à la modernité*, p. 128.

⁸⁴ Henri Lefebvre, *Critique de la vie quotidienne*, vol. 2, p. 82.

'triple edict of taboo, non-existence, and silence.'⁸⁵ These three concepts attach themselves easily to the situation of France in the 1950s. This was a country haunted by the humiliation of defeat and occupation. 'The 1940 defeat was more than a blow to patriotic pride: it was the incontrovertible proof that the France of the time no longer had the cohesion or the resilience to maintain itself.'⁸⁶ The country was dismembered, literally torn in two, its notional capital placed in a sleepy spa town. In the wake of Liberation, there was a rush toward general forgiveness and indulgence in order to recreate a united nation. Purification in France was a hurried and hushed process. The Republic claimed its validity as a natural follow-on from Resistance. A bringing to justice of all collaborators would have meant admitting that Vichy had been important in French society and that the Resistance had been a small minority and examine the reasons for that situation. The Resistance, the daughter of the 1789 revolution, dreamed of national unity. It had no wish to undermine this vision.

Et si la France profonde n'était pas en 1944-45 aussi innocente qu'elle voulait le croire en se débarrassant de sa propre image que lui renvoyaient les victimes de l'épuration? 'Le pays, un jour, devra connaître qu'il est vengé' promettait le général de Gaulle dès 1943. Les Français, eux, préférèrent se reconnaître avec lassitude dans une République qui ne sera ni une, ni indivisible, comme eux-mêmes. Parce que, notait alors Jean-Marie Domenach, 'c'était comme si on avait peur de l'ampleur même du crime.'⁸⁷

France was also involved in a series of damaging and complex colonial wars, in Madagascar (1947), Indochina (1954) and Algeria (1954-62). The loss of power in the colonies was linked to France's diminished status in Europe. The Allies had decided in Potsdam, without France's presence, that Indochina would be divided on the 16th parallel, and shared between China and Britain. 'La France est hors jeu.'⁸⁸ Leclerc rapidly restored the French physical presence. However, in the North, they were forced to negotiate with Ho Chi Minh and the Chinese and ceded the three Ky in 1946.

⁸⁵ Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality, volume 1* trans. Robert Hurley (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976), p. 154.

⁸⁶ Colin Nettelbeck, *War and Identity: The French and the Second World War* (London: Methuen 1987), p. 91.

⁸⁷ Jean-Pierre Rioux, *La France de la Quatrième République, vol. 1 L'ardeur et la nécessité 1944-52* (Paris: Seuil, 1980), pp. 61-7.

⁸⁸ Jean-Pierre Rioux, *La France de la Quatrième République, vol. 1*, p. 135.

Negotiations soon fell apart however, due to French internal political disagreements, and a guerrilla war against the French ensued. On the 19th December 1946, more than 200 French soldiers were killed in Hanoi. Blum, Président du Conseil, refused to negotiate before military victory was obtained. The Republic was dragged into a war she had wanted to avoid. The fall of the French Vietnamese stronghold of Dien Bien Phu on 7 May 1954 was treated as a national tragedy. The commander of the French forces, General Navarre, diagnosed his country as ailing, weak and impotent, in need of 'un grand chirurgien,' a thinly veiled reference to de Gaulle.⁸⁹ France's loss is overwhelming: Yalta confirmed her impotence in the West, and Dien Bien Phu her impotence in the East.

These public disasters were accompanied by the change in the status of private life discussed above. In this new emphasis on leisure and the private sphere, French and American cinema came to have an important influence. Cinema stars were now more talked about in the press than businessmen or politicians. They confirmed the importance of leisure, so much so that their work seemed an extension of it. Delivered from need, their existence is predicated on an expansive private life that is indistinguishable from their public persona. Morin writes that the ultimate stars are female,⁹⁰ and it was especially the female film stars who drove the wheel of consumer culture full circle. Featured in films, being written about in magazines, advertising beauty products that are in turn also written about in editorial, female cinema stars were guarantees of the transformational effects of consumption. Cinema became the vehicle of dreams and consumer culture, and the two were intimately linked. Female Hollywood stars publicised an array of objects that appeared to guarantee happiness and well-being, abundance and freedom. The rapid social mobility suggested by the objects they display and the luxurious interiors they inhabit also provided a mirror for the plasticity and change then being experienced in France, if on a less exalted level.

30 ans après, les femmes se souviennent surtout [...] du cinéma américain. On trouve en effet, dans le cinéma américain de ces années là une problématique de la mobilité sociale toujours envisagée en termes de réussite (à la fois sociale et morale) qui est absente du cinéma français, où les groupes sociaux apparaissent sous la forme des essences stables, et qui répond en même temps à une préoccupation réelle de la société française en train de se

⁸⁹ H Navarre, *Agonie de l'Indochine 1953-4* (Paris: Plon, 1956), p. 325.

⁹⁰ Edgar Morin, *Les Stars* (Paris: Seuil, 1957).

transformer. L'Amérique est donc l'image de l'innovation, mais aussi celle de l'abundance et de la liberté.⁹¹

This celebration of the private individual and the belief that happiness is to be found in the private rather than the public sphere confirms a loss of large value systems such as the state and religion.⁹² The state is now seen as (relatively) powerless to determine an individual's qualities. In the affirmation of the (feminine) private sphere as the key to existence, so there was a further leeching of (phallic) power from the state. In *Introduction à la Modernité*, Lefebvre identifies this loss of phallic power as part of a modern collapse of referents. He argued that until recently objects such as furniture or buildings were built one by one, and each existed in relation to accepted social and moral references, to symbols. From the twentieth century onward, all these references collapse, including the greatest and oldest figure of them all, that of the Father (eternal or temporal, divine or human). In this collapse of the referent in morality, history, nature, religion, cities, art and so on Lefebvre finds the explanation for the rise of importance in theorising the everyday, as it remains a common denominator to all systems. Yet it does not provide the certainties of the Father and meaning is conveyed by signs rather than symbols. This emphasis on the private sphere also means that the consumer revolution of the 1950s was not only uncanny in its contents but in its very form. As Blanchot discusses above, historical revolutions usually overwhelm and overtake the everyday by totally privileging the public sector as the place of change. Here, the revolution occurred in the private sphere, with an attendant concentration on women as the vectors and visible symbols of change.

This historical situation opens the path to the fetishisation of the object in 1950s France. I have already remarked how daily life had an uncanny quality. In Freudian theory, the uncanny moment is the moment when the boy child sees his mother's genitals and believes her to be castrated. This is repressed through fetish substitution i.e. through the operation of the fetish, the child can believe that his mother has a phallus, whilst simultaneously knowing that she has also 'given it up', sacrificed it. The fetish, unlike other perversions, works not just through repression, but active disavowal. The fetish can then become revered, as with the mutilated foot of the bound Chinese woman. 'The Chinese male wants to thank the woman for

⁹¹ Verna Aebischer and Sonia Dayan Herzbrun, 'Cinéma et destins de femmes', *Cahiers Internationaux de Sociologie*, 30 (janvier-juin 1986), 147-160 (p.148).

⁹² Edgar Morin, *L'Esprit du Temps*, pp. 86-97.

having submitted to being castrated.’⁹³ The uncanny moment for the French is the realisation of their own loss of power, their own impotence/castration on the world stage. Everyday life is uncanny and unknowable and of course also feminised, dominated by American managerial expertise and finance. This realisation is too traumatic and leads to a fetishisation of objects. As Louise J. Kaplan comments, ‘a fetish is designed to keep the lies hidden, to divert attention from the whole story by focussing attention on the detail.’⁹⁴ Robert Stoller also picks up on the narrative quality of the fetish object by commenting that it is ‘a story masquerading as an object.’⁹⁵ The object or the detail can be revered and mask the whole story of loss.

Barthes’s *Mythologies* is a whole series of narratives around objects, a game in which objects both reveal and conceal their true meanings.

Nous voguons sans cesse entre l’objet et sa démystification, impuissants à rendre sa totalité: car si nous pénétrons l’objet, nous le libérons mais nous le détruisons; et si nous lui laissons son poids, nous le respectons, mais nous le restituons encore mystifié.⁹⁶

Freud argued that the fetish was a play between presence and absence, the item both revealing and concealing the horror of castration. Barthes’s description posited objects as fetishes in this way. They both conceal and reveal a truth about French society. This doubling is essential to their function; when he lays their narrative bare they are no longer the same item. They lose their totemic quality. No longer fetish objects, they are ‘destroyed’.

This reading explains what Morin terms ‘l’Eros Quotidien’: the presence of the erotic in the everyday. Morin argues that in contrast to the Communist countries, where eroticism is censored from images and repressed into private relations, the capitalist world celebrates it. Erotic images were found in films, magazines, and

Les spectacles sont de plus en plus pimentés d’images érotiques [...] quotidiennement jambes levées, poitrines gonflées, chevelures ruisselantes, lèvres

⁹³ Stella Bruzzi, *Undressing Cinema: Clothing and Identity in the Movies* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), p. 41.

⁹⁴ Louise J. Kaplan, *Female Perversions: The Temptations of Madame Bovary*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1993), p.34.

⁹⁵ Robert Stoller, *Observing the Erotic Imagination*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1985), p. 155.

⁹⁶ Roland Barthes, *Mythologies* (Paris: Seuil, 1957), back cover.

entrouvertes nous convient à consommer cigarettes, dentifrices, savons, boissons gazeuses, toute une gamme de produits dont la finalité n'est pas à proprement parler érotique.⁹⁷

In a similar vein, Lefebvre writes 'l'irruption de la sexualité dans le domaine des images – et plus généralement dans le loisir – réclamerait à elle seule une étude.'⁹⁸ He argues it is desire for rupture with the everyday that encourages this eroticism, yet he feels this eroticism is also incorporated back into the everyday as it ultimately unsatisfying and superficial.

Given the sexual nature of the 'first' fetish, it is hardly surprising that objects that had very little 'natural' link to the erotic were exploited by publicity for their latent eroticism. Obviously when a bottle of Schweppes was bought, the lovely long legs of the girl advertising it would not come with the bottle. Morin argues, however, that the young pin-up girl and the soda, washing machine or refrigerator she is selling became interchangeable for the consumer through a process of projection and identification, a feeling that when one bought the object, one appropriated if not the girl herself, at least her qualities.⁹⁹ This eroticisation and feminisation of the object was echoed in the way it was presented, in curvaceous forms, wrapped in cellophane and brightly coloured. He also says that publicity, which operates through all the media of mass culture, has a psychoanalytic quality in the way it drew on the latent eroticism of objects. Hygiene products are transformed (or perhaps rather deformed, as the fetish twists the 'innocent' object) into agents of seduction. Cleanliness has become beauty, and beauty has become sex appeal. The original aim of products such as shampoo has been overwhelmed by the new erotic impetus they have been given. Eroticism is diffuse, spread over films, magazines, and comics. It is also highly developed and specialised in various cosmetics and clothes. This is an eroticism that bears the marks of its American origins. In Puritanical fashion, it represses the image of the primary sexual organ to eroticise the rest of the body. Mass culture celebrates the secondary sexual characteristics of breasts, thighs, legs, lips and hair. There is a complicated set of links working here. Objects are produced in a society that

⁹⁷ Edgar Morin, *L'Esprit du temps*, pp. 159-60.

⁹⁸ Henri Lefebvre, *Critique de la vie quotidienne*, vol. 1, pp.43-4.

⁹⁹ This advertising ploy lead commentators such as Lo Duca to argue that this transformed women into the 'femme-objet.' Morin argues that the situation is more complicated than that: that her reign is complimented by that of the 'femme-sujet' as these erotic images do not address themselves solely or even mainly to men but rather to women themselves. Female consumers are being appealed to and encouraged to believe in their desire to seduce and conquer.

has a vested interest in their importance and fetishises them. They are advertised. Advertising (perhaps subconsciously) exploits the erotic charge of the object, usually by associating it with a cinema star or a glamorous model. This eroticism is then deformed into an incitement to consume by offering the consumer the possibility to appropriate. The French public consumed images of objects and of women. These glamorous women occupied a complex position within the French cultural imaginary. They sold bright, sparkling feminised objects that acted as replacements for themselves. They performed the vital role of both showcasing and selling products and alongside these products rendered the private sphere so visible that one could no longer tell where its images ended and images of the public sector began. A shot of Monroe using a beauty cream exploits her erotic charge and transfers it to the fetishised object. As an advertised object, the cream is in the public sphere. Monroe is paid for the publicity, so she is operating within the public sphere of financial payment for labour. Yet the advertisement will be read in the home, the cream will be used in the home, and Monroe's image, with all its associations of absence and presence discussed by Morin, will also live in the home (private sphere). The citizen becomes a spectator in their own home, identifying with and desiring glamorous American women while political decisions and technological progress occur 'elsewhere.'

Case study: *Les cadres* – an example of an unreal everyday life

It was the technocrats and bureaucrats who made up the ranks of middle and senior management known as cadres who championed this technological progress and increasing consumption. Cadres emerged in the 1930s but were transformed by the importation of American management techniques. They are an especially important group as they are an excellent example of how fascination with America transformed the French everyday. Once again, we are witnessing an exchange between the imaginary (how France 'should' be) and reality. America dominated French social and intellectual life as well as her military and political agenda. The dominance of America, alongside France's own problems, threw the nature of both societies into sharp relief, with French commentators determined to account for and emulate American success.

After World War Two, restructuring of industry was necessary. A burning question was how these new industries should be managed and how the supervisors should be trained and recruited. In the years 1945-55 there

was a new industrial ideology and a new representation of social space. American style 'human engineering' and 'management' practices were introduced into France in conjunction with economic changes begun under first under the Economic and Social Program of the National Resistance Committee and then the Marshall plan. It saw modernisation of the economy through more than just new equipment. One condition of economic aid was that France should train managers who would be economically knowledgeable and politically reliable. More generally, the Americans wanted a stable French society that would halt the rise of the Communist party, especially after the strikes of 1947. Economic modernisation was explicitly intended to bring about the wholesale political and social transformation of French society.

In 1953 American technical assistance provided 30 million dollars in loans and guarantees to private companies that would undertake to improve their productivity and operate some kind of profit share scheme, in the interest of stimulating a free-enterprise economy. In 1950-53, the *Association Française pour l'accroissement de la productivité* (AFAP) sponsored more than 450 productivity missions to the US, involving 4,000 employers, engineers and cadres, union delegates, top civil servants, economists, sociologists and psychologists. The rationalisation of industry, which the productivity missions were intended to assist, were not limited to such areas as technology or the organisation of work. Reports found that, broadly speaking, French technologies were similar to those used by America. Economic lag was not due to technological inadequacy or engineering incompetence. According to one important OECE report, 'les Américaines [...] ont clairement indiqués qu'il n'existe aucune différence entre l'Europe et les Etats-Unis en matière de technologie. En fait, il leur a été donné d'observer bien des cas où la technologie industrielle européenne était en avance sur celles des Etats-Unis.' But, the report added, 'les Français ne sont pas conscients du rapport direct qui existe entre un niveau élevé de productivité et l'application de saines méthodes en matière de rapports humaines.'¹⁰⁰

The primary goal of those who sponsored the productivity missions was thus to reshape the minds of the major economic actors in France, to change their ways of thinking and acting. Whilst visual culture was saturating France with images that encouraged projection and identification, so French minds were also being transformed by American social (rather than material) technologies. The American 'experts' sent to France under the

¹⁰⁰ Luc Boltanski, *Les Cadres: la formation d'un groupe social* (Paris: Minuit, 1982), p. 159.

auspices of the Marshall plan concentrated their criticisms on French executives and plant owners. They argued that constructive attitudes in the US among workers were primarily due to constructive attitudes among managers. French managers were called upon to have a reasonably optimistic attitude, to display enthusiasm and confidence, to improve communications, and generally to account for the 'human factor' in business. The most urgent need was identified as the need to train loyal and efficient 'middle managers.' Industrial management had to become a profession, with management schools. The overall aim was to perfect methods and techniques to change management attitudes. The reformist avant-garde, typified by the Servan-Schreiber family, Pierre Mendès-France and Jean Monnet presented this modernisation in a progressive and nationalist light. This transformation was necessary for French advancement. They formed a 'new bourgeoisie' with a new value system praising professionalism (as opposed to the amateurism of the dilettante), simplicity (*L'Express* was renowned for its 'American style' airline lunches on a tray) youth and feminism. These values were championed in a new press.

L'Express, founded by Servan-Schreiber in 1953, called for economic concentration, industrial rationalisation, enhanced productivity, higher wages, increased consumption, and the modernisation of the educational system. To those who reproached Servan-Schreiber for changing the editorial line post 1964, when *L'Express* was even more overtly Americanised, he replied that such modernising was always *L'Express's* original project, hindered to some extent by the colonial wars. From 1954 onwards, *L'Express* was dedicated to the political and social transformation of everyday life in France.

The Schreiber family was responsible for creating a whole series of publications for cadres, which as well as *L'Express*, included the more specialist *L'Expansion* and *L'Enterprise*. These magazines became manuals of savoir-vivre: the portraits of top managers, the advertising, the career analysis, and the interviews provided the run-of-the-mill cadre with an identity and role models (like *Le Nouvel Observateur* which brought secondary school teachers and provincial intellectuals the glittering spectacle of the Parisian intellectual scene). 'Il s'agit, pour *L'Expansion*, d'une politique tout à fait explicite: le journal, dit un de ses rédacteurs, est pour les cadres un "miroir qui leur renvoie leur image et cultive leur nombrilisme."¹⁰¹ The

¹⁰¹ Luc Boltanski, p. 184.

cadres' press standardised values and life styles. It packaged a cadre lifestyle for easy transmission to a large, now increasingly homogenous, group.

It was only so successful in this mission because this was preceded by the creation of a system of institutions that reformed the industrial bourgeoisie by inculcating the stereotypical values of the American middle classes. Hundreds of management training courses were offered under the auspices of the AFAP. Industrial psychology spread widely in the 1950s with group techniques, brain storming, creativity stimulation, T-groups and role-playing. This was not aimed at making cadres learn specific rules, but rather inculcating them in the right attitude and allow them to internalise role models.

Mais l'introduction du 'management', des relations humaines, de la dynamique de groupe, du marketing et sans doute, plus profondément, des représentations de l'agent économique comme libre sujet investi par le 'désir' de 'réussite' et de consommation qui leur était sous-jacent contribué aussi, indissociablement, à imposer, particulièrement pour les cadres, la supériorité des normes, des savoirs, et des objets associés, à tort ou à raison, à la culture des Etats-Unis.¹⁰²

This development was accompanied by the opening of European financial markets to American capital. Traditional Europe was seen as bankrupt. The future was America, a harbinger of things to come for Western Europe, and which seemed to offer a model for a more wholly evolved society.

The management industry was to some degree responsible for a partial homogenisation of behaviour. This explains multinationals' extraordinary ability to recruit workers and, especially, supervisory staff, who are sufficiently alike to allow top management to exert central control over internal policies, personnel management rules and 'the professional habitus'. The American model provoked fascination and envy. Jean Louis Servan-Schreiber, the very model of cadre his older brother wished to promote, wrote, 'Il était normal de s'identifier à John Kennedy qui incarnait les idée-force de mon âge: l'Amérique, la jeunesse, le succès, la beauté, l'avenir.'¹⁰³

This generation of cadres became privileged consumers in the 1950s and 1960s. The nature and volume of their consumption tended to attract other groups occupying the same social space and this probably heightened the struggle between groups and classes for the appropriation of various signs of

¹⁰² Luc Boltanski, p. 213.

¹⁰³ Luc Boltanski, p. 164.

distinction. These status struggles led to the rapid devaluation of many status symbols (as other classes gained access to goods whose distinctive value depended on their relative scarcity, bourgeois consumption shifted to new products). There was competition for distinctive goods, for cadres differed greatly in terms of wealth and income. Yet just as the political representation of the group was monopolised by a leading sub-group (namely, engineers who had studied at the Grande Ecoles) so too, did the symbols of being a cadre – the lifestyle promoted in *L'Express* and *Paris-Match* – pertain primarily to this sub-group. Many in the French middle classes bought the lifestyle and thus their entire social identity on credit. Being a cadre seemed more of a leisure role than a professional one, and advertisements for home appliances, cars, leather bound books, radios, televisions, Scotch and records popularised a certain image based almost entirely on consumption and objects.¹⁰⁴ The Americanised cadre's entire identity came to be based on the fetishised object. Small wonder that the characters in Simone de Beauvoir's *Les Belles Images*, analysed by Kristin Ross, worried that they had become entirely reproducible. An entire way of life constructed in *Paris-Match* and *L'Express* could be bought anybody provided they have sufficient wealth. Colourful magazine illustrations both reflected and provided a paradigm for the cadre's everyday life. It is hardly surprising it had the unreal quality discussed earlier.

In the 1950s, the French model for how to perform everyday life comes not from the family, the school, the province or even the nation, but from outside, from American visual culture. The world was both nearer and further, present and absent, the boundaries between reality and imagination hazy. Humans both participated in and observed the spectacle of everyday life. In the street, one was both a part of the spectacle of people in transit, and also watching others hurrying about their business. The idea of a divided self can be seen as entering discourse in this description. In the rapidly changing conditions of everyday life in the 1950s, the self was diluted, as one was always elsewhere, dreaming without sleeping, sleeping without waking. In this dream world, objects acquired new significance, becoming active players in the semantic field of the everyday. They took on a narrative role, as they became fetish objects. This narrative was especially recounted in films, film publicity, and publicity using cinema stars. As these cultural artefacts provided performative paradigms for the French through the processes of identification and projection described by Morin, so the French adapted these objects and learnt their narrative, their role, and their use through visual

¹⁰⁴ Luc Boltanski, pp. 279-80.

culture. Americanisation in this way altered the very gestures involved in being French and was inscribed onto the French body.

Theorising nationality and the role of cinema

Une sorte de révélation me vint à l'hôpital. J'étais malade à New York. Je me demandais où j'avais déjà vu des demoiselles marchant comme mes infirmières. J'avais le temps d'y réfléchir. Je trouvais enfin que c'était au cinéma. Revenu en France, je remarquai, surtout à Paris, la fréquence de cette démarche; les jeunes filles étaient françaises et elles marchaient aussi de cette façon. En fait, les modes de marche américaine, grâce au cinéma, commençaient à arriver chez nous.¹⁰⁵

Benedict Anderson argues that nations are imagined communities, that is to say that they are groups of people who feel they have something in common despite never having met in their entirety. This sense of a shared identity was formed by print capitalism. Print capitalism united groups of people into disparate language sets, below the sacred Latin formula but above the vernacular. Dialects were gradually lost as capitalist pressures streamlined language, and gradually one increasingly homogenous language became identified with one nation. With the arrival of the printed word, there was tangible proof that a certain set of people had something in common, uniting them beyond class difference or even historical time. The baker in Strasbourg could read the same paper as his bank manager in Marseille, but not as another baker just over the border in Karlsruhe. In Anderson's formulation, literacy thus creates a sense of nationhood (this feeling of nationhood crossing class boundaries obviously required mass ability to consume print, hence nineteenth century nationalism being overwhelmingly bourgeois). Literacy does not just mean the ability to read: rather, it can be taken at a broader level to mean the ability to understand symbolic forms of language.¹⁰⁶ Most obviously in Western Europe this is the ability to understand letters as symbolic of sounds, but it is also an ability to understand signals, signs and symbols – i.e. to read the everyday and behave 'correctly' within it. Yet as has been demonstrated above, the ability to read the narrative of the fetish commodity, to understand its uses and its meanings was provided by a

¹⁰⁵ Marcel Mauss, quoted in Verna Aebischer and Sonia Dayan Herzbrun, 'Cinéma et destins de femmes', p. 147.

¹⁰⁶ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983).

predominantly American and American-inspired visual culture in 1950s France. This provided a challenge to the very notion of national identity as formulated by Anderson. With the rapid process of social change French society was undergoing, the French were unable to live in the same ways as their parents. Film stars provided a number of complex and ambivalent identifiatory models. They taught the French how to read and write their new cultural and social texts. This new literacy loosens national borders rather than re-confirming them. Identity becomes disembodied from the nation-state and becomes part of the ether of modern image making technologies. It is constantly open to negotiation and re-interpretation.

Films functioned as a metonym for American cultural invasion. During the Vichy years, French films had dominated the market for the first time since the World War One, American and other foreign entertainment being largely banned. From 1946 onwards the importation of American films grew rapidly: for example, in January-June 1946, just 36 films had been distributed in France; for the equivalent period in 1947 the number had reached 338. For the next decade, American made films constituted over fifty percent of the total number in distribution and were watched by around 43 percent of the viewing public. The Hollywood marketing machine and the burgeoning French mass media such as *l'Express*, *Paris-Match*, *Cinérevue*, *Cinémonde* and *Mon Film* located the American female star's sexual and national identity in a set of performances, both on and off screen. This mass media also offered the chance to appropriate these spectacular behaviours through the use of objects, selling them in advertisements and demonstrating them in film. Shining surfaces, smoky hazes and glittering haute couture garments hid the grim realities of post war France through a fetishisation process. So great was the investment in surface that very possibility of depth was denied. Stars (literally pulsating lights) became the vectors of a modernisation process that dislocated embedded national stories and offered an alternative focus for the narrative – the fetish object.

My thesis will explore how female stars operated as visible beings in the public sphere and how they became symbolic of fetish objects and behaviours. The narrative concerning this object acted as metonym for the modernisation process France was undergoing, which is thus figured as the story of many objects, demonstrated by many stars. Mass culture transformed French national identity, locating it in objects that were manufactured in a global economy and displayed in a global cultural system. National identity was therefore more free floating, a series of behaviours that could be

remodelled rather than a set of unchangeable facts. Rather than being formed in the public sphere of school, the armed forces, parliament and other institutions of the State, these new promoters of identity entered the private sphere and opened it up as the area of dynamic change. Clean haired, smoking, trouser wearing, sexually liberated, car driving, voting: French women in the 1950s were more visible than ever before as players in the public sphere, and the public sphere was shrinking in importance as the private sphere became opened up to investigation. The female Hollywood star, with her near pathological consumption of goods, her fetishised features, her private life on constant display and her public persona a pale imitation of it, is just a rather extreme example of a process of feminisation and commodification of the everyday. Through the process of projection and identification, she offers a spectacular, glamorous role model for the changes in French everyday life in the 1950s. She, and the objects she uses to construct her persona, become narrative fetishes in a society denying trauma and recreating its national identity through a whole new media. The American cinema star, the objects identified with her, and the new performative narratives they form, and how these are re-interpreted by the French cinema star, will be the subjects of investigation in my next chapters.

Chapter Two: Gentlemen Prefer Blondes

Introduction

‘Raconter Montand, c’est parler de nous.’¹

‘I do not suntan because I like to feel blonde all over.’²

‘Une Américaine à l’époque, c’était une femme aux cheveux toujours fraîchement lavés, bien briquée, en chapeau, avec un air neuf, et le sourire.’³

The three quotes above suggest the complicated nexus between ideology, nationality, stardom, and ‘everyday behaviour’, that is to say the actions designated as normative and even desirable in a given geographical, cultural and political space. In the first, Rémond is suggesting that Montand’s story is the same as ‘ours’, the ‘nous’ here being the (unproblematically homogenous) imagined French audience consuming the cultural material Montand performs. There is a mirror image effect working: by looking at Montand’s life-story, the French find their own reflected. This is a complicated series of reflections however: Montand is both the image and the subject standing before the mirror, both separate from (because he is a star) and part of the French nation. The sentence relentlessly grounds Montand in his time and space. His life story cannot be cut free from its origins, both a reflection and a creator of French national identity; his every action is seen as a performance of Frenchness.

In the second quote, the ‘blonde bombshell’ Marilyn Monroe utters one of her famous quips. A typical ‘Monroeism’ it teasingly links bloneness to an explosive and contradictory mix of innocence, modesty and sexuality. Monroe draws attention to her blonde hair and to her white skin, making them part of a seamless, white whole that she will not darken – it is to remain unblemished and pure, virginal and untouched by the sun. At the same time, the coy reference to nudity suggests a willingness to expose herself if not to

¹ Alain Rémond, *Yves Montand* (Paris: Henri Veyrier, 1977), p. 9.

² Marilyn Monroe, quoted in Thomas Harris, ‘The Building of Popular Images’, in *Stardom: Industry of Desire*, ed. by Christine Gledhill (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), pp. 40-44 (p.41).

³ Françoise Giroud, *Si je mens* (Paris: Stock, 1972), p. 123.

the sun, at least to the public gaze. Her intensely white hair and skin, covered in shimmering jewels that rhyme visually with her glossy lips and shining hair, serve to link the bleached 'platinum' blonde to highly desirable objects within the capitalist system of exchange. This chapter will argue that the sexual Monroe paradoxically transcended her body to become as free floating as any other capitalist exchange item, solidity melting into air, in contrast to Montand and his wife, Simone Signoret, both thoroughly grounded in 'traditional' values of community and class.

As a blonde, Monroe was the sexual and racial embodiment of perfection. Monroe's bloneness had aesthetic and industrial significance. Her bloneness, especially in its extreme pallor, created her as supremely white. Whiteness has multiple connotations: the white race, figured as the most civilised and advanced of all races; white goods, the products filling the suburban homes of 1950s America (and France); cleanliness, purity and virginity. White women were offered as the most desirable of all women and blondes, as the most white, as the most desirable of all. Monroe's sexual desirability and commercial value both reside in her white-blonde hair, a relentless re-construction of perfect whiteness (during filming, her hair was retinted every four days). In *The Seven Year Itch* (Wilder, 1955), where she is an American pin-up girl made flesh, Monroe is also a blur of floating whiteness – most famously in the New York subway grill scene, but also lounging in a sudsy bath and advertising 'Dazzledent' toothpaste. In *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* (Hawks, 1953), she may start the story as a vamp clothed in a bright red dress, but she takes the title of the film to heart, marrying in white to secure the dazzling translucent diamonds she covets. Her whiteness confirms Monroe as the embodiment of a highly exportable American ideal, representing territorial expansion, technical advancement, cleanliness and safe 'suburban' sexuality.

The third quote has Françoise Giroud take one signifier, the clean hair, and make it stand for a national and gendered way of life. Nationality is figured as a kind of behaviour. Giroud is comparing the French woman, deprived of even basic necessities by the devastation to France's commercial and industrial infrastructure caused by the Second World War, to the American woman still living in a land of plenty – a land which allowed her to keep herself clean, and not only clean, but by implication, modern, using shampoo (synthetic shampoos being first marketed in 1947) on a daily basis. Giroud would have seen this fresh, clean, modern version of American femininity represented in France in advertisements carried by magazines such

as *Elle* which she co-founded and upon the silver screen – in the years following Liberation, there was a steady flow of American films on French screens. Hollywood cinema has been a key source of idealised versions of femininity in a culture where women are both subjects and objects of commodity exchange (Lorelei covets diamonds; she herself is a diamond to be acquired by a man). Jackie Stacey has demonstrated how Hollywood films function as both mirrors and shop windows for the female viewer, regardless of whether or not this viewer is of American nationality.⁴ Monroe's and Signoret's behaviour in becoming blonde thus has repercussions for how femininity is performed and idealised within both French as well as American culture. This chapter will explore how their differing performances of this idealised femininity are read in terms of a national body.

Monroe is a particularly fruitful figure for this inquiry because she occupies an ambiguous position with regard to nationality. She is an American ideal, definitely, with her colouring representing some Utopia of racial purity and an embodiment of 'Playboy' sexual philosophy (availability without danger), but this is an ideal. It takes place at a Utopian, fantasy level. She cannot be grounded within terms of Americanness in the same way Montand and Signoret, 'le couple solide du cinéma français'⁵ can be grounded within the French national and cinematic space. She floats free above it, existing not in a real place, but in Hollywood, where the boundaries between dreams and reality are viewed as blurred. Monroe, as the ultimate American star constructed to rescue cinema from the threat of television, is also figured as an incarnation of the screen itself, or certainly the technologies that elongated it and made her more 'real' upon the screen than off it. Her body is beautiful, but also translucent, light: she transcends the body as a limiting space in a way that Signoret doesn't. Monroe, generally agreed to be the sexiest star of the 1950s, is a floating fetish. She inhabits a different, gravity-free space – 'everyone else is earthbound by comparison.'⁶

⁴ Jackie Stacey, *Star Gazing: Hollywood Cinema and Female Spectatorship* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994).

⁵ *Paris-Match* 589 (23 juillet 1960), not paginated.

⁶ Billy Wilder, quoted by Graham McCann, *Marilyn Monroe* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1988), p. 111.

Red like the Republic: modernity, hygiene and being clean.

‘Une vieille de Bravez tricote un chandail rouge. Jean-Pierre le Bolloch la regarde. La vieille: Ru comme la République.’⁷

Edgar Morin’s anthropological study of a Breton village, Plodémet, was undertaken in the mid 1960s. Morin, along with a group of other researchers from the French Centre for the Study of Social Sciences, the CNRS, went to stay in the village and report on the effects on modernisation in a particularly isolated and traditionally ‘backward area’ of France. These researchers were recording the last of a peasant generation, as the commune was transformed from an agrarian community into just another collection of suburban homes. Consumerism transformed the peasant home into a space encouraging hygiene and cleanliness rather than work and stoicism in the space of fifteen years, from 1950-1965, a change initiated and encouraged by women, ‘l’agent secret de la modernité.’⁸ Whereas a man who modernises his farming equipment remains a peasant, a woman who modernises her home embraces new and different concerns influenced by the mass media and popular culture. This is part of a process Morin labels as decolonisation. His text, conceived, it appears, in knowing reference to the work of Frantz Fanon (one of his chapters is entitled ‘Les damnés de la terre’), addresses the peasant condition as one that, with modernisation, creates a split or divided self. The condition is associated with dirt, no longer a sign of authenticity and hard work, but a site of repugnance and disgust.

Surchargée de tâches d’exploitation, elle [la femme paysanne] cherche d’abord l’allègement des corvées ménagères. Elle [...] demande la machine à laver, qui supprime le lavoir, et précède de loin le frigidaire [...] Ces premières infiltrations modernistes ne sont plus seulement provoquées par l’utilité ou la commodité, elles créent les nouvelles motivations au confort et cristallisent un sentiment d’intérieur. L’intérieur s’oppose alors à l’extérieur solide et sale [...] Toutes ces répugnances se rassemblent, se coagulent en un complexe de saleté, qui traduit l’irruption définitive du nouveau modèle domestique dans la psychologie féminine, et qui va se

⁷ Edgar Morin, *Commune en France: la métamorphose de Plodémet* (Paris: Fayard, 1967), p. 43.

⁸ Edgar Morin, *Commune en France*, p. 164.

traduire chez toutes les jeunes filles par une répugnance totale de la condition paysanne.⁹

The former neglect of body and clothing during working days had thus been replaced by a preoccupation with daily hygiene, health, and making a pleasing appearance. In contrast to the patriarch Toto Poullan, who boasts of the sturdiness of his fine black teeth never sullied by toothpaste, Morin noted that clean teeth, feet and nails had become the rule amongst young people, along with the use of shampoo. The women had abandoned traditional clothes for a variety of styles, experimented with make-up and beauty products, and went to the hairdresser to have a set once or even twice a week, even in the most rural areas, with the two hairdressing salons in the town expanding rapidly. According to one of the hairdressers, her clientele increased by 50 percent each year since 1959.¹⁰

It is women rather than men that are driving this modernisation through cleanliness and hygiene, symbolised by their visits to the hairdresser. Taking fingernails as a metonym for the modernisation process, one of the old peasant men remarks to Morin that, rather than having dirt under their nails, women now like to wear varnish on their nails.¹¹ The red earth of peasant labour is being replaced by the glossy shining surfaces of modernity. The hair-dresser-visiting, nail-varnish-applying women of Plodémet were typical examples of a drive to cleanliness in France during the 1950s and 1960s. This drive for cleanliness was accompanied by a change in psychological identification with a colour of nationality, from the red of the Republic, to the white of consumer goods, bleach, washing powder and Americanisation. This change in identificatory modes was mapped onto the bodies of Signoret and Monroe as they embodied French and American connotations of bloneness and its concomitant whiteness.

Concern for cleanliness and hygiene is an American trait developed in the twentieth century and having connotations of whiteness. These values are intimately linked to Americanness, which is also seen as white. Raymond Loewy redesigned the Lucky Strike packet in 1940, changing its colour from green to white, precisely to play on ideas of cleanliness, freshness, immaculate manufacturing and 'the American way of life.'¹² In a world of consumer choice, the product that identified itself as American could achieve

⁹ Edgar Morin, *Commune en France*, p. 166.

¹⁰ Edgar Morin, *Commune en France*, p. 172.

¹¹ Edgar Morin, *Commune en France*, p. 164.

¹² Quoted by Adrian Forty, *Objects of Desire: Design and Society since 1750* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1986), p. 243.

mass sales beyond one or two ethnic groups. The design of the Lucky Strike packet, with its use of the colour white, here comes into its own.

At the heart of American values and the way of life was a commodification of hygiene and cleanliness. The search for whiteness had been translated to mass manufacture of recognisably American products. Lucky Strike used the colour white to promote itself as American. Drawing upon the existing association between cleanliness and Americanness gave the Lucky Strike packet an American image, which ensured it a national market. A member of any ethnic group could identify Lucky Strike as an American cigarette by virtue of the pack's conspicuous cleanliness, and perhaps, by purchasing a packet, feel instantly part of American culture. Indeed, the packet was so recognisably American that, within a very short space of time, Lucky Strike became famous throughout the world as a symbol of the American way of life.¹³

Calvin Coolidge identified the America of 1928 as a society moving from necessity to luxury, the Republican election slogan of that year describing the party's aims as 'a chicken in every pot, a car in every garage.' American industry was organised to provide commodities far beyond the necessities of subsistence, and this created a boom in advertising, as the reason to buy was now primarily psychological rather than physical needs. Vincent Vinikas argues that adverts were now a cultural phenomenon designed to define wants and needs, and one area where they were particularly effective in transforming habits was that of personal hygiene and grooming.

At the start of the twentieth century in America, the bath was a pre-Sabbath ritual preserved for a Friday or Saturday evening, toothbrushes were curiosities and washing one's hair more than once a month was considered unnecessary and unwise. By the 1920s, it was not only fashionable but also normal for Americans to brush their teeth, wash their hands, bathe frequently, apply deodorants, gargle with mouthwash and generally consume large amounts of toiletries. Advertising built a material sensibility in Americans and guided their relationship with commodities. A stunning example of an extremely successful publicity campaign was one that transformed Listerine from a general-purpose antiseptic to a mouthwash. The cosmetic boom in the 1920s was due not only to advertising, but also to changing gender relations

¹³ Adrian Forty, *Objects of Desire*, p. 245.

with women assuming a more public identity than ever before. As women became involved in the suffrage and birth control movements, their appearance changed to emphasise gender distinctions, and sales of cosmetics, perfumes and hair-dyes soared. The soap manufacturers thought themselves threatened by this new market and fought back by creating a co-operative trade association designed to maintain and increase soap consumption. Previously, soap had been sold as an agent of lovely skin and for its beautifying properties. Now cosmetics manufacturers saturated this market, they turned to soap's basic function: that of cleanliness. The Association of Soap and Glycerine Producers formed a Cleanliness Institute in 1927 that especially targeted schools, selling material at cost on skills such as brushing teeth and washing hands before and after eating. Children were to be educated to see dirtiness as a violation of a social norm (and become life-long consumers of soap). The New York Times welcomed the Institute as setting a standard for America and American values: 'slovenly folk, who have been going on the principle they can take a bath or leave it, are to be brought to their senses [...] The American standard of cleanliness [will now be maintained].'¹⁴

In contrast, French identity in the twentieth century was located in values that could be associated with dirt, a word that if translated as 'terre' has positive connotations of 'terroir', the land, the very root of French paysan livelihoods. During the First World War, when France had been threatened with destruction, it was her soil that had to be defended, her soil being the very essence of her nationhood. On 16 May 1915, Mgr Baudrillart, rector of Institut Catholique of Paris, led prayers in Notre Dame that French soil might be liberated, describing Joan of Arc as 'the incarnation of the French soil and of the French peasant.'¹⁵ Following a humiliating defeat for France in 1940, Vichy called for a return to the land and France's 'true' values that had been perverted through urbanisation. In the 1950s, Roland Barthes locates 'francité' in the visceral bloody foodstuffs of red wine and steak. Red wine is felt to be the lifeblood of the French state, 'une boisson totem' that unlike its equivalents (tea in England or milk in Holland) takes the form of blood itself. Drinking the product of the vines that grow deep into the French earth, the French drink a product that through distillation allows earth to become the blood of France. Wine acts like blood as well, warming the (national and

¹⁴ All the above discussion is based on Vincent Vinikas, *Soft Soap: Hard Sell: American Hygiene in an Age of Advertisement* (Ames, IA: Iowa State University Press, 1992).

¹⁵ Robert Gildea, *The Past in French History* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1994), p. 154.

personal) body: to reject red wine is to reject Frenchness itself. American films may present milk as the source of strength: this is an exotic strength found in gleaming pure white surfaces. Despite Mendes-France's self-conscious drinking of milk in the chamber 'le lait reste une substance exotique; c'est le vin qui est national.' Steak has similar connotations of bloodiness and universal Frenchness. The meat is described as a hunk of bloody flesh: the ways it can be cooked are described not in calorific units, but in terms of bloodiness: the steak can be '*bleu*', re-calling the heavy blood of the veins, or '*saignant*', the arterial blood flooding the animal. If the meat is cooked to such a point that the blood no longer flows from the meat, this is '*à point*': a limit rather than a perfection. Steak is simple substance, a patriotic dish that nourishes (and is) the flesh of the French soldier. This thick, red, fleshy meat is the national food of France.¹⁶

France is thus nourished by and finds its identity in blood and earth, in the colour red. For his investigation into everyday French life, Laurence Wylie, an American anthropologist, lived in Peyrane, a small French village, where 'there are none of the external signs of modernity – no chrome, no enamel, no electric iceboxes, no deep freezes, no television, no white kitchens, no glamorous bathrooms.'¹⁷ However, as Morin's study of Plodémet demonstrates, throughout the 1950s and 1960s, modernising pressures upon the French peasant did impact upon attitudes towards cleanliness, as the French nation moved from psychological identification with the colour red to the colour white.

Will the French ever be clean?

While red wine supported myths of Frenchness and French traditions of both the working class and the bourgeois, Roland Barthes was also turning his attention to detergents, face creams, milk and diamonds. Milk was the drink of purity and the future, with its health-giving properties and white colour. All France seemed converted to shiny, glistening surfaces: from the inedible but beautifully-presented food on the pages of *Elle* magazine that was adorned with glazes to the smooth, streamlined gloss of the new Citroën.¹⁸ Kristin Ross argues that Barthes's ideologeme around

¹⁶ Roland Barthes, *Mythologies* (Paris: Seuil, 1957), pp. 74-79.

¹⁷ Laurence Wylie, *A Village in the Vaucluse* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1957), pp. 12-32.

¹⁸ Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*.

detergent reveals a France with a desperate yen to be clean, to rid itself of decay of the teeth, the blood, the skin, and the breath.¹⁹

Françoise Giroud, the co-founder of *Elle* magazine, was part of this drive towards greater French cleanliness. France was to be as clean as the United States. The American woman was the 'anti-hippie', and *Elle* aimed to inculcate similar values, of gaiety, optimism and freshness. One of its many surveys posed the question 'Is the French Woman Clean?', the damning response being a clear 'no', with, for example, garter belts being washed on average once every two years.²⁰ France was encouraged to embrace American purity and whiteness in the form of consumer durables ('white goods') that were symbols of abundance following the impoverishment of the war years and, for the less well-off, bleach and washing powder before credit became widely available.²¹ The Marxist critic Henri Lefebvre demonstrates how advertising created myths concerning products such as detergent as adverts exploited the symbolic power of the colour white. 'C'est le symbole de la blancheur avec tout ce qu'il suggère, tout ce qui concerne la pureté, la virginité, ce qu'il y a d'immaculé dans l'âme; c'est la blancheur en tant que symbole qui sert à vendre tel ou tel détergent, et les gens 'marchent'. Ils achètent.'²² Advertising promises the consumer that they will be buying into a 'white' – clean, pure, immaculate – lifestyle, through the consumption of detergent. The January 10 1955 issue of *Elle* magazine is devoted to the theme of 'whiteness': bleach, pasteurised milk, linen, nappies and the white goods that make it possible. American advances in technology and hygiene are linked together: being modern means being clean means being more American. Furthermore, as the comments made by Françoise Giroud reveal, these developments were especially impressed upon women. They were to pay more attention to their appearance and their personal cleanliness (and the cleanliness of their homes) as part of the national drive toward modernity and 'whiteness' as a value.

Post-Second-World-War developments in America saw further improvements in cleansing products and increased consumption. This had particular effects in the hair-care industry, and the shiny, clean haired blonde was representative of American values of purity, hygiene, modernity and

¹⁹ Kristen Ross, *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies: Decolonization and the Reordering of French Culture* (Cambridge, MA: October / MIT Press, 1996), p. 73.

²⁰ Françoise Giroud, *Si je mens*, p. 127.

²¹ Claire Duchon 'Occupation Housewife: The Domestic Ideal in 1950s France', *French Cultural Studies* volume 2 (1991), 1-12.

²² Henri Lefebvre, 'Les Mythes de la vie quotidienne', *Cahiers internationaux de sociologie* volume 33 (juillet- décembre 1962), 67-74 (p.71).

whiteness. Both Françoise Giroud and Simone de Beauvoir, representative though they were of such different sections of French 1950s society, identified America as a land of cleanliness, and American women as having noticeably clean hair. 'Une Américaine à l'époque, c'était une femme aux cheveux toujours fraîchement lavés, bien briquée, en chapeau, avec un air neuf, et le sourire.'²³ 'This dulling heat, then, is America; and this orange juice handed to me by a young woman with shiny hair and a practiced smile is also America.'²⁴ For many years, soap was the primary cleansing agent in shampoos. It has many drawbacks: it lathers poorly in hard water and tends to deposit a dulling film of insoluble calcium. As a result, especially in hard water areas of the Mid-West, people limited the frequency of their hair washing to, at the most, once a week. Due to animal fat shortages in the Second World War, research was carried out into alternatives to soap and in 1947 synthetic detergent shampoos hit the American market and quickly supplanted soap shampoos, as they lathered copiously and rinsed freely. Manufacturers were delighted by the synthetic detergents' ability to be tailored specifically to different products, and they were used in developing bath foam, shower gels, and hair conditioners as well as shampoo. In just two years between 1949 and 1951, the value of the shampoo market increased by some twenty million dollars in America alone.²⁵

Procter and Gamble (who developed their 'syndet' shampoo, *Prell*, in 1949) began manufacturing in France in 1954 and in the same year an international 'syndet' congress was held in Paris. A shampoo advert from a May 1955 edition of *Elle* magazine reproduced in *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies* shows that the identifiably American product of shampoo was available to all French women, so they could care for their hair in the way American women did. The slogan proclaims 'Les Américaines ont les cheveux les mieux soignés du monde!' Technological improvements in the United States (thanks to Helena Rubenstein in this instance) allow American women to care for their hair better than any other nationality; hair cleanliness becomes a source of national pride. Once these new (better, scientifically developed) products are available in France, French women can also care for their hair in this way that is worthy of national pride. Needless to say, the owner of these sumptuously cared for, sparkling clean locks is a blonde.

²³ Françoise Giroud, *Si je mens*, p. 123.

²⁴ Simone de Beauvoir, *America Day by Day* (1954) trans. by Carol Cosman (London: Victor Gollancz, 1996), p. 20.

²⁵ Cynthia Champney Urbano '50 years of Hair-care Development', *Cosmetics and Toiletries magazine* 110: 12 (December 1995).

Being blonde was also more attainable than ever before. In 1950, Clairol developed the Miss Clairol Hair Color Bath that required no pre-bleaching and could be used at home. Improved technology led to more natural looking hair colours.²⁶ Ruth Turner Wilcox, commenting on hair-styles of the 1950s, compares them to 'the glamorous fancies of Marie-Antoinette', only with the advantages of modern technology meaning that it is easy to tint or dye one's hair without using messy powders or suffering social stigma.

Not only women but men too, take advantage of the modern rinses, tints and dyes. One can change to the color of one's dreams in short time by having it done in the hairdresser's salon, or quite simply, by doing the job's one's self. One's hair can be lightened with a bleach. Gone is the terror of choosing the wrong color, because tint or rinse can be washed out. Gone is the day when to change the hair color was a stigma in society. Manufacturers of the magic formulas claim that at least seventy-five percent of the feminine world has rinsed, dyed or bleached because science has eliminated guess-work.²⁷

The dyeing of one's hair is presented as a normal feminine desire, aided and abetted by technology. Thanks to the developments of science, one no longer needs to be a member of a privileged elite living in Versailles to dye one's hair. This is a Hollywood glamour available to anybody who can afford a cheap bottle of hair dye, and thus turns hairdressing from the preserve of the few to a mass-market endeavour. A L'Oréal advert placed in *Madame Express* magazine on 7 April 1960 associated the desire to colour one's hair with a reaction to the stresses and strains of modern life, a way of rejuvenating one's self and adding 'joie de vivre' to one's life. Where ten years ago, women were reluctant to risk dying their hair (fearing both social rejection and disastrous results), they were now '*rassurées*' and '*conquise*' by changing technology and social moeurs which allows every woman to participate in a 'conte de fées moderne où des alchimistes du vingtième siècle créent la couleur.'

This cleanliness and whiteness is not just a physical but a moral condition. In his analysis of intellectual anti-Americanism in France, Tony Judt argues that the post 1956 shift from pro-communism to anti-colonialism

²⁶ Cynthia Champney Urbano '50 years of Hair-care Development.'

²⁷ Ruth Turner Wilcox, *The Mode in Hats and Headdress* (London and New York: Charles Scribner and Sons, 1959), pp. 329-331.

in the community had little impact upon relations with America, but did bring about contemplation of the state of each nations' moral position. Whereas earlier anti-American, anti-West feelings had been based on metaphysical conceptions of preserving high culture and the attractions of the spiritual, the (American) West could now be charged with the far more concrete and demonstrable failings of racism and imperialism.

The question of a clean conscience troubled many in this decade. In the immediate post-war years, America seemed annoyingly guilt free, untroubled by Europe's uncomplicated and ambivalent past. It was this combination of a clean conscience and technological resources that would [...] be the Americans' strongest suit in their drive to world domination [...] it was with some glee that Mounier, Sartre, and others devoted their time and their journals to demonstrating just how dirty the American's hands really were.²⁸

Cleanliness becomes a moral compulsion, the desire for moral and spiritual goodness demonstrated by clean, white hands. Richard Dyer argues in his study of whiteness that one of Shakespeare's most memorable lines, Lady Macbeth's 'Will these hands ne'er be clean' mobilises this metaphor extremely successfully. Lady Macbeth's part in her husband's rise to power is bloody and ruthless; in her mind, she seeks to rid herself of the taint of the real means by which her (and other white) power has been achieved. If she can be clean, she will be free of taint. 'But – and here is the haunting power of the line – her terror is that she never will or can be. One can never be white enough, either metaphorically or literally. Its ideal forms are impossible.'²⁹

In Charles Cornu's study of soap, the use of soap and other cleansing agents is viewed as a natural result of modernity. This is further and explicitly viewed as an unmitigatedly 'good thing' (i.e. morally and politically pleasing) for French society as a whole rather than just those whose commercial interest lies in increasing consumption of these products.

Il ne suffit pas de mettre l'eau à la disposition de l'habitant, il faut aussi que les conditions de vie soit très améliorées. On sait combien la France a été en retard sur ce point; bien qu'un immense progrès ait été accompli et

²⁸ Tony Judt, *Past Imperfect: French intellectuals, 1944-56* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press), pp. 187- 204.

²⁹ Richard Dyer, *White* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), p. 78.

que les efforts des Pouvoirs publics commencent à porter leurs fruits (cas des logements neufs), il reste beaucoup à faire dans le domaine de la modernisation. Il est bien évident que l'intérêt particulier des producteurs de savons et détergents rejoint ici l'intérêt général qui est le bien-être de chacun.³⁰

The desire for ideal (i.e. impossible) whiteness is fed by new manufacturing industries as a clean home and clean hands are linked to a moral and social imperative.

America exported this whiteness, especially in its most idealised form, via the platinum blonde Marilyn Monroe. Laura Mulvey argues that US industry and the federal government both realised that American commodities (of which movie stars were one) had a sexiness that could counter the colourless asexuality of communism. Lorelei Lee's trip to Europe in *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* is a literal rendering of a process by which sex appeal is used to seduce Europeans into a relationship with America.

If America was to export the democracy of glamour into post-war, impoverished Europe, the movies could be its shop window [...] Marilyn Monroe, with her all American attributes and streamlined sexuality, came to epitomise in a single image this complex interface of the economic, the political, and the erotic. By the mid 1950s, she stood for a brand of classless glamour, available to anyone using American cosmetics, nylons and peroxide.³¹

Monroe's star image was continuing a long tradition of stars being used to showcase commodities. By the 1930s, cosmetics were synonymous with Hollywood, because its stars appeared in hundreds of thousands of adverts that saturated the media. Hollywood was realising that its stars were valuable merchandising assets; in 1933, MGM signed a 500,000 dollar contract with Coca-Cola providing the company with the much vaunted star power of the most star laden studio.³² The difference with Marilyn Monroe was that she was selling not just another product but the American way of life (which was perhaps just a collection of many thousands of products). With her shiny blonde hair and her sparkling diamonds, Marilyn Monroe is

³⁰ Charles Cornu, *Les Savons et les Détergents* (Paris: Que-sais je?, 1970), p. 10.

³¹ Laura Mulvey, 'Howard Hawks/ Marilyn Monroe/ Anita Loos' in *Howard Hawks: American Artist*, ed. by Jim Hillier and Peter Wollen (London: BFI, 1996), pp. 202-218 (p. 216).

³² Charles Eckert, 'The Carole Lombard in Macy's Window' in *Stardom: Industry of Desire*, ed. by Christine Gledhill (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), pp. 30-39.

the most obvious example of an exportation of American values of cleanliness, technological enhancement, and their perceived link to whiteness as the representative of these values. She seduced Europe three times over in her film roles: first as a show-girl in Paris in *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* (1953); then falling in love with Laurence Olivier in *The Prince and the Showgirl* (1957) and then Yves Montand in *Let's Make Love* (1960). She and Montand also had a highly publicised affair off-screen, which pitted the French Simone Signoret, Montand's wife, directly against Monroe, the representative of Hollywood glamour.

Monroe's whiteness identifies her almost literally as a star, a pulsating light, with her shiny white hair, her sparkling jewels, her creamy light outfits and her glowing skin. Her bloneness confirmed her as the Hollywood gloss lighting up grey 1950s Europe. A typical picture of Montand and Monroe during the affair shows Monroe in a white dress, her eyes a deep sparkling blue, her hair bright white: Montand is in a dark suit. Signoret was competing against the light, white, starry Hollywood blonde. Susan Hayward argues that this affair was the moment when Signoret entered discourse as a national icon of French womanhood. The affair became a national issue as French pride in the seductive powers of their women was first threatened then re-affirmed when Montand returned to his wife.³³ Yet films Signoret made in the late 1940s and early 1950s already established her as firmly attached to a national community. The affair simply recuperated these meanings and gave them new impetus under the threat offered up the ultimate blonde, the American Monroe.

Signoret as French blonde.

Simone Signoret incarnates typically French values, linking tradition, modernity, history, masculinity, femininity, earthiness and aura in a balanced, well-adjusted whole. She played her first film roles with a notable sensuality, critics focussing on her slim legs and alluring eyes, yet she was not groomed for export in the way Bardot was (see chapter four). She was very much in the French tradition, seen as being part of an earthy, almost masculine way of acting primarily embodied by the 1930s star Arletty. Whilst a compliment to Signoret, Susan Hayward suggests that this

³³ Susan Hayward, 'Simone Signoret 1921-1985: the star as sign – the sign as scar', *Women and Representation*, ed. by Diana Knight and Judith Still, (Nottingham: WIF Publications - Women Teaching French Occasional Papers 3, 1995), pp. 57-74.

comparison makes her an anachronism in the modernising 1950s.³⁴ Certainly, it places her in a discourse of traditional Frenchness, located earlier in earthy vitality rather than shining surfaces. The press presented her as the anti-star, the antidote to false glamour.

Le succès n'a pas grisé Simone Signoret. Elle reste, aujourd'hui encore, fidèle au village, aux amis et aux usages de ses débuts. Elle hante toujours les abords de Saint-Germain-des-Prés; fume comme autrefois les cigarettes de gros caporal, garde de la même affection gastronomique pour le démocratique vin rouge et le soupe à l'oignon, et s'habille, comme par le passé, d'un vieil imperméable qui masque un chandail à col roulé sur un pantalon de flanelle ("on ne travaille bien qu'en pantalon").³⁵

In becoming a site for Frenchness (notably summarised above as a taste for red wine and onion soup) and later French history, Signoret cannot be a star, at least not in the conventional terms of the word. She is located within a framework of authenticity which precludes a Hollywood type stardom: 'en devenant un personnage, une femme en prise avec le deuxième moitié du siècle [...], Simone Signoret a pris le risque de ne plus avoir avec le cinéma qu'une relation strictement professionnelle. De n'être qu'une grande comédienne dans des films et un personnage dans la vie. Au lieu d'être une star.'³⁶ Rather than an American star, Signoret is part and parcel of the French nation, a role she shares with her husband.

The French press presents Signoret and Montand as the embodiment of French cinema, culture and even France itself. *Paris-Match* describes them as 'le couple solide du cinéma français.'³⁷ Catherine David describes how this couple is a myth for the French, representing an entire generation to themselves: 'et ce grand amour allait devenir, pour toute une génération, un mythe [...] il y avait, sûrement, une part de réalité dans la fiction d'une entente sans faille qui a fait de ce duo une gloire nationale, tutélaire.'³⁸ Signoret and Montand are seen as representative of '*nous*', the national French community which is cemented together in the popular imagination

³⁴ Susan Hayward, 'Simone Signoret 1921-1985.'

³⁵ *Uni France Film: Informations* 4 (juin 1950), not paginated.

³⁶ Serge Toubiana, 'Simone Signoret: sacré monstre', *Journal du cahiers du cinéma*, 377 (novembre 1985).

³⁷ *Paris Match* 589 (23 juillet 1960), not paginated.

³⁸ Catherine David, *Simone Signoret ou la mémoire partagée* (Paris: Robert Laffont, 1990) p. 84

through a series of events that construct a 'national' identity – the French revolution, the Second World War, May 1968. These key-dates are '*lieux de memoire*', memory sites whose very existence provides a sense of national cohesion. They form part of a narrative produced by the national media and educational systems in a national language which links people who don't know each other into an 'imagined community' of 'la nation française'.³⁹ In the introduction to his biography of Montand, Rémond explicitly links him to the memory sites that resonate for his generation.

Raconter Montand, c'est parler de nous. De notre époque, des houles qui la traversent, espoirs, désillusions, contradictions. Impossible de tracer l'itinéraire d'une carrière hors du temps, d'énumérer des films, des disques, des récitals. Montand est des nôtres. Et notre histoire colle à la sienne. Il suffit d'aligner quelques mots: fascisme, exil, misères, usine, après-guerre, prolo chantant, Appel de Stockholm, guerre froide, Rosenberg, McCarthysme, Budapest, Moscou, Kroutchev, Hollywood, Espagne, Prague, Chili [...] cas unique, me semble-t-il, d'une vedette à ce-point liée a son époque.⁴⁰

Montand is seen as both product and producer of his time – but far from this being unique, Catherine David considers Signoret in strikingly similar terms: 'à travers son histoire, c'est une génération toute entière dont l'aventure est contée. Un temps de fêtes, de luttes politiques et d'espoirs brisés.'⁴¹ It is not just as an ordinary couple that the Montands travelled to America – it was as the representatives of the French community to which they belonged. They were the incarnation of French cultural and cinematic values, including the belief in the solidity of their couple.

Signoret was ensconced within French cultural traditions, having been 're-born' 'un soir de mars 1941 sur une banquette du Café de Flore, boulevard St- Germain, Paris Vième' when she met the 'bande de Flore' including Yves Allégret, her first husband.⁴² In this account, she is once more firmly located in time and space. She remains as fixed as in her first major

³⁹ The phrase is first used in Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflection on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 2nd edition 1991).

⁴⁰ Alain Rémond, *Yves Montand* (Paris: Henri Veyrier, 1977) p. 9.

⁴¹ Catherine David, *Simone Signoret* p. 3.

⁴² Claude-Jean Phillippe, *Simone Signoret* (Paris: Hachette, 1985) p. 43 This 're-birth' also conveniently hides her less French 'original' birth as a half- Jewish girl, Simone Kaminker. During the War she took walk-on parts and changed her name to Signoret. It was often wrongly assumed that she was the daughter or niece of the actor Gabriel Signoret, further tying her into French performance traditions.

film, *Dedée d'Anvers* (Allégret, 1948). She is from Antwerp, she will not shift in time or space. In this film, her fixedness is her tragedy: her plan to leave with her lover is doomed by the self-interest of her pimp. She will remain forever at the port, the town on the margins of the world. The sailors come and go: Dedée remains the fixed point of contact. She is always to be found at *The Big Moon*, revenged by and thus forever bound to the *patron* and his small entourage. This emphasis on being part of a community is also found in *Casque d'Or*, one of Signoret's most famous roles, and the one that turned her blonde. It is born out of a uniquely French artistic tradition and milieu, based on a real-life character, Amélie Hélié.⁴³ Hélié worked as a prostitute in the Belleville district of Paris. She met Pleigneur, a petty crook from the area at a bal populaire on the 14th July and they fell instantly in love. In despair over her fidelity, Pleigneur joined a gang as Manda in the hope of winning her over. He was voted 'le roi des apaches' and became the leader of the prolific gang (430 crimes were committed in two years, with no arrests made). Hélié, known as Casque d'Or because of her striking blonde hair, then began an affair with Henri de Monmartre, the leader of a rival gang, in the hope of making Manda prove his love for her in a duel. The fatal blow to Manda's pride occurred however when she fell in love with Manda's lieutenant, Leca: they met just before Christmas 1901. Leca was from Corsica, and the affair was reportedly avidly by newspapers of the time. Leca was not in love with Hélié, however, but was pushed into the relationship by the desire for revenge, as Manda had earlier stolen his mistress Germaine van Maelle, known as La Panthère. When Leca threatened to leave Paris with Hélié in January 1902, a bloody vendetta started between Manda's gang and Leca's newly formed rival gang. Manda was arrested and charged in June 1902; as he was lead to the Assises, he called 'Vous ne savez pas ce que c'est, aimer une fille?' Leca was arrested and sent to Guyana. Hélié, benefiting from the notoriety of the case, went on to have a successful singing career.⁴⁴

The story firmly locates the character within a Parisian narrative and time frame. She comes from a specific area of the capital, known for its gangs: she meets her lovers on festival days, times of leisure and freedom. She is tied down in space and time. Significantly changed to concentrate on the love story between Manda and Casque d'Or, the 'fait divers' was turned into a film by Jacques Becker in 1952. The story adds to Signoret's

⁴³ Catherine David, *Simone Signoret*, p. 97.

⁴⁴ Louis Chevalier, *Monmartre du plaisir et du crime* (Paris: Robert Laffont, 1980), pp. 280-282.

incarnation of authenticity and Frenchness, the sense of her being grounded within a specific French historical reality. The role also provided a place for her within French cinematic history; 'dans l'aventure, Simone va gagner l'immortalité indiscutable des stars, et une place de premier plan dans le coeur des spectateurs, les encyclopédies du cinéma, les cinémathèques de la culture française.'⁴⁵

Blonde hair is a hugely important signifier both within the film text and beyond it, drawing meanings from the text and adding to meaning within the text concerning nationality, sexuality and stardom. The title of the film instantly draws the spectator's attention to the blonde hair of its protagonist. Signoret reports that she had to go to a special hairdresser for her hair to be coloured and that Becker 'se penchait sur les racines de mes cheveux comme Louis Pasteur sur son microscope.'⁴⁶ Hair is used to symbolise both Marie's streetwise nature (her ability to protect herself in a world of gangsters) and her growing intimacy with and trust of Manda. In the public sphere, this hair is kept strictly tied up, forming a protective helmet. It is only deep in the heart of the countryside, in the romantic interlude she manages to enjoy alone with Manda, far from Paris, that Marie (both literally and metaphorically) lets her hair down. Her hair distinguishes her from the rest of her community in its colour and form, but it also consolidates her place within that community: as a feisty girl who is part of a rough-and-ready street gang and who blossoms into a tender individual when she falls in love with Manda. For all that she plays the blonde *femme fatale*, Marie is still very much part of French tradition of community and class. Marie has a modern sexuality, embodying a 'female in her own right' eroticism⁴⁷ but is still depicted within a specifically French working class tradition. Her very name *Casque d'or* underlines these ambiguities: gold suggests wealth and corruption – the only other character we see associated with gold is Leca, when he gives a *louis d'or* to Anatole's grandmother having just organised his death, and when we see his hand in close-up clutching several golden coins. Marie's golden hair links her to Leca but also adds to her sexual attractiveness and 'modernity'. Gold is also to be valued and prized – Marie is the treasure of the group over

⁴⁵ Catherine David, *Simone Signoret*, p. 98.

⁴⁶ Simone Signoret, *La nostalgie n'est plus ce qu'elle était* (Paris: Seuil, 1976), p. 115.

⁴⁷ This is an independent eroticism that is illustrated in the film especially by Marie's rowing – she refuses to let Roland take the oar from her and later she will row to Manda when she organises their illicit rendez-vous. It is also reinforced by Signoret's star image that responded to a representation/ reification of French woman's sexuality in the fifties as being self-determined. See Susan Hayward, *French National Cinema*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), p. 12.

whom the men vie. The idea that she is another currency within the group is hinted at when Leca offers to buy her from Roland and secondly when, no sooner has Marie left Leca's, he opens his safe and distributes money among the gang. Her chemical blonde colouring suggests sexuality and capitalist exchange. However, her casque has a semantic link to the working class flat caps (*casquettes*) sported by Manda and Raymond who embody friendship and integrity. Leca rejects these caps in favour of the dandy's bowler hat. Here, Marie's casque links her to the 'honest' French working class against patriarchal corruption. Her hair colour and style thus has multiple and contradictory significations of wealth, corruption, sexuality, modernity and integrity, all key issues within French post-war society.

For all that Marie's hair colour may connote wealth, this is modified by her love of simple rural pleasures and heartily rustic French food. The very setting of the film at the turn of the century further allows it to exploit an idea of Marie as icon of authentic Frenchness. It lovingly recreated the 'belle époque' of the late-nineteenth century in its setting. The start of the film suggests two French art traditions: the credits roll over an art nouveau backdrop; the film opens with the group rowing towards a guinguette, recalling the Impressionist paintings of Renoir and Manet. Dudley Andrew thus argues that the film celebrates a vivid working class existence that is recognised and celebrated within French art. Furthermore, the idea for the film was originally mooted during the 1930s, the era of Poetic Realism, a cultural high point for French cinema that was harked back to in the fifties. Renoir's shimmering depictions of late nineteenth century Paris and the Popular Front films of the thirties both find echoes here.⁴⁸

Marie thus has a particularly complicated relationship toward modernity: as the blonde, she specifically suggests links with Hollywood and stars such as Monroe. She pulls Manda away from a world of paternalism, hierarchy and deference (either working for the carpenter or under Leca's leadership in the gang) to a new relationship built on being part of a couple, a relationship that Ross argues is a key concept in French post-war cultural discourses of modernisation and Americanisation.⁴⁹ Yet Marie is also part of a film that is robustly within French artistic, cinematic and social traditions and harking back to their limpid view of the world with a clarity of values

⁴⁸ Dudley Andrew, 'Casque d'or, casquettes, a cask of ageing wine: Jacques Becker's *Casque d'or*', in *French Film: Texts and Contexts* ed. by Ginette Vincendeau and Susan Hayward (London and New York: Routledge, 1990), pp. 157-172.

⁴⁹ Kirsten Ross, *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies: Decolonization and the Re-ordering of French culture*, pp. 123-156.

lacking in post-war France. That in many ways the film, with its belle époque setting, seems to be deliberately avoiding addressing the social issues of the day is in itself comment upon them, upon the desire to avoid confronting awkward questions. Andrew locates the film within ‘entertainment cinema’ of the fifties and claims that it ‘offers neither program nor project, merely an unforgettable emblem [of the dancing couple].’⁵⁰

The film does however have a strong political inflection. First, Marie’s bloneness is given a distinctly working-class identity. She is part of a French national discourse concerning French working class identity, and her hair colour and style, co-joined in her name, celebrate her as the sparkling member of the Belleville community. She is in direct contrast to the three bourgeois women who are part of a group visiting *L’Ange Gabriel* to play the class tourist and experience some genuine grit. They laughingly discuss how much fun it would be to witness a murder or be raped, crass comments they will regret. The blonde woman is asked to dance by Roland, who roughly hauls her onto the dance floor: the advances of this ‘impossible voyou’ shock her. Later in the evening, when Roland’s dead body is carried into the bar, they are shocked and wish to leave, afraid to be polluted by what they may have seen or heard. The blonde here offers no understanding toward or sympathy with the Belleville community. The bourgeois are revealed as cowardly hypocrites and the blonde’s reactions are as harsh and cold (and possibly false) as her sparkling diamonds. The meanings of the body change according to class as well as nationality.

Secondly, as Andrew himself goes on to argue, the recurrent tune within the film, *Les Temps des cerises*, has powerful political connotations. Composed by Jean-Baptist Clément in 1866, this love song acquired direct revolutionary overtones when he published it along with his other songs in *Chansons révolutionnaires* in 1868. In the last few years of the belle époque, after Clément’s death, the song was reworked, keeping its lyrical tune but sporting radical new lyrics and a new title – *Les Temps des crises*. Now overtly political, it persisted into the 1930s as an anthem to be sung alongside the *Internationale*, a Left-wing antidote to *La Marseillaise* which had been appropriated by the Right.⁵¹ Its presence underscores a lost political utopia, a moment of perfect fraternity and love before disaster – the dashed hopes of the Popular Front, the thirties finishing in the disarray of the *drôle de guerre* and ignominious defeat. Manda and Marie’s story echoes this tragic

⁵⁰ Dudley Andrew, ‘Jacques Becker’s *Casque d’or*’, pp.157-172.

⁵¹ Dudley Andrew, ‘Jacques Becker’s *Casque d’or*’, pp. 157-172.

trajectory; hope and love turns to disaster and despair. They have two perfect moments of fusion. The first is in the guinguette, when their eyes meet as Marie is on the dance floor and Manda with Raymond, the instant attraction between them suggested by insistent shot reverse shots of the two characters looking at each other and confirmed by the two of them dancing together. This moment of perfection recurs right at the end of the film. The guillotine is presented to us in long shot, then we see the knife fall and cut to Marie's head falling forwards, revealing a new view of her splendid head of hair. There is then a dissolve to an image of Manda and herself spinning away in an empty guinguette as the eternal blissful couple. The film provides no context for this image: it could be in Marie's head, as she recollects her and Manda's moment of blissful happiness. It could belong to Manda, who earlier promised, 'Je pense toujours à toi Marie'. It could be an image for the audience, an objective recollection of the film's most potent image of love and happiness, a moment of transcendental uniting of man and woman, myth and reality, modernity and tradition. It is the final image that is designed to seal in the audience's mind the struggle between modern life and French traditions hinted at in the film's narrative, *mise en scène*, and star.

The blonde challenges patriarchal order. The world presented to us in *Casque d'Or* is the world of the homosocial male grouping. Whilst the men in the gang may have girlfriends, they are not seen as people, but rather as objects to be bartered (this is especially so for Marie, with her precious golden mane). When Manda is introduced to the group at the guinguette, the men are identified to him by two sets of names – their Christian name and the nickname bestowed on them by the gang. They have their subjectivity affirmed twice over, as members of the national group 'France' and members of the gang. The women are not even named once. This grouping is ruled over by a corrupt father figure, Leca. Manda's situation at the start of the film has him also bound in a relationship based upon patriarchy and hierarchy – working for the carpenter as a pseudo son, half engaged to the carpenter's daughter. The decisive break occurs when Marie calls for Manda at the carpenter's. Manda is in the shop, and is told 'la dame là' wishes to see him. The film cuts to a shot using depth of field to allow us to see Marie in the distance waving her feather boa, beckoning Manda. Music plays and the camera finally rests on a close up of the two of them as they kiss. The music and the kiss ends abruptly when the carpenter's daughter finds them and announces her engagement to Manda. Marie leaves, but the die is cast:

Manda's next line will be 'Je suis venu te chercher Marie.' He has left the bonds of his craft in order to form a couple.

Yet the story of *Casque d'Or* is one of failed synthesis. For all we have a glimpse of total fusion, the blonde (with her chemically enhanced colouring, a signifier of modernity in itself) fails in her task to bring about the ideal romantic and living unit as figured at the time. Twentieth-century France has been almost obsessed by the question of childbirth, following the devastation of two world wars and falling birth rates. By the 1950s, the ideal was seen as being part of a harmonious couple to nurture children, and magazines such as *Paris-Match* and *Elle*, promoted images of couples. The couple was thus the privileged way to experience French life⁵². Marie's lover dies for an older, different set of values, those inscribed within the French revolutionary tradition, most obviously that of fraternity. He leaves the countryside idyll to save his friend Raymond, who has been set up by Leca. He then rebels against Leca, the father figure, killing him in cold blood in a deserted alleyway, after stumbling across Marie's slippers by Leca's bed. Manda is a soldier of the Republic, revenging his compatriot Raymond and himself against corrupt patriarchal forces claiming the power of the Law (Leca's relations with the policeman) and the bedroom (Leca's cynical manipulation of Marie). Manda's total rejection of these forces is underlined by the scene where Manda enters the square where the guillotine is ready, itself a potent symbol of the Terror. He walks through an archway surrounded by policemen and he has a priest walking along by his side. He ignores them all, rushing straight to his death. There is a shot of a knife falling and a cut to Marie's head falling forward. The attempt at harmonious French modernisation has been futile, overwhelmed by past French traditions and values. The promise Marie's hair held, a knitting together of community spirit ('casque') and the sexuality suited to being part of a modern liberated couple ('d'or'), is revealed as false. Within the discourse of Becker's film, therefore, the blonde's hair is held to offer reconciliation between tradition and modernity, suggesting purity and sexuality, integrity and corruption. The contradictions are dissolved in the utopian dance, a moment where the narrative flow of the film is put on hold and we are offered pure spectacle, linking *Casque d'Or* to the musical tradition. Yet this dance is fantasy: the blonde offers no solution to the coming of modernity. All is ambiguity. Robin Buss argues that the countryside and the city are set up as opposing

⁵² Claire Duchon, *Women's Rights and Women's Lives in France 1944-1986* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), p. 99.

places, the city as corrupt and the countryside as pure and unsullied.⁵³ However, Becker undermines the neatness of this opposition. Manda and Marie are walking through the woods together, filmed in tracking shot. The camera pans to the sky, there is an *imperceptible* change, and the camera swings back to Leca walking down a Paris street. There is no essential difference between the two locales. Both are part of the same moral universe – Leca’s influence can easily stretch to the countryside, and the blonde can offer no promise of purity.

Indeed, Marie’s character is marked by ambiguity. It is tempting to classify her as a stereotypical ‘tart with a golden heart’, a typical figure of French cinema, and a victim of society. With Marie, this position is not so clear cut. She doesn’t complain about her position – she is even compliant with it. What does upset her is Roland, her lover. The film opens with them arguing, and given the general reaction of the *bande*, this is not an unusual occurrence. The moment of fusion she has with Manda is just that – a moment. She doesn’t reject Leca’s proposition (that he buy her from Roland) out of hand, and when Manda kills Roland, far from throwing herself in the former’s arms, she runs away. In fact, what matters to her above all is her liberty. She opposed Roland and Leca for the same reason – because they wish to objectify her. She rejoins Manda as an equal rather than a kept mistress.⁵⁴ This description of Marie as liberty links her to another French female icon, Marianne. Becker changed the name of the original protagonist from Amélie to Marie, itself suggestive of Marianne. The complicated hairstyle is reminiscent of the revolutionary Phrygian bonnet worn by Marianne. With her bare breasts and staunch identification with *la République*, Marianne echoes Marie’s self-determination and frank approach to sexuality. If Manda can be claimed to value the republican virtue of fraternity, Marie is liberty and together they form equality. The film is not this schematic; it does however, clearly locate its characters within French Republican traditions, threatened by modernity and also by the characters themselves, for ‘ils ne sont ni totalement blancs, ni totalement noirs.’⁵⁵ In other words, they are ordinary people. Becker claimed in an interview that he was not excited by plot; he wanted his films to get under the skin of his characters. ‘l’histoire m’importent un peu [...]mais ne me passionnent nullement. Je m’efforce de raconter mon affaire le mieux que je puis, et c’est tout. Seul les personnages de mes histoires (et ils deviennent mes

⁵³ Robin Buss, *French Film Noir* (London: Marion Boyars, 1994), p. 76.

⁵⁴ *Image et Son* no 124 (1968), not paginated.

⁵⁵ *Image et Son* no 124 (1968), not paginated.

personnages) m'obsèdent vraiment au point d'y penser sans cesse.'⁵⁶ This gives Becker the opportunity to nuance his characters. Even Leca, the antipathetic character of the piece, has his redeeming qualities. He respects the rules of the gang – for example, distributing the money between members, and punishing Freddo for stealing some money for himself. 'C'est un être-humain avec ses défauts et ses qualités, les premiers dominant les seconds.'⁵⁷ The idea of balance as a French trait comes to the fore again. Becker's characters are nuanced and do not veer to extremes in their behaviour; Becker said in interview he preferred the ordinary to the exceptional. He saw his characters in resolutely national terms. 'Ça se passe en France, je suis Français, je travaille sur des Français, je regarde des Français, je m'intéresse aux Français.'⁵⁸ Writing their affectionate obituary for him, *Cahiers du cinéma* consider Becker as an essential part of the French cinematic and national landscape.

Becker donnait l'impression d'être tellement Français [...] c'était l'existence et la façon de vivre d'hommes comme Becker que faisaient croire à une 'notion' française. L'elegance morale et physique, la réserve du protestantisme, l'amour des voitures, la fascination exercée par les jolies femmes, la culte de l'amitié [...] un certain type de Français en voie de disparition.'⁵⁹

Becker's Marie is thus seen as the articulation of a vision of Frenchness, a fascinating 'jolie femme' incarnating the attraction of French culture and traditions, threatened by the forces she herself partially represents – modernity, romantic love, lack of spirituality and freedom.

Signoret's off-screen persona offers a more optimistic vision of French femininity and its relation to modernity. Susan Hayward argues that Signoret was not only anachronistic in her embodiment of a 1930s cinematic sensibility but also because her frank, self-determined sexuality was perceived as threatening in an overwhelmingly patriarchal 1950s France. Hayward says that Signoret grew in popularity in the 1960s as her agency was increasingly appreciated by a more liberated society. She argues that

⁵⁶ Jacques Rivette and François Truffaut, 'Entretien avec Jacques Becker', *Cahiers du cinéma* 32 (février 1954), 3-19.

⁵⁷ *Image et Son* no 124 (1968), not paginated.

⁵⁸ Jacques Rivette and François Truffaut, 'Entretien avec Jacques Becker.'

⁵⁹ *Cahiers du cinéma*, 106 (avril 1960).

Signoret was also taken to heart as a symbol of France following Montand's affair.

It is important to nuance this argument slightly. Signoret was a figure of balance, marrying different characteristics (and indeed, Hayward goes on to explore her marrying of active and passive, masculine and feminine behaviour in her film roles).⁶⁰ She blends together tradition and modernity in her on-screen and off-screen persona (for example, the setting of *Casque d'Or* versus Marie's 'modern' relationship with Manda, her links to Arletty's style of performance and her liberated attitudes). Rather than her connotations of the past being forgotten in 1960s France, Signoret blends the two into a synthesis of balance and contentment: she can be modern and French. The affair with Monroe threw Signoret's already present characteristics further into relief due to the contrast between the two stars. The betrayal left its scars, which would place Signoret into a further tradition of French feminine performance: suffering. Piaf and Fréhal in their late careers both offered up a spectacle of the suffering female, their mental anguish projected onto their wracked bodies. Signoret rejected the masochism of this, but she embraced ageing, another index of her authenticity. Signoret achieved a very difficult task: she offered the vision of how one could be both a modern, self-determined woman and authentically French.

But do French Gentlemen Prefer American Blondes?

Just a year after *Casque d'Or* was shown in cinemas, Howard Hawks, the American director fêted by the *Cahiers du cinéma* critics, pictured another blonde wandering through the streets of Paris in *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*. The title of the film again explicitly draws the audience's attention toward the colour and function of the star's hair. This blonde's hair certainly is no protective helmet however; on the contrary, it is her golden hair that serves to attract gentlemen to her, rather than ward them off. Her blonde hair promises her wealth in exchange for sexual services. The blonde's hair loses the innocence it has in *Casque d'Or* in its place within the knowing sexuality of Hawks's film. The American's blonde hair becomes associated with a love of wealth that runs to excess, most notably in the mad shopping spree in Paris where we have several consecutive shots of high class Parisian *couture* boutiques, the girls finally filling the French taxi to

⁶⁰ Susan Hayward, 'Simone Signoret 1921-1985.'

overflowing with parcels, and in the famous show number ‘Diamonds Are a Girl’s Best Friend.’ Marie takes her place as the shining star of a French community; Lorelei is the excessive blonde who has embraced sexuality and consumerism. In Hawks’ film, the blonde hair serves to make the girl more attractive to men and she trades on this attractiveness for material gain. The gold of her hair links to another precious mineral, the diamonds she covets, all within a strict capitalist logic – golden hair for diamond tiaras. Piggy makes his money mining diamonds, Lorelei digging gold – both in their own way exploit men for wealth. Whilst Marie’s hair sparkles in the context of her group, Lorelei’s bloneness is ‘off the gold exchange’ with no fixed value but ready to be sold to the highest bidder.

Gentlemen Prefer Blondes explores consumer choice. Its title embodies the whole idea of preference and choice – in this case a sexual predilection for the blonde woman as the embodiment of sexual charisma and charm. It is an image shot through with racist and imperialist assumptions. Monroe is figured as part of the American dream of territorial expansion, an exporting of whiteness and white values to the world (after all, if gentlemen prefer blondes, what are we to conclude about the savages?) Offered up to the spectator in glorious stretched form thanks to the new technology of CinemaScope, Monroe positively explodes whiteness, symbol of both realism (the accurate picture) and spectacle. Race and sexuality are thus conflated in Monroe’s star persona, especially as constructed in *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*. She is a sexual and a racial ideal, her blonde hair confirming her whiteness and thus her sexual desirability and her conformity to American values both of territorial expansion and feminine sexuality as pleasing to men. Maureen Turim locates the film’s overall discourse as reduction of women to objectified bodies, their passion subsumed into heterosexual marriage. Lorelei and Dorothy are both showgirls, designed for spectacle and display. They display their bodies, which are beautiful objects and their most precious commodity. The ultimate precious stone is not a diamond but the girl herself. The girl is revealed as the absolute object – beautiful, but with no use value. The film itself also delights in glittering spectacle. The girls are beautiful objects to be admired and acquired by men, both within the film’s story and upon the screen. Turim argues that the film undercuts its own discourse concerning the blonde as distinctions between love and money, brunette and blonde, collapse at the altar of heterosexual

monogamy.⁶¹ The film is intimately concerned with consumerism and sexual desire becomes subsumed into strict capitalist logic.

However, as Laura Mulvey argues, this analysis ignores that the girls can also be operating as critical subjects. The film constantly undercuts the power of the male gaze. Lorelei is aware of the advantages her blonde hair brings her, using it as does Marie in *Casque d'Or*, to manipulate the patriarchal order. Malone, the private detective, and the representative of the male gaze upon Lorelei/ Monroe (he is informed at the start of the cruise to 'keep an eye on the blonde') is weakened by the fact he is masquerading as a rich man, while actually spying on Lorelei. As he snaps Lorelei and Piggy through the porthole, he is reduced from owner of the gaze to grubby peeping Tom. In their attempts to remove incriminating evidence from him, Dorothy and Lorelei subject him to a typical Hawksian 'sex and role reversal'.⁶² He is made drunk, stripped of his trousers and bundled off in a frilly dressing gown. Male sexual power is linked to the ability to provide diamonds, rather than the ability to control the gaze, the traditional marker within cinema of objectification. In the opening sequence, Lorelei returns Mr Esmond's adoring gaze when she realises he has a diamond in his pocket. Later, the mutual shot reverse shot indicator of attraction between Piggy and Lorelei occurs when the latter envisages Piggy's elderly, asexual head as a large, glittering diamond. It is Lorelei rather than Piggy that is controlling the gaze and imagining the man into a form of objectified perfection – in this case, a huge diamond.

The idea of the blonde as being most disruptive to the 'natural' French order is especially brought out when Dorothy imitates Lorelei causing chaos in the courtroom. Far from being a victim of capitalist codes, the blonde is a manipulator of them. Dorothy dons a blonde wig and impersonates Lorelei for her courtroom sequence (Turim argues that this shows how the blonde and the brunette are essentially 'the same.' It can however be read as indicating the opposite, the power of the blonde rather than the brunette to challenge tradition because of her perceived desirability). As a blonde, Dorothy disrupts sexual, legal and patriarchal codes. Dorothy's successful impersonation of her blonde friend in a courtroom suggest that there is the possibility of subverting the legal, patriarchal, and, especially capitalist codes that regulate the blonde and her whiteness. Blondenness,

⁶¹ Maureen Turim, 'Gentlemen Consume Blondes', in *Movies and Methods*, ed. by Bill Nicholls volume 2 (Los Angeles and Berkeley: University of California Press), pp. 369-378.

⁶² Laura Mulvey, 'Howard Hawks/ Marilyn Monroe/ Anita Loos', p. 215.

especially when a conscious choice, has the possibility to be the site of power and subversion for women as well as a means of their objectification.

Hawks himself saw his film as a modern joke, a subversion of traditional plots.

Ce n'était qu'une plaisanterie. Dans les autres films, vous avez deux hommes qui sortent et essaient de trouver quelques jolies filles pour s'amuser. Nous avons imaginé le contraire et pris deux filles qui sortent et se trouvent quelques hommes pour s'amuser: histoire parfaitement moderne; cela m'a beaucoup plu; c'était drôle.⁶³

In Hawks's description, the girls are the one in charge of the game, looking for men as men look for women. Indeed, the issue of the gaze is central to the operation of Monroe's screen image. Monroe's image does function in the traditional cinematic mode of femininity: she is an object for display, with the male gaze confirming her objectification and thus, in this discourse, idealised femininity. In *The Seven Year Itch*, the Girl/Monroe is first introduced through her curvaceous shadow. She cannot see Richard/Tom Ewell, who, with the audience sharing his point of view, is shown in a rapid montage of shot reverse shots admiring the view. A further sequence shows Richard admiring the Girl's legs as she descends the stairs. The framing of Monroe's legs by the camera is a classic cinematic presentation of the female body for the male gaze through the identification with a male subject on the screen.

However, Monroe's star image does also suggest a less conventional relationship to the operation of the gaze. As Lisa Cohen argues, the film *How to Marry a Millionaire* (Negulesco, 1953) appears positively obsessed with the process of looking at Monroe, and Monroe looking. Pola/Monroe refuses to wear her glasses as she believes these make her less attractive to men, which means she is constantly taking them off and putting them back on again. In a scene archetypal of the position of the female star, Pola/Monroe retires to the bathroom to fix herself up. Dressed in a raspberry pink satin gown, she stands alone in the restaurant ladies' bathroom, in front of four curved floor-to-ceiling mirrors – and takes off her glasses. For one brief but highly pleasurable moment, the spectator is confronted by an excessively specularised Monroe – there are five of her. She is seen from several angles,

⁶³ Jacques Becker, François Truffaut and Jacques Rivette, 'Entretien avec Howard Hawks', *Cahiers du cinéma* 56 (février 1956), 4-17.

and she virtually fills the screen. Yet she cannot see herself, just as when any film star is being looked at by a movie audience, they cannot see themselves. At this moment she is the powerless object. Yet this movie also pointedly, although comically, reverses the scenario in which a woman sheds her ability to see herself in order to be at her most attractive, by allowing Monroe to end up both bespectacled and married (to an astigmatic, a man who could not see her without his glasses). This narrative reversal of cinematic cliché (a woman removes her glasses and is discovered to be beautiful) allows Pola/Monroe ultimate control over her own image.⁶⁴

This struggle over her position vis à vis the male gaze is determined partially by Monroe's bloneness. Monroe was seen as some kind of natural phenomenon or incarnation of the cinema, views that are widely expressed in French discourse, but she is also a creation. Her blonde hair is the most visible sign of her own re-making of herself, her demand to be looked at and to engage the spectator. Monroe's deliberate choice of bloneness stresses her vulnerability, her need to be the object of the gaze and to have her femininity affirmed through its operation. However, it also suggests her power to change and control her image. Bloneness does bestow some kind of power; in *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*, Hawks identifies this as a sexual power over men. Mulvey persuasively suggests that the 'like the perfect fetish, the film's shiny surface holds the gaze with a fascination that blocks out all enquiry and is rendered anathema to traditional and male auteurist critics.'⁶⁵ The blonde escapes the decoding male gaze precisely through her sexual desirability produced through a dazzling surface. She cannot be totally read by conventional male cinematic discourse. Lorelei's visit to Freud in Vienna in the novel exemplifies this:

I told him I never really dream about anything. [...] So Dr Froyd was very very surprized at a girl who did not dream about anything. So then he asked me about my life [...] So then he called in his assistance and he pointed at me and talked to his assistance quite a lot in the Viennese landguage. So then his assistance looked at me and looked at me and it really seems as if I was quite a famous case. So then Dr. Froyd said that all I really needed was to cultivate a few inhibitions and get some sleep.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Lisa Cohen, 'The Horizontal Walk: Marilyn Monroe, CinemaScope, and Sexuality', *Yale Journal of Criticism*, 11:1 (Spring 1998), 259-88.

⁶⁵ Laura Mulvey, 'Anita Loos/ Howard Hawks/ Marilyn Monroe', p. 214.

⁶⁶ Anita Loos, (1925) *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1992) pp.118-9.

This scene, sadly ignored in the film, provides an insight into the psyche of the American bleached blonde. She is all image, all surface, fetishised beauty, (the shiny fabrics, the glitter, the dazzling jewels), so much so that 'after Marilyn made *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*, her image rapidly became an emblem of perfectly eroticised features that could be recognised immediately in reduced form.'⁶⁷ So much is invested into the surface that there is no hidden depth, no unconscious, as the advice that Lorelei should cultivate dreams suggests. However much 'Froyd' and his assistant gaze at Lorelei, she remains beyond their grasp, a triumphant spectacle that holds the eye but reveals nothing.⁶⁸ Yet is there not also a dread about this – the blonde's power is based on the fact that she is nothingness, that she has no unconscious. Furthermore, Lorelei's sexual drives are dedicated to consumption rather than (re) production, engaging her in destructive rather than constructive acts. Marie and Manda also fail to form a functioning couple. As Dyer argues, whiteness is irrevocably associated with death: 'the very struggle for whiteness is a sign of whiteness, but [...] to recapture whiteness is also to shed life, which mean nothing else but death.'⁶⁹

Monroe's/ Lorelei's blonde hair is also a metonym for her excess. Within the film, blondeness is associated with acquisition and unbridled capitalism. The impossibly blonde, over-bleached hair, stands also for Monroe's excessiveness: she had too much sex, took too many drugs, exposed herself too much, knew too much, wore clothes that were too tight, was too vulnerable, was too tardy, was too lonely. Her meanings are conflicted and inflated as she becomes the subject of too much writing.⁷⁰ She has become identified by this very excessiveness of visibility: the infamous Andy Warhol screen print, the shot of her in *How to Marry a Millionaire* surrounded by a wall of mirrors. Monroe is everywhere and nowhere. These proliferating images belie the idea of a unique Monroe. Her meanings and her whiteness become dispersed throughout the text. As well as being symbolic of nothingness, she also has white's other characteristic, universality and ubiquity. The brunette, Jane Russell/Dorothy, interested in romantic love rather than money, successfully impersonates her opposite number the blonde, Monroe/ Lorelei, singing the film's most cynical number, 'Diamonds

⁶⁷ Laura Mulvey, *Fetishism and Curiosity* (London: BFI, 1996), p. 47.

⁶⁸ Mulvey suggests in *Fetishism and Curiosity* that this investment in surface partly explains the great interest Monroe still arouses, the attempts to reach 'the real Marilyn,' as the investment in surface is so intense it suggests the need to hide 'something else', and what could this something else be?, p. 48

⁶⁹ Richard Dyer, *White*, p. 208.

⁷⁰ Lisa Cohen, 'The Horizontal Walk: Marilyn Monroe, CinemaScope, and Sexuality.'

Are a Girl's Best Friend.' Anyone can struggle for blonde characteristics. The film, which begins in patriotic colours, in a blue, red and white palette, identifies the girls as American and sexual (they are dressed in the vamp's red). It finishes itself in a blaze of white, at a dual white wedding, the girls both now associated with the values of whiteness.

The film also explicitly exports this whiteness to France. Lorelei and Dorothy are on a cruise to Paris. This is the mythic Paris of tourist brochures: the announcement is made that the ship will be docking in an hour, followed by a montage of shots of (in order) the Eiffel Tower, the Arc de Triomphe and the Opera. France is located as a country of courtly, chivalrous tradition against the American blonde's interest in a man's material worth: 'The French are glad to fight for love/ They delight in fighting duels/ But I prefer a man who lives/ and gives/ expensive jewels/ A kiss on the hand/ may be quite continental/ but diamonds are a girl's best friend.' Manda's actions in killing Roland are relegated to another era. These modern girls seduce the French, just as *Cahiers du cinéma* critics were themselves turning from French cultural and cinematic traditions and praising the work of Hollywood directors such as Hitchcock and Hawks. Yet it was this film that Bazin used as his example to argue that, although auteur theory is valid, all the work of one director does not have the same value. He claims one can champion auteurs 'without feeling this obliges us to admire *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*.'⁷¹ It earned a scathing review in Sartre's journal *Temps Modernes*. Chardère describes it as '*vide*', '*mauvais*', '*banale*' and '*misogyne*' concluding 'blonde cupide pour blonde cupide et équipe olympique pour équipe olympique, je me permets de préférer Mata Marachee et les athlètes de Klopstokia.'⁷² Such hostility towards Hawks's 'joke' film seems curious. Perhaps this is partly what earned the film such French critical contempt. Rather than a perfect example of male mastery (the male director as 'auteur' controlling all elements of the film including the female star, the woman being seduced by the hero) it is men who are seduced and controlled by women. Hawks lost his perfect artistic vision and control (the film is 'un ballet [...] de Jack Cole'⁷³ and Cole had an excellent relationship with Monroe, far better than the director's). Lorelei won over both Mr. Esmond and his father with her looks. Perhaps this vision of the successful, seductive

⁷¹ André Bazin, 'How could you Possibly be a Hitchcocko-Hawksian?', trans. by John Moore in *Howard Hawks: American Artist* ed. by Jim Hillier and Peter Wollen (London: BFI, 1996), pp. 32-34.

⁷² Bernard Chadère, 'Les hommes préfèrent les blondes de H. Hawks', *Temps Modernes* (janvier/ février 1955).

⁷³ Bernard Chadère, 'Les hommes préfèrent les blondes de H. Hawks'.

American female manipulating patriarchal power struck rather too close to home when she was actually pictured in Paris.

‘Je ne sais pas ce que je suis, mais en tout cas, je suis la Blonde!’

⁷⁴ **Monroe as Hollywood blonde**

Monroe is the ultimate blonde. Furthermore, her blonde hair seems to contain some kind of divine power both for herself, her fans and her biographers. Claude Duffau reports that

Elle prit l’habitude de laver quotidiennement ses cheveux, n’oubliant jamais, lors de ses déplacements, d’emporter dans ses bagages l’indispensable et encombrant séchoir. Ses cheveux magnifiques constituaient – elle fut prompte à en prendre conscience – un véritable trésor.⁷⁵

When she and Joe di Maggio were flying from Hawaii to Japan, her fans at the airport pulled her golden hair out in handfuls.⁷⁶ Indeed, the image of the golden-white Monroe surrounded by darker fans and lovers is one films and her biographers both find hard to resist. Maurice Zolotow, barely hiding his own delight in the image, reports that she ‘haunts the dark Turk in Istanbul’ alongside a whole series of national types he rattles off in an extraordinary range of stereotypes... ‘the slight sensitive Japanese in Tokyo; the Parisian boulevardier; the polite Englishman; the romantic Pole and the sensual Italian; the hot-blooded señor; and the impassive Scandinavian.’⁷⁷ Gloria Steinem, in a ‘feminist’ reading of Monroe, places her in relation to Jews and Blacks as another member of a group oppressed by stereotyped representation. In doing so she succumbs to a very similar image to that of Zolotow, the little white girl joined by ‘Negroes, Jews, Arabs’: all those who are denied her whiteness.⁷⁸ This fantasy of a ‘blonde all over’ Monroe with darker men is emphasised throughout her films. In *Bus-Stop* the cowboy Bo/Don Murray, with his black hair and weathered skin, proposes to Cherie/Monroe, the chanteuse who never sees the sunlight. The camera closes in on the two of them and the shot is so tight that we cannot see all of

⁷⁴ Claude Duffau, *La Femme poète: un portrait de Marilyn Monroe dans son miroir brisé* (Paris: Jean-Claude Simoën, 1978) p. 67.

⁷⁵ Claude Duffau, *La Femme poète*, p. 33.

⁷⁶ Maurice Zolotow, *Marilyn Monroe* (London: WH Allen, 1961), p. 191.

⁷⁷ Maurice Zolotow, *Marilyn Monroe*, p. 308.

⁷⁸ Gloria Steinem, *Marilyn: Norma Jeane* (London: Vista, 1996), p. 32.

Monroe's face. She leans on his shoulder. Pale curls tumble over pale white skin in direct contrast to her dark cowboy. In *Some Like It Hot* (Wilder, 1959) Joe/Curtis and Jerry/Lemmon, in drag, burst into the women's toilet and surprise Sugar/Monroe, who is having a quick swig of brandy. All three are wearing black dresses, but the men also have black hats in contrast to Monroe/ Sugar's blonde hair, which is lit from above, the side and below, so that her head is almost ball of light. In the fantasy sequence in *Let's Make Love* (Cukor, 1960), the dark suited Clément/Montand imagines Amanda/Monroe sitting on a bed knitting not her usual hole-filled pink jumper but a shiny white fabric. Small wonder that, describing her toilette, Duffau concludes that she when she goes out into the dark night in her white lace dress, her long gloves and her thick fur 'elle semblerait alors sa blanche excrétion.'⁷⁹

As she gained power within Hollywood (and especially within 20th Century Fox), Monroe was determined to be the Blonde, the palest blonde possible. Duffau records Monroe's rising power due to the creation of her own company accompanying 'une coiffure plus bouffante, plus courte aussi et d'un blond plus pale encore.'⁸⁰ Hope Lange was nearly fired from *Bus-Stop* when her hair colouring was deemed too similar to Monroe's – Monroe left the set until she had it darkened. A bleached blonde extra on the set of *Something's Got to Give* was sent home upon Monroe's request, and according to Brown and Barham, Cyd Charisse's hair turns inexplicably darker in some footage from the unfinished film.⁸¹ It is hardly surprising that a popularist study of blondes and 'living the blonde lifestyle', although written nearly twenty years after Monroe's death, features on its first page a full page shot of Monroe, her white curls fluttering in the breeze.⁸² As was discussed above, the ideal forms are whiteness are impossible to attain – one can never be white enough. Yet the very pallor of Monroe's peroxidized hair moves her as close to the ideal as it is possible to be. This involves a loss of self, 'because ideally white is absence: to be really, absolutely white is to be nothing.'⁸³

Duffau explicitly links Monroe's changed name (Marilyn Monroe was chosen by studio executive Ben Lyon) and her hair dying. Both were

⁷⁹ Claude Duffau, *La Femme poète*, p. 47.

⁸⁰ Claude Duffau, *La Femme poète*, p. 98.

⁸¹ Claude Duffau, *La Femme poète*, p. 48 and Peter Brown and Patte Barham, *Marilyn: The Last Take* (London: Heinemann, 1992), pp. 130-132.

⁸² Lois Wyse, *Blonde, Beautiful Blonde: how to look, live, work and think blonde* (New York: M Evans and Company, 1980), not paginated.

⁸³ Richard Dyer, *White*, pp. 78-80.

parts of the construction of a movie star, both necessary actions for a career in the movies, and both involved a negation of 'Norma Jean's' subjectivity. The name suggested 1930s film star Marilyn Miller; the alliteration connotes a sensuous 'mmmm', a combination of sexual and sensory pleasure. Norma Jean Baker 'became' (or was in fact constructed as) a blonde sex goddess, with the hair and the name to match. Her whole self becomes based on a false identity, however. Judith Butler argues that naming is in itself an act that brings into being one's subjectivity. 'Language sustains the body not by bringing it into being or feeding it in a literal way; rather, it is by being interpellated within the terms of language that a certain social existence of the body first becomes possible.'⁸⁴ It is through being named or 'interpellated into language' that one comes into being as a subject. When Monroe was first re-named, she was taking part in a parade the very evening after the name change. She had to ask how 'Marilyn' was spelt.⁸⁵ While a star persona is not a subject, but rather a commodity object, it has the patina of subjectivity in order to disguise its mechanisms. This subjectivity is endowed upon the star persona thanks to the fact it is constructed upon a flesh-and-blood human being. Here, even this patina of subjectivity is negated. The self being called into language was not the self walking down the parade, just as Monroe was not a natural blonde. Yet this name has determined her entry as a subject into language and the way she has subsequently been represented. With the sexy, film star name and the accompanying bleached blonde hair, Monroe cannot escape the star image of whiteness and desirability. Rather, Monroe becomes dependent upon it for any sense of self, for 'to be addressed is not merely to be recognized for what one already is, but to have the very term conferred by which the recognition of existence becomes possible. One comes to "exist" by virtue of this fundamental dependency on the Other.'⁸⁶

It does appear that Monroe's whole concept of her selfhood and her need for recognition and love from others (a constant theme in her biographies)⁸⁷ came to rely on her blonde hair, and the maintenance of this look by a whole forgotten labour force. Signoret explains how when they were living next door to each other during the filming of *Let's Make Love* they had their hair bleached every Saturday morning by Jean Harlow's ex-

⁸⁴ Judith Butler, *Excitable Speech: The Politics of Performativity* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), p. 5.

⁸⁵ Pete Martin, *Marilyn Monroe* (London: Frederick Muller Ltd, 1956), p. 35.

⁸⁶ Judith Butler, *Excitable Speech*, p. 32.

⁸⁷ Two excellent analysis of biographical material about Monroe are Lisa Cohen 'The Horizontal Walk: Marilyn Monroe, CinemaScope, and Sexuality', and Graham McCann, *Marilyn Monroe*.

colourist. This ritual was part of Marilyn's self-creation as a blonde star. First, she had to have impeccable blonde colouring.

C'était une petite pointe très jolie, toute frisottée, qui lui partageait le front également ou presque. Elle la détestait, elle la méprisait et elle s'en méfiait. Elle s'en méfiait parce que, curieusement, les racines de ces petits cheveux-là [...] était beaucoup plus récalcitrantes à la décoloration platinée que les racines de tous les autres cheveux de sa tête de blonde. La belle mèche [...] trahit dans les plans très rapprochés.⁸⁸

Second, she employed the elderly colourist because 'c'était une forme d'association par personne interposée entre la "Blonde" première manière et la "Blonde" qu'elle était devenue. Ce devait être aussi [...] la main tendue à quelqu'un d'oublié [...] Ceux qui accompagnent – obscurément pour le public mais indispensablement pour la production – la prestation de la star à la mode.'⁸⁹

Thus Monroe's blonde hair is signalled as an essential ingredient in her star persona. Its pallor makes it as white, as near to ideal, as possible, just as Monroe is as close to the ideal star as it is possible to be (and such an ideal is clearly constructed: Monroe once quipped that the only natural blondes were albinos, a remark that indicates just how white and 'perfect' her blonde hair had to be).⁹⁰ This clearly constructed ideal self, which seems to involve the negation of the original self, is identified by the biographer Maurice Zolotow as the seminal moment in the creation of the ideal female movie star. That is to say, the negation of the self is the pre-condition to (idealised) feminine stardom.

It was against her better judgement that she became a blonde. It is hard for a woman to understand why the difference in the colour of her hair can influence men so much [...] Her hair was cut short, given a straight permanent, and then bleached a golden blonde, quite unlike the platinum tint she later acquired [...] She was uneasy when she first saw herself in the mirror. "It wasn't the real me." [...] She couldn't get used to the strange exotic image that stared back at her [...] But she knew she was becoming more of a siren than ever before. The very

⁸⁸ Simone Signoret, *La Nostalgie n'est plus ce qu'elle était* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1976), p. 280.

⁸⁹ Simone Signoret, p. 282.

⁹⁰ Pete Martin, *Marilyn Monroe*, p. 37.

artificiality of it, she realized, meant that it was a created thing and she would have to create a personality to go along with the new face and the new hair. A bleached blonde is not natural [...] she becomes in some sense, an assembled product. To be put together by modistes, couturiers, cosmeticians and coiffures, leads to a profound sense of loss of one's identity. Motion-picture actresses often lose all sense of who and what they really are. They are wraiths, reflections in a mirror, existing only in an audience's reaction to them.⁹¹

Zolotow identifies Monroe's change in hair colour as necessary to make her more sexually appealing to men. The mirror image offers up Monroe as a reflection of male ideals of femininity. Monroe is objectified, able to find her new self only in the gaze of others, rather than in an independent subjectivity. Her personal identity is totally negated. This objectification is underlined by the artifice of the bleached blonde. She now has a specific role to enact, that of the exotic siren. The very fact of being a chemically enhanced blonde intensifies the idea of women as object, yet another 'assembled product' manufactured in a capitalist system. Monroe's whole identity is now to be constructed from scratch as a bleached blonde, assisted by studio minions. This is a creation that goes largely unrecognised. Although Monroe is a very constructed ideal, her whiteness is presented as 'natural' and 'normal'. The work that goes into the image remains hidden. The rhetoric of capitalism insists it is capital that makes things happen rather than the labour of many bodies in the interest of the few. It is not the jewels shimmering around her neck that figure alone in making Monroe so desirable – it is the platinum hair, a construction of hairdressers, cosmeticians and chemical research.

This objectification and idealisation of the dyed blonde female star is further intensified by the use of the adjectives 'gold' and 'platinum' to describe the blonde's colouring. These are not neutral descriptions of a shade, but link the bleached blonde back to other highly desirable objects within the capitalist system of exchange. While 'golden' to describe a blonde's hair colouring can trace a lineage back to Homer who called the Goddess of Love's tresses '*xanthe*' the use of the word platinum has distinctly twentieth century overtones, first appearing in the English language in or about 1930.⁹² The Robert dictionary also dates the term '*platiné*' to the beginning of the

⁹¹ Maurice Zolotow, *Marilyn Monroe*, p. 55.

⁹² Marina Warner, *From the Beast to the Blonde* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1994), p. 363 and *The English Oxford Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990).

twentieth century, and the phrase it gives as an example of the term is '*une star platinée*', linking the term to cinema and (feminine) celebrity. The platinum blonde is another desirable object to be possessed, through the operation of the gaze if not by other means.

Indeed, Dyer argues that Monroe's screen roles deliberately emphasised her as a body for display. She is a chorus girl in *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* (1953), *There's No Business Like Show Business* (1954), *The Prince and the Showgirl* (1957) and *Let's Make Love* (1960); a talentless actress in *River of No Return* (1954), *Bus-Stop* (1956) and *Some Like it Hot* (1959); and a model in *How to Marry a Millionaire* (1953) and *The Seven Year Itch* (1955). She is constantly presented as sexual spectacle – 'a side-on tits and arse positioning obsessively repeated throughout the films'.⁹³ In these films, Monroe is totally defined by her (white) body. However, this white body itself may be harder to define. Richard Dyer argues that Monroe's body is figured as the privileged site of 'Playboy' fifties discourse concerning sexuality, which perceives sex as 'natural' and 'fun', and the epitome of the sexually desirable woman as blonde. 'Monroe conforms to, and is part of the construction of, what constitutes desirability in women [...] for the most desirable woman is a white woman. The typical playmate is white, and most often blonde [...] to be ideal Monroe had to be white, and not only white but blonde, the most unambiguously white you can get'⁹⁴ (and one might add, the whitest blonde she could be). Blondeness automatically connotes whiteness – the two specific variants of hair and eye colouring, blonde hair and blue eyes, are uniquely white, to the degree that a non-white person with these features is considered, usually literally, to be remarkable.⁹⁵ In myths and fairy tales, blondeness and beauty are synonymous (indeed, the word 'fair' has both meanings). Blonde hair in general shares certain mythic properties with gold – it is incorruptible over time and it can be beaten, hammered and spun and its brightness will not fade. Hair may be the sign of the animal rather than the human but it also the least fleshy production of the flesh. It seems to transcend the mortal condition, hence, Marina Warner suggests, its mythic properties in fairy-tales and Biblical stories such as that of Samson and Delilah, Rapunzel and Goldilocks.

Blonde hair also seems to reflect solar radiance. It makes white women glow, especially when back-lighting in films surrounds hair with a

⁹³ Richard Dyer, *Heavenly Bodies: Film Stars and Society* (London: Macmillan Educational, 1986), p. 21.

⁹⁴ Richard Dyer, *Heavenly Bodies: Film Stars and Society*, pp. 42-3.

⁹⁵ Richard Dyer, *White*, p. 44.

ball of light, the woman's head becoming an effulgent dazzle reminiscent of Dante's rise to Paradise. It also suggests innocence as many children are fair in infancy and grow darker with age. Given its connotations of youth, innocence and luminosity it is hardly surprising that the Virgin's hair is frequently depicted as blonde, even in France and Spain. Even Black Madonnas have golden hair, as in the cult statue of Montserrat in Spain. The pale golden hair of childhood, its fluffiness reminiscent of baby ducklings, and the winsome 'little girl' voice paint the pale blonde Monroe as childlike and virginal, in contrast to the sexual ideal it also suggests. Indeed, blonde hair has multiple connotations – of childhood, of sexual desirability, of expensive jewels and 'civilisation', of a natural and easy-going playmate. Monroe's pale blonde hair confirms her as the near as it is possible to be to an ideal, hence the fact that she can connote so many oxymoronic features. Her blonde hair allows Monroe to display an idealised body that escapes just one reading. Monroe is not the feminine enigma to be solved by the male gaze at the end of the film, rather she escapes, disappears, and floats up into a realm of light.

Dyer discusses how Monroe's image, inescapably and necessarily a white one, combines with Hollywood conventions of glamour lighting to make her disappear even more thoroughly than is usually the case with female stars. For example, in *The Seven Year Itch*, in a classic moment of woman as spectacle, Richard looks up to the Girl, standing on the balcony. She has just sent a tomato plant crashing to his feet. There is a cut to Monroe looking down from her balcony, apparently nude; the wall behind her is dark, as is the vegetation on the balcony, so her face and shoulders stand out as white. 'Such moments conflate unreal angel glow with sexual aura.'⁹⁶ In *Bus-Stop*, the script allows Monroe to incarnate that same mix of sexual knowingness (her turbulent past) and innocence (she is Bo's angel). Duffau associates Monroe's whiteness with transparency and luxury goods, so she becomes symbolic of 'light' (both '*léger*' and '*lumière*') and can float up to a fantasy setting.

Monroe a intimé à sa chair de se faire aussi transparente que possible aux yeux des hommes: qu'ils voient au travers d'elle (qu'ils la transpercent, comme une bulle enfilée au rayon de leurs regards), qu'ils la découvrent débarrassée de toute lenteur – toute lourdeur

⁹⁶ Richard Dyer, *The Matter of Images: Essays on Representation* (London and New York, Routledge, 1993), p. 161.

vomie – nourrie seulement de parfums, de caviar, de champagne, voire de diamants. Que sait si, guérie de la pésanteur, elle ne pourrait alors s'élever, et fuir par la brèche qu'elle a pratiquée vers l'ordre plus habitable de rêve.⁹⁷

As a Hollywood blonde, retinted every few days by helpers, filmed in flattering ways, given suitable narrative structures, Monroe can be that ultimate fantasy blonde, both madonna and whore. She can be a guarantor of sexual pleasure as a desirable white woman, and an innocent angelic young girl. A good time girl of no identifiable background, without parentage or pedigree, her American bloneness was what made Monroe the perfect playmate (and perhaps part of the American dream of egalitarianism as well, having literally risen from the cutting room floor to the silver screen).⁹⁸ Stretched out in CinemaScope, she offered a virginal expanse of whiteness ready to be conquered. Her 'horizontal' (she was described as 'the girl with the horizontal walk') is suggestive of vast prairies and sprawling suburbs in contrast to the relentless verticals of the city, a contrast played on in *How to Marry a Millionaire*. Her whiteness offers a pleasing mesh of technology, cleanliness, bloneness and suburban values. She is the playmate ideal. Norman Mailer saw Monroe as the safe, suburban sexual dream – sex, far from being dark and difficult, would, he commented, be ice cream with Marilyn.

It should also be noted that this relentless producing of whiteness was taking place at a time when Hollywood found it nearly impossible to find an institutional space for the black female actress. Dorothy Dandridge was nominated for an Academy Award in 1955 for her performance in the all-black *Carmen Jones* (Preminger, 1954). However, Hollywood proved unable to accommodate its rising black star, pushing her into crudely stereotyped roles such as slave girls and prostitutes. She felt crushed by, on the one hand, the weight of expectation placed upon her by sections of the Negro community as 'a black star' and on the other hand, Hollywood's insistence that audiences, especially in the South, would not stomach interracial romances on screen, thus severely limiting the roles available to black stars. Dandridge's life finished with an unhappy divorce and an overdose of barbiturates in a Hollywood hotel room in 1965.

⁹⁷ Claude Duffau, *La Femme poète*, p. 171.

⁹⁸ Monroe's mother, Gladys Baker, worked as a negative cutter for RKO - radio pictures during her childhood. Monroe was brought there to be 'shown off' to fellow workers when she started walking, before her mother became too ill to work. Zolotow, p. 20.

That Marilyn's tragedy, like Dorothy's, was not of her own making should not, however, obscure the difference between the two. Dorothy knew intensely that she was entirely alone, the only black woman in her position, and she knew that she was in so untenable a position because she was a black woman, at a time when Hollywood had no means of dealing with what she represented.⁹⁹

Monroe's sexuality is perceived as carefree, natural and pleasing to men. Dorothy Dandridge's sexuality is seen as so threatening that it was censored from the filming process itself. *Island in the Sun* (Rossen, 1957) could hint at inter-racial romance, but not show it. When filming *Malaga* in 1957, Dandridge was standing with her co-star Trevor Howard on the riverbank, shadows playing over their faces. The camera moved into close-ups, Howard trembling with passion and pulling Dandridge close, their lips inches apart. The director called 'cut' before their lips could touch, and Hollywood's first inter-racial kiss be recorded. With her light colouring, Dandridge could 'pass' for Spanish in the script, but American audiences would know she was black. 'These problems underlined why there never could be for me a true motion picture career. The limitations of Life reached into Art – at least, the screen art.'¹⁰⁰

Frantz Fanon argues that sexual relations between the white woman and the black man permit the black men to think that he is 'achieving whiteness.'

De la partie la plus noire de mon âme, à travers la zone hachurée me monte ce désir d'être tout à coup blanc. Je ne veux pas être reconnu comme Noir, mais comme Blanc. Or – et c'est là une reconnaissance que Hegel n'a pas décrite – qui peut la faire, sinon la Blanche? En m'aimant, elle me prouve que je suis digne d'un amour blanc. On m'aime comme un blanc. Je suis un Blanc [...] J' épouse la culture blanche, la beauté blanche, la blancheur blanche. Dans ces seins blancs que mes mains ubiquitaires carressent, c'est la civilisation et la dignité blanche que je fais miennes.¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ Karen Alexander, 'Fatal Beauties: Black Women in Hollywood', in *Stardom: Industry of Desire* ed. by Christine Gledhill (London: Routledge, 1995), pp. 45-54.

¹⁰⁰ Dorothy Dandridge and Earl Conrad, *Everything and Nothing: The Dorothy Dandridge Tragedy* (New York: Abelard Schumann, 1970), p. 192.

¹⁰¹ Frantz Fanon, *Peau noire, masques blancs* (Paris: Seuil, 1952), p. 51.

The sexual relationship between the white woman and the black man is seen as one of possession. By holding the breasts in his hands, the black man can claim rights of ownership over them and what their white colour is claimed to embody (civilisation, dignity, beauty, culture, all of which can be collapsed ultimately into the one word 'whiteness'). Fanon then tells an anecdote of when 'un Noir du plus beau teint' shouted at the point of orgasm with a 'une blonde incendiaire' 'Vive Schoelcher!', Schoelcher being the man who managed to persuade the Third Republic to adopt the decree banning slavery. The black man is now figured as equal to the white in the eyes of the law at least, and he can thus undertake the pretence of being like any white man and enjoy sexual congress with a blonde. The very colouring of the woman offers her as a guarantee of this claim to whiteness and white values (and her extreme contrast to the man she is having sex with, who is described as very dark). Once again, the blonde woman is figured as an object to be acquired. She is reduced to her breasts and the romantic caress soon becomes the acquisitive and violent grasp. Her comment about such a cry upon orgasm, a time of intimacy rather than public proclamations, goes unrecorded. She is the object that allows access to the ideal.

'Elle incarne aux Etats-Unis l'idéal féminin'¹⁰²

This notion of Monroe as the ideal blonde star was widely reported in France. *L'Express* reviewed *Don't Bother to Knock* (Baker, 1952) in June 1953. The film starred Anne Bancroft and Richard Widmark; Marilyn Monroe had a relatively minor role as a troubled babysitter, but she clearly fascinated the reviewer, who dedicates most of his article to this new American star 'pratiquement inconnu en France.' The terms in which it considers Monroe set the tone for much of how she was to be conceived – she is an American ideal, 'un visage naïf sur un corps pevers' whose dominant trait is 'la sexualité'. This overt sexuality is reported as disturbing to America's right-wing Puritan streak: 'le sénateur Mc Carthy, réformiste des mœurs autant des opinions politiques, a prétendu interdire certains de ses films'. Monroe is introduced in defining terms. She is a contradiction: naïve and yet sexual, an American ideal, yet challenging part of America's establishment. Even the film role appears oxymoronic: a fresh young American playgirl plays a disturbed babysitter. 'Ne nous y trompons pas. Ce

¹⁰² *L'Express*, (20 juin 1953).

n'est pas Marilyn qui prend l'air hagard et désamparé d'être en perdition mentale, c'est la fille qui prend l'aspect frais et rebondi de Marilyn.'¹⁰³

The release of *Niagara* (Hathawa, 1953) later that year confirmed Monroe's, and by extension, the American woman's sexuality. Edgar Morin sees Monroe as the apogee of the 1950s Hollywood star system: she is its ultimate creation, with her exaggerated femininity presented to us in *Niagara*, 'nue sous sa robe rouge, sexe dévorant, visage massacrant...'.¹⁰⁴ Here, Monroe appears in her early incarnation as the 'vamp', the sexually voracious woman, naked under her tight red dress. In *River of No Return* (Preminger, 1954), she is once again associated with the colour red – the last shot of the film shows her fetishistic red high heels abandoned in the dust. The image projected by Monroe in *Niagara* firmly establishes her in the French imagination as the sexual American woman, whose existence had just been confirmed by the publishing of the Kinsey Report.¹⁰⁵ *L'Express* magazine reviews *Niagara* and the Kinsey Report on the same page in its 19 September 1953 edition, creating an inevitable link between the release of the film and the study. Kinsey, Monroe and Niagara are figured in terms that make them part of the natural American landscape: 'pour son dernier film, Hathaway a mis en concurrence Marilyn Monroe, prodige des ateliers du cinéma, et les chutes de Niagara, prodige de la nature.' Kinsey was discovering sexual problems, which like the falls and Monroe, were parts of American nature: 'Kinsey a accompli pour les problèmes sexuels ce que Christoph Colomb a fait pour la géographie.'¹⁰⁶ Both have in their own way uncovered America – one physically, the other psychologically. The review of *Niagara* reproduces a photo of Marilyn in the red dress, with a white stone wall in the background, leaning so that her breasts are in profile, with the falls pouring behind them, both suggesting the force of nature. Underneath her picture the by-line reads 'son mari a quelques ennuis'. Whilst ostentatiously referring to the plot, in which Rose/Monroe is trying to kill her husband George/Cotton, this line could in general be referring to the problems American men face pleasing their sexually demanding wives. *L'Express* wonders if there could be a French version of the Kinsey Report. The report on men (published in 1948) had aroused little interest, and the magazine attributes this indifference to 'une bonne santé morale.' It suggests

¹⁰³ *L'Express*, 6 (20 juin 1953).

¹⁰⁴ Edgar Morin, *Les Stars* (Paris: Seuil, 1957), p. 34.

¹⁰⁵ The link between the emergence of Monroe as star and the Kinsey report is made by Richard Dyer in *Heavenly Bodies*, p. 23.

¹⁰⁶ *L'Express*, 11 (25 juillet 1953).

that rather than carrying out scientific enquiry, the sexual behaviour of women is a 'matière sur laquelle il peut être réjouissant de prendre des renseignements soi-même.'¹⁰⁷ The French man, with his good moral standing and skill, doesn't need a Dr Kinsey. Furthermore, French/European cultural superiority renders an investigation such as Kinsey's unnecessary. 'Ici, nous avons eu Laclos, de Sade, Freud. Nous cherchons dans les romans les interprétations valables des statistiques devinées. Je crois que nous avons franchi le mur de Kinsey à force d'avoir vécu au delà de lui [...avec...] une littérature qui n'hésite pas devant les sujets et devant les mots.'¹⁰⁸

Daniel Guérin, in his enthusiastic response to the Report, considers the links it illuminates between sexuality and capitalism:

Avant d'avoir lu le rapport, un socialiste ou un communiste impatient de mettre fin à la société des classes et à l'exploitation économique, pouvait, avec Lenine, considérer la question sexuelle comme secondaire [...] Depuis la publication du rapport, une telle attitude n'est plus tenable. Bien que Kinsey n'aille pas au delà d'un certain réformisme libéral [...] son ouvrage contient implicitement les conclusions qu'il n'ose pas déduire:[...] il nous incite poursuivre conjointement la révolution sociale et la révolution sexuelle, jusqu'à l'émancipation complète, sur les deux plans, de l'être humain aujourd'hui encore écrasé par le double fardeau d'un hydre à deux têtes: le capitalisme et le puritanisme.¹⁰⁹

Female sexuality, epitomised by Monroe, is exploited to make a lot of money, through pornographic films, books and periodicals and 'surtout, le sex-appeal étant le meilleur appât publicitaire [par] Marilyn Monroe'. Puritanism, Guérin argues, denies sexual response, yet capitalism ensures a constant state of sexual excitement: 'on n'a pas le droit de toucher à la femme (outre que l'épouse), mais son image vous poursuit partout. La 'pin-up' girl est offerte au jeune mâle comme substitut de la partenaire réelle.'¹¹⁰ Monroe's overt sexuality, far from being a contradiction in a puritanical society, is a product of it, the return of the repressed exploited for profit.

André Bazin further argues that puritanical censorship forced Henry Hathaway to develop a subtle system of allusions to and metaphors of eroticism in *Niagara*. Monroe is always naked under something: a sheet, a

¹⁰⁷ *L'Express*, 13 (19 septembre 1953).

¹⁰⁸ Georges Izard, interviewed in *L'Express*, 13 (19 septembre 1953).

¹⁰⁹ Daniel Guérin, *Kinsey et la sexualité* (Paris: Juilliard, 1955), p. 21.

¹¹⁰ Daniel Guérin, *Kinsey et la sexualité*, pp. 118-9.

dress, or a robe. Water is important thematically in the film. The dialogue figures it as a dramatic symbol of tumultuous passion but, as Bazin argues 'ce n'est point la force dynamique de l'eau dans sa chute qui compte ici, mais l'humidité épanchée dans l'air tout à l'entour. Humidité sous laquelle ruissellent et souffrent les protagonistes, mais qui semble être une qualité de la peau de l'héroïne et comme le transfert de notre toucher.'¹¹¹ Monroe is the embodiment of an all-enveloping yet hidden eroticism (she is clothed, but the promise of nudity is behind those clothes – she is untouched, yet her skin has the quality that suggests the tantalising possibility of touch). Censorship, rather than being a restriction, is an excitement to the imagination. Furthermore, this is a typical use of feminine sexuality in Hollywood cinema. Taking an article by Lo Duca comparing a film to a dream, Bazin claims that the cinematic spectator is in a similar position to a dreaming sleeper. All dreams are, in the final analysis, erotic. Yet they are also heavily censored. 'Le surmoi de chacun est un M. Hayes qui s'ignore.' The dream, far from being archaic liberty of expression, is heavily censored and determined as no other thought process is (this determination is not carried out by reason, however). Whilst cinematic censorship is largely decided by judicial and social rules, and dream censorship by the superego, censorship is necessary to the form and the function of both films and dreams. The things that are most revealing about a society are not therefore what is on the censor's floor, but what censorship allows to remain.

...S'agissant de Marilyn Monroe, que la photo qui s'imposait n'était pas celle du calendrier où elle posa nue [...] mais la fameuse scène de *Sept ans de réflexion*, où elle se fait souffler ses jupes par le métro. Cette idée géniale ne pouvait naître que dans le cadre d'un cinéma possédant une longue, une riche, une byzantine culture de la censure.¹¹²

Monroe's eroticism, a blend of innocence and knowingness, related to the multiple connotations of her white-blond hair, is thus also formed in the specific national mould of Hollywood cinema to operate in the imaginary rather than the symbolic, in the realm of the ideal, the dream-like, and the erotic, rather than the everyday and the earthy.

¹¹¹ André Bazin, *Qu'est-ce que le cinéma? Vol 3 cinéma et sociologie* (Paris: Editions du cerf, 1961), p. 64.

¹¹² André Bazin, *Qu'est-ce que le cinéma?*, pp. 68-75.

It is thus entirely logical that Monroe did not remain a Niagaresque vamp for long. After *Niagara* and *River of No Return*, her fetish colour moves from red to white. Edgar Morin attributes this to the need for the star to embody a goddess-like purity. Moral and physical beauty are seen as one and the same, and the true beautiful female star cannot be a vamp. 'Elle [la star] vit sincèrement ses passions [...] elle protège les enfants, respecte les vieillards. De vamp niagaresque, Marilyn Monroe est devenue star en dévoilant la coeur maternal qui cachait sa poitrine valeureuse en *Rivière sans retour*.'¹¹³ Hollywood is promoting an ideal of femininity based on spirituality and purity, combating the televisual threat with not only technological advances but by exploiting ancient myths to give cinema credibility and exoticism and give a new shine to its stars.

Le relance érotique joue un rôle capital: la renaissance mammaire marque la renaissance du star-system. [...] Les films multiplient les strip-teases de stars, baignades, déshabillages, rhabillages, etc. Une vague d'innocence perverse porte au premier rang les gamines érotiques [...] d'extrême innocence et d'extrême érotisme.¹¹⁴

To be the feminine ideal, the female star had to have both qualities, the vamp being both too threatening and too insincere in her emotions. Monroe's vampishness necessarily dissolved into the good-bad girl ideal. By the time she stars in *The Seven Year Itch* Monroe is clothed in white dresses. Her literal move from the red to the white makes her a Hollywood ideal, an ideal that is reinforced through the colour of her hair.

Edgar Morin argues that this ability to denote oxymoronic ideas is necessary to the star ideal. The star system creates stars who mediate between the everyday, allowing identification, and the exotic, allowing aspiration. Monroe, as a star formed in Hollywood, is forced into contradictory positions – a comedy actress playing a short sighted young girl in *How to Marry a Millionaire* marries Arthur Miller and envisages herself playing Dostoievski.

Ainsi, sans cesser de faire jouer ses formes affolantes, l'ex-vamp a accédé aux sommets de la spiritualité. Le star-system semble réglé par un thermostat: si le mouvement d'humanisation qui ramène la star au niveau des mortels frole de trop près la vie quotidienne, un

¹¹³ Edgar Morin, *Les Stars*, p. 46.

¹¹⁴ Edgar Morin, *les Stars*, p. 27.

mécanisme interne rétablit la distance, un nouvel artifice exalte la star; elle reprend de la hauteur. Mais tout excès dans ce sens provoque un rappel au réalisme.¹¹⁵

Monroe, constructed in the Hollywood system, thus lives (or is at least perceived to live) her life in two contradictory currents: as an exotic goddess raised by beauty to a higher plane; and as an ordinary human being who has the same needs and desires as the person watching the film or reading the fan magazine. The beauty that propels the pretty girl into a major studio star is neither entirely natural, nor entirely constructed. The artificial beauty of the make-up and the natural beauty of the actress combine in a unique synthesis to produce a performing mask. The actress can never lose this mask of perfection, hence the tyranny of the mirror for Monroe: 'Elle doit, en permanence, être identique à elle-même dans sa perfectionne rayonnante.'¹¹⁶ It is hardly surprising, with such publicity, that the companies responsible for studio make-up, Max Factor, Elizabeth Arden and Helena Rubenstein, (a New York based company that was the first to use make-up on Theda Bora, giving her a pale face, carefully reddened lips and mascara-ed eyes in 1918), are the best selling brands in the world. The arrival of Technicolor had a huge impact upon their influence and success as whereas previously women had been able to imitate shape of an eye brow or the curl of a fringe, a look easily achieved at home, now they needed the exact shade of red necessary to emulate Joan Crawford's lips.¹¹⁷ Even French brands such as L'Oréal use their appeal to the American market as a guarantee of their efficacy and quality.¹¹⁸

Monroe is presented in the French popular press as an unstoppable force of nature: it is only the (extreme) solidity of the representatively French Montand couple that managed to stand in her way. 'Contre l'ouragon Marilyn les Montands ont tenu bon.'¹¹⁹ This is typical of the way Monroe was perceived and marketed. Print advertisements for *Niagara*, in which the Falls and Marilyn are as one, link Monroe's body with its undulating curves to the flow of the waterfall. *Paris-Match* employs similar naturalistic imagery to describe Monroe's walk: 'le verbe 'marcher' ne saurait décrire les mouvements de la jeune femme. Son buste flotte avec l'assurance tranquille

¹¹⁵ Edgar Morin, *Les Stars*, p. 31.

¹¹⁶ Edgar Morin, *Les Stars*, p. 42.

¹¹⁷ Maggie Angeloglou, *A History of Make-Up* (London: Studio Vista, 1970), pp. 96-8.

¹¹⁸ L'Oréal hair colourant advertisement proclaims that the product is sold in 70 countries and 'detient meme 25% du marché américain pour produits des cheveux.' *L'Express* (7 avril 1960).

¹¹⁹ *Paris-Match* 588 (samedi 16 juillet 1960), not paginated.

d'une caravelle aux voiles gonflées par les alizés, tandis que ses hanches ondulent selon le rythme de l'océan lui-même.'¹²⁰

Yet, as Lisa Cohen argues, Monroe was simultaneously and contradictorily perceived as completely artificial – as a parody of what is posited as some more 'real' femininity. Cohen explores this contradiction within American post war culture and argues that Monroe is an oxymoron of nature and technology, containment and excess, an embodiment of the ironies of suburban sexuality in which the female home-maker was both relentlessly inscribed into the wholly private sphere of the domestic space whilst being made increasingly visible and available in women's magazines, *Playboy*, scientific and technological discourse (the invention of labour-saving devices) and political ideology (debates on the role of the working women in committees such as White House Conference on Effective Uses of Woman Power, 1955).¹²¹ The home, the private space, is thus labelled by Cohen as 'a peculiar theatre of the gaze', with women as both visible and invisible members of the family.

Monroe's contradictory sexuality is therefore typical of the way ideal femininity was constructed along mutually incompatible lines as to be both contained and hidden and yet visible and praised. Monroe reconciled these contradictions concerning the feminine ideal as she was herself an ideal made flesh, her extreme blonde hair both denoting and enhancing her contradictory appeal. Yet this reconciliation is only available because Monroe operates in the mode of fantasy. Unlike the authentic Signoret, Monroe veers between the extremes of 'natural', raw sexuality and a complete constructed artificial femininity.

The American system makes it impossible for the Monroe star to embody 'normal' femininity as figured by ideological discourses of the time. Foreign women did become part of the Hollywood star system, such as Marlene Dietrich and Ingrid Bergman. However, Monroe's Americanness and the way she is figured into French discourse as 'the All-American girl' adds further to this extreme contradiction between the natural and the technological/ artificial, of which one aspect is her dyed blonde hair – chemical colourants contrasting with blonde's connotations of health, sunshine and luminosity. Monroe started life as a pin-up girl, an identifiably American phenomenon which uses a love of the outdoors to suggest an easy-

¹²⁰ *Paris-Match* 566 (samedi 13 février 1960), not paginated.

¹²¹ Glenda Riley, *Inventing the American Woman: A Perspective on Woman's History 1865 to the Present* (Illinois: Harlan Davison, 1986), p. 126.

going, carefree sexuality (and gives a flimsy context to revealing shorts and streamlined swimming costumes).

Innombrables sont en Amérique les magazines 'for men' qui, sur papier glacé et sous le prétexte d'art photographique ou de vie près de la nature, outdoors life, présentent à leur clientèle, chaque mois, une ample variété de belles filles peu vetues: Saines joies de la mer, Charmante joueuse de golf, Intimité.¹²²

In one month alone, Monroe's face appeared on five of these magazines. Morin argues that she never really lost that pin-up quality. Although she escaped the anonymity of the format, she was still figured in similar terms; the healthy, happy, sexually liberated, natural girl. She is a cartoon drawing of femininity, and her film roles exaggerate and play upon this: her excessively rounded figure presented to us as a silhouette in our first sight of her in *The Seven Year Itch*, or standing over a New York subway grill and letting her skirt rise up. If Signoret's film roles stress authenticity and her part in French traditions of community and class, Monroe's serve only to emphasise her unrealness, her American artificiality. Consider this film review of *The Seven Year Itch*:

Elle [the Girl] est imaginaire. Elle est une réclame de pâte dentifrice, un modèle qui a posé nu pour U.S. Camera, une jeune femme dont un coupe de vent de métro a soulevé le jupe. C'est à dire qu'elle est Marilyn elle-même. Par le truchement de l'identification par Tom Ewell, *7 Ans de Réflexion* met brusquement face à face 50 millions d'Américains mâles et adultes avec Marilyn Monroe.¹²³

The situation Morin describes, where the star becomes her image, and the image becomes the star, is especially the case with Monroe in this film, where she in effect plays herself – and playing herself means playing a sexual fantasy. As the blonde pin-up girl, Monroe embodies safe sexuality: a picture on the wall, she could never outwit or outsmart her partner and while she is always waiting she can never be stolen. A relationship with her is effortless, without mess or obligation, totally uncomplicated. She demands no equality of pleasure, no exchange and no mutuality. Her pale skin, white

¹²² Claude Duffau, *La Femme poète*, p. 27.

¹²³ Pierre Conquerteau, '7 ans de réflexion de Billy Wilder', *Temps Modernes*, vol. 11, (1955-56).

hair and light dresses offer a vision of innocence, purity and racial homogeneity. Yet her Americaness seems to this French reviewer to 'normalise' or render natural the fact that this is all taking place at a fantasy level. Monroe is removed and exotic because she is a product of America. It is the American male who is confronted with the vision of Monroe as his next-door neighbour – the French man, even watching the film where this happens, does not have the privileged identification with Tom Ewell. As an American woman, Monroe will always be exotic and removed from the everyday. Monroe's extremes become understandable because they are perceived as 'American'. The tornado threatening Montand and Signoret recalls the tornado that swept away Dorothy's home from Kansas to Oz; Monroe, too, is American nature sweeping the French to a kind of fantasy land, where all women are blonde, curvaceous, and sexually available, yet not sexually threatening. Monroe's sexuality is never dangerous, but always contained within the realm of male fantasy – the silent pliable pin-up girl who can be held down in one place.

She was the masturbatory fantasy [...] the fifties' fiction, the lie that a woman has no sexual needs, that she is there to cater to, or enhance, a man's needs. She was the living embodiment of half of one of the more grotesque and familiar pseudo-couples – the old man and the 'show-girl'.¹²⁴

Molly Haskell here reveals that Monroe's 'natural' sexuality was as much a construct as the rest of her image, yet the recurrence of Monroe and the French Yves Montand together in 'real-life' surely hides the falseness of the relationship between a European old-world millionaire and American Cinderella figure. It could happen, because it has, in the exotic, erotic land of Hollywood.

Let's Make Love: Monroe and Montand's affair, 1960

Monroe and Yves Montand met in Autumn 1959. Following a tour of the Eastern bloc countries (Russia, Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia), Yves Montand was offered the chance to undertake a singing tour on the other side of the Iron Curtain in the United States. Norman Granz, an American impresario who was relatively well known in France, approached

¹²⁴ Molly Haskell, *From Reverence to Rape: the Treatment of Women in the Movies* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2nd edition 1987), pp. 254-5.

him and after some difficulty with visas for him and his wife, Simone Signoret due to their connections with the left-wing CGT a Broadway tour was organised for Montand. The French man was coming to seduce America.¹²⁵

Granting an interview to *L'Express* magazine, Signoret explains what a risk this was for Montand. Unknown in the States, he had only one opportunity to shine – he would become a genius or a failure in the space of an evening. Following the success of *Room At the Top* (Clayton, 1959), for which she would win the Oscar the following April, Signoret was better known than her husband. His success on Broadway re-adjusted the power balance within their relationship – she was once more his wife rather than him being her husband. Signoret seems to believe this is the ‘correct’ way for a husband-wife relationship to be perceived. The interviewer, Jean Cau, remarks upon her acceptance (and even pride) in this as being evidence of her love for her husband. She refers to Montand affectionately as ‘mon bonhomme’ and this is taken as a further indicator of the strength of the Signoret-Montand relationship. This portrayal of their relationship is particularly interesting given the context in which it occurs. Signoret, despite her success, is willing to take the usual ‘wifely’ role within the relationship, being an appendage of her husband. Her true pride and success is not in the Oscar she has won, but in her husband’s remarkable success in America – she is affirmed through him. Furthermore, this is a French couple whose love is unchallenged by American seduction and sexuality, in the (extremely attractive) shape of Marilyn Monroe.¹²⁶

Following the resounding success of his Broadway show, Montand was signed up by Dinah Shore to be on her television show, where 60 million viewers saw him. All America was at the feet of the ‘formidable français’, including Monroe. Rather than being a choice imposed by the studio or circumstance, (such as her difficult reputation discouraging male stars from working with her)¹²⁷ the French press repeatedly stressed how Monroe chose Montand for her new film. *Paris-Match* reproduced a photograph of the couple smiling, with the headline ‘Je choisis Montand’. The blurb underneath

¹²⁵ Simone Signoret, *La Nostalgie n'est plus ce qu'elle était*, p. 120.

¹²⁶ Jean Cau, ‘L' étonnante aventure américaine de Simone’, *L'Express*, 461 (14 avril 1960).

¹²⁷ Tony Curtis had been highly unflattering towards Monroe when she was his co-star in *Some Like It Hot*, considering that her habit of asking for many takes killed his spontaneous style. By now, her lateness was legendary. Zolotow further reports that Arthur Miller re-wrote Krasna’s script for *Let's Make Love*, fattening up Monroe’s part so that Gregory Peck, originally cast to play opposite her, felt his role was too much diminished, and he resigned. Production was suspended as Wald, the producer, was reduced to desperately searching for a new lead, including approaching Universal for the loan out of Hudson, p. 217.

the photograph reads 'Pour son prochain film, *Aimons-nous* on lui proposait Gregory Peck, Fred Astaire, Rock Hudson. Elle a préféré Yves Montand.'¹²⁸ *L'Express* reports in a similar vein: 'Le couple Montand est devenu la coqueluche de Hollywood, a été célébré partout et Marilyn Monroe a préféré Yves Montand à Gregory Peck pour tourner '*Le Milliardaire*.'¹²⁹ It seems as if Monroe's choice is the ultimate American seal of approval upon French culture. The Montand triumph is a triumph for France. Following the announcement that Montand was to play opposite Monroe, *Paris-Match* reproduced a colour photograph of them together on its cover. Monroe is wearing a light blue evening dress, her hair glows white and her eyes are an almost unnaturally bright blue, in stark (white) contrast to Montand in a dark suit. Monroe's whiteness also contrasts strongly with the only writing on the cover, which proclaims in black 'Alger – le dénouement, les pleins pouvoirs', referring to De Gaulle's plans for cantonal and regional elections in Algeria to grant the colony some limited form of independence from France. As one couple unravels (that of France and Algeria), so another forms (that of France/Montand and America/Monroe).¹³⁰

The image of Montand and Monroe together, in poses conventionally taken by an acknowledged couple, is repeated continuously in the French press from this period. *Paris-Match* uses the filming of *Le Milliardaire* as a hook around which to peg countless photographs of the couple. It even introduces an article spread over two weeks on Monroe's life story with 'news' about the couple: Montand not even being allowed on set when Monroe is rehearsing, Montand chatting in English with Miller and Signoret while they wait for Monroe. Rather than Montand's part in the film being seen as an excellent career opportunity, it is presented as a gallant sacrifice made to Monroe's feminine charms: 'Pour elle, Yves Montand interrompt sa tournée triomphale.'¹³¹ *L'Express* reproduced an interview with Arthur Miller and Marilyn Monroe first published in *The Sunday Times*. Whereas the British original illustrates the interview with a picture of Monroe and Miller, the French version reproduces a photograph of a smiling Monroe and Montand, Monroe's white dress once more contrasting to

¹²⁸ *Paris-Match*, 563, (samedi 23 janvier 1960).

¹²⁹ *L'Express*, 460, (7 avril 1960).

¹³⁰ *Paris-Match*, 566, (samedi 13 février 1960). For a discussion of the couple as a metaphor for the world political situation in which France found itself emmeshed, see Kristin Ross, *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies*, pp. 123-156.

¹³¹ *Paris-Match*, 566, (samedi 13 février 1960) and 567, (samedi 20 février 1960).

Montand's suit, (even though no mention is made of him during the interview).¹³²

There is an uneasy power balance at play here between the French man and the American woman, not present in the relationship between the French man and woman who fall into pre-determined gender roles. Signoret is presented as the willing housewife to Montand – she is the embodiment of the domestic ideal, content to be considered as Mme Montand. She consciously rejects star status that could possibly follow her Oscar win: 'c'est agréable d'être populaire. Je commence à boire ce poison subtil, mais je suis trop parasite pour être une grande 'star' et pour sacrifier ma vie privée à quoi que ce soit.'¹³³ This image of the private, domestic-oriented Signoret is enhanced in later *Paris-Match* reports of the reunion between Signoret and Montand when the latter returned from Hollywood to rejoin his wife who had been filming in Italy. They are pictured embracing in the doorway of their home, and the text breathlessly recounts Signoret's joy at being back at their house in Autheuil, far from the bright lights of Hollywood. The following week, the magazine imagines an argument between Signoret and Montand over his return to the United States that casts Signoret firmly in the role of the home-loving housewife. It imagines an angry Montand telling his wife, 'Simone Signoret préfère la vie au foyer à sa carrière d'actrice! Moi je suis pas d'accord. J'ai ma carrière et il faut que je m'y donne.'¹³⁴ Signoret's attachment to her home and her marriage was presented as 'natural' in the ideology of the time. The romantic love between Signoret and Yves Montand was being presented by the media of the time as the 'natural' and 'happiest' way to live, their faces being presented alongside other prominent French couples from all walks of life, such as de Beauvoir and Sartre and Giroud and Servan-Schreiber. 'Le couple typique' evoked in *Elle* magazine and labelled M. and Mme. Dupont in the newsreels gave the impression that French life was naturally experienced as part of a couple.¹³⁵

Signoret is thus a balanced ideal: she rejects the demands and pitfalls of stardom (loss of private life, typecasting) to 'tourne peu et bien'.¹³⁶ Her fulfilment comes from her husband, her child and her home, as well as her work. She was reported as welcoming her husband's success as re-establishing the correct power balance within their relationship. Although she

¹³² *L'Express*, (7 avril 1960).

¹³³ *L'Express*, (7 avril 1960).

¹³⁴ *Paris-Match*, 589, (samedi 23 juillet 1960).

¹³⁵ Kristen Ross, *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies*, p. 133.

¹³⁶ *L'Express*, 460 (7 avril 1960).

is not as contained within the domestic space as the ideal of the period required,¹³⁷ she is talked of as someone who loves her 'foyer', her home comforts, snuggled up on a sofa wearing her dressing gown, laughing with joy helping Montand unpack his bags, cooking spaghetti for the family meal.¹³⁸ Her autobiography describes the large country house in Autheuil she bought with Montand in 1954 as an idyll, and *Paris-Match* presents it as a real home and authentic retreat away from 'tête à tête hollywoodiens [...] dans la roulotte servant de loge' and false 'baisers du cinéma'.¹³⁹

Furthermore, there seems to be no contradiction between the actress and the housewife, one article about Montand and Signoret accompanied by an advertisement for Moulinex kitchen equipment. The double page spread is dominated by the picture of a smiling family; the main slogan is '*La vie en rose*', suggesting both ease and comfort with the use of Moulinex appliances and a French feminine tradition of performance. Indeed, the text confirms the idea that house wifery is another performance, best accomplished with the help of Moulinex:

Le dernier episode du film de la vie quotidienne d'une maîtresse de maison, film dont les millions des femmes furent, depuis des siècles, les vedettes dramatiques [...] Moulinex permet maintenant à toute maîtresse de maison de disposer enfin de tout le temps nécessaire à la préparation de petits plats compliqués et à l'entretien de son capital beauté, qui éveillera ainsi encore plus d'intérêt.¹⁴⁰

With her oxymoronic nature, there seems to be no such easy combination of the private life of a wife and mother and being an actress for Monroe. The Hollywood system cancels out the opportunity for Monroe to enjoy Signoret's 'normal' femininity. Monroe has not only lived all her life around Hollywood but is seen as its most perfect representative. On the 18 July 1953 she was pictured on the cover of *Paris-Match* in the pearl embroidered swimming costume she wore in *How to Marry a Millionaire*. The picture has Monroe as all feminine curves (right down to the rounded pearls on the costume), draped against a staccato column she embraces. The

¹³⁷ Claire Duchon, *Women's Rights and Women's Lives in France 1944- 1986* chapter 3. In fact, however, the fact that Signoret worked was by no means atypical – *L'Express* reports that 4 out of every 10 French women work, twice the number of working American women. *L'Express*, 14 (22 août 1953).

¹³⁸ *Paris-Match*, 588 (samedi 16 juillet 1960) and 589, (samedi 23 juillet 1960).

¹³⁹ Simone Signoret, p. 124 and *Paris-Match*, 588, samedi 16 juillet 1960.

¹⁴⁰ *Paris Match*, 588, (samedi 16 juillet 1960).

question is 'Le cinéma, va-t-elle disparaître?' Inside, the article 'Hollywood lutte pour survivre' clearly establishes a parallel between the use of new technologies to get viewers back to cinema and the impulsion given to Monroe. More even than a star, she is figured as the cinema itself, part of the artificial, aseptic widescreen America, with its ostentatious opulence, her perfect bodywork gleaming like another shiny Cadillac or Chevrolet. Small wonder she is presented as incapable of performing wifely duties. Talking about her early marriage to Jim Dougherty at the age of 16 (this is not atypical for the period – such was the strength of ideology that stressed a domestic role for women, the late 1940s and early 1950s were characterised by early marriage and a dramatically rising birth rate),¹⁴¹ Duffau writes: 'nous imaginons mal celle qui allait devenir bientôt Marilyn Monroe sur fond d'appareils ménagers ou suivant son époux le week-end à la chasse de lapin de garenne. D'ailleurs ce mari ne comprenait rien aux rêves de cette jeune sorcière à qui le bonheur domestique pesa vite.'¹⁴² Monroe, with her dreams of stardom, cannot even be imagined washing floors or cooking. Her lack of fulfilment is understood in the context of the dreams Hollywood offers, even though in fact the myth of perfect contentment in the domestic sphere was exploded by *The Feminine Mystique* by Betty Friedan, published in 1963 in the United States and appearing in translation in France a year later.¹⁴³ It was obviously not just potential movie stars that found domestic life weighing heavily upon them.

Discussing her second marriage to Joe Di Maggio, *Paris-Match* labels it 'un conte de fées à l'américain', soon to fall into disarray when Monroe serves 'pommes de terre crues et rôtis calcinées'. She did in fact master the art of cooking spaghetti, but wanted to continue to be a star. The magazine comments that di Maggio was too Italian 'pour imaginer le bonheur d'une femme ailleurs que dans un foyer'.¹⁴⁴ When Montand was trying to persuade Signoret to come out to Hollywood again, having finished filming in Italy, it was his Italian nature that was proffered as the explanation for him to failing to understand her reluctance, to understand she could be

¹⁴¹ In the years following the war, the average age for marriage fell to 20. By 1951, one in three women married by age 19. And by 1958, more women married between the ages of 15 and 19 than any other age category. Glenda Riley, *Inventing the American Woman*, p. 122

¹⁴² Claude Duffau, *La Femme poète*, p. 23

¹⁴³ Glenda Riley, p. 128 and Claire Duchon, *Women's Lives and Women's Rights*. Claire Duchon quotes the translator, Yvette Roudy talking about the crisis of the housewife: 'These women had bravely tried to follow the fashion of returning to the home and to cope with the situation they had chosen. But they didn't feel right with it [...] This suffering that comes from living below one's full capacity is not the prerogative of American women', p. 91

¹⁴⁴ *Paris-Match*, 567, (samedi 20 février 1960).

happier elsewhere than by his side. 'Montand est d'origine italienne et il ignore les habilités. Il a trouvé le refus [...] de sa femme, incompréhensibles.'¹⁴⁵ Signoret refused to join her husband because she would immediately be forced into playing a part (the angry betrayed wife) that she did not want to assume. '...Sans qu'on la jette de force dans un rôle où elle ne se reconnaît pas. La pièce qu'on veut lui faire jouer est monotone, longue comme un opéra chinois.'¹⁴⁶ Signoret was rejecting artificiality and the role of the victim, which is interpreted in the light of her star persona of French authenticity. She denies having said 'Nous ne quitterons plus jamais' because 'ce n'est pas son langage. Elle n'est ni une starlette, ni un ténor italien et elle parle volontiers argot.' The rejection of performance here is overwhelming. Signoret doesn't deny the affair, stating simply that 'la vie n'est pas un fable en noir et en blanc. Nous ne sommes ni saints ni monstres.' In a rather poignant ending to the interview, however, she is once more associated with the colour red and Monroe with white. 'Je ne suis pas l'épouse-qui-pardonne qui est venue arracher son mari aux griffes de la panthère blonde. La panthère, c'est moi. Les italiens m'appellent *la pantera rossa*, ce qui veut dire la panthère rousse.'¹⁴⁷

The letters of support women sent Signoret often concentrated on the differences in their colouring, with comments such as 'ma rivale était blonde comme elle', as if the reason for Montand's attraction was the shade of Monroe's hair. While Montand was still filming in the States, Signoret received a telephone call on behalf of Sartre, asking if she would sign a text that was to become the famous Manifeste des 121 with its simple declarations against the Algerian war, torture in the name of the French people and the upholding of the colonial system. Signoret signed her name, but did not add Montand's, arguing she did not wish to sign something for him he hadn't read. Signoret claims that his absent name was read as a sort of moral divorce between them. Montand had embraced (literally) American whiteness and cleanliness, whilst Signoret was involved in the dark underbelly of French modernisation. Letters she received expressed this contrast forcefully and in the most racist terms: 'elles disaient généralement que mon mari avait bien raison de me préférer une blonde si fraîche. Que je retourne donc chez les Arabes dont les aptitudes amoureuses sont bien connus. On ajoutait souvent que c'était bien fait aussi pour le juif Miller.'¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁵ *Elle*, (12 août 1960).

¹⁴⁶ *Elle*, (12 août 1960).

¹⁴⁷ *Elle*, (12 août 1960).

¹⁴⁸ Simone Signoret, pp. 290- 295.

With Montand now adopting Monroe's characteristics of American whiteness, the two of them came to be seen as some kind of fantasy of whiteness as a desirable (and actual) value. On the cover of a 1960 *Life* magazine, the headline 'A Drama of Suburbanites and a Negro Neighbor' is superimposed on a photograph of Montand and Monroe in *Let's make Love*. The 'drama' is an excerpt from a novel in which whites collaborate to prevent an Afro-American buying a house on their street.¹⁴⁹ The very presence of Montand and Monroe confirms the fantasy appeal of the all-white couple acting as containment against encroaching darker forces. With such a fantasy role, small wonder Monroe could not function as a housewife. 'I guess I've had too much fantasy to be only a housewife.'¹⁵⁰

If the French woman reading *Paris-Match* imagines 'tous les plaisirs de l'eau' are to be discovered in allowing her two children to wash the dog in her new Standard bathroom, Monroe in *The Seven Year Itch* is in the cooling bath, her toe stuck in the tap and needing it eased out by a local plumber, or reclining in a stream-lined swimming costume on a beach, to show her how very wrong she is. This is a film that absolutely insists on The (fantasy) Girl's lack of domesticity and contrasts her totally to the absent wife. She is never shown in her own space, she encourages Tom Ewell to smoke, she thinks champagne and potato crisps 'elegant'. This image of a rejection of domesticity occurs in Monroe's earlier film roles, such as *How to Marry a Millionaire* – 'the whole premise of the film's plot is that the women want to marry rich men, not end up as middle-class housewives. They are not interested in keeping a house, but getting one.'¹⁵¹ Whereas Signoret positively revels in her private home life, leaving it to make excellent films that bring glory to herself and France, Monroe fails in her role as wife (and later, due to repeated miscarriages, mother), indeed cannot even be expected to perform them because she is a star and, as such, belongs to the public rather than one family. During the filming of *The Seven Year Itch*, 400 people crowded onto a street to watch Monroe's skirts float up around her thighs. 'Le coup de vent cinématographique avait fait voler en éclats ce qui restait de l'amour conjugal entre les mariés du siècle.'¹⁵² Monroe is presented as a fantasy figure, incapable of living a normal home life.

The film *Let's Make Love* further adds to the idea of the American star as a fantasy figure, and the European as being grounded within tradition

¹⁴⁹ Lisa Cohen, 'The Horizontal Walk: Marilyn Monroe, CinemaScope, and Sexuality.'

¹⁵⁰ Lisa Cohen, 'The Horizontal Walk: Marilyn Monroe, CinemaScope, and Sexuality.'

¹⁵¹ Lisa Cohen, 'The Horizontal Walk: Marilyn Monroe, CinemaScope, and Sexuality.'

¹⁵² *Paris-Match*, 567 (samedi 20 février 1960).

and domesticity. The film opens with a map of seventeenth century France, giving a sense of time and space, then moves on to a series of lithographs accompanied by a voice-over describing the origins of the Clément family and their huge wealth. This is not wealth formed over night on Wall Street, but has been nurtured for generations, having first been discovered by that most French of characters, the *'paysan'*. A talentless farmer 'who couldn't grow mud' the first Clément was lucky enough to discover a chest of gold on his property. The Clément's family fortune then becomes intimately linked with the fate of France: manufacturing balloons (invented by the Montgolfier brothers); supplying munitions through the Napoleonic wars; persuading a Mr. Eiffel to build 'some kind of sight-seeing tower' and amassing a fortune of one billion dollars as they do so. All the while this family is being described, the strains of *La Marseillaise* can be heard. Clément and his nation are linked together: he has built his wealth through French history. Further details throughout the film serve to make Montand/Clément an icon of Frenchness, cradled within French tradition, history, and culture. His manager, Welch, says 'I've been worrying about you since your christening at Notre Dame'; Clément collects art; when desperately searching for a name to call himself, Clément suggests 'Alexandre Dumas', arguing 'it's a very common name in France.' He speaks through the film with a heavy French accent. This is added to by Montand's own star image and persona; *Variety*, praising Fox for a shrewd move in acquiring a new French star, compares him to Maurice Chevalier, another French show man.¹⁵³

The film plays with Monroe's star image as well, giving her character, Amanda Dell, many of Monroe's traits: she is a performer; she is going to a night school in an attempt to better herself, (in an oblique reference to Monroe's time at the Actor's Lab, and her 'artistic pretensions' Clément/Montand asks 'I suppose you want to play Shakespeare and Greek tragedy?'; obviously a fantasy figure for Fox executives as well as the audience, Dell/ Monroe replies 'oh no, this is my favourite kind of show', even though she struggled against playing in 'dumb blonde' vehicles); she has a stage name. She specifically claims 'I'm weak in history' when Amanda and Clément chat about her night school work – compare this to Clément's introduction which locates him in a family of seven generations. Although referring directly to her subject, it could also refer to Amanda and Monroe's hazy backgrounds and even the relative youth of America as compared to France.

¹⁵³ *Variety*, 24 August 1960.

Monroe and her character Dell, and the myths, fantasies and anecdotes surrounding Monroe become even more conflated during the performance of the show number 'Let's Make love'. The number is performed in real time, dramatically interrupting the narrative flow of the film, and allowing full indulgence upon Monroe as spectacle. She is ethereal, dressed in a shiny bluish evening dress, silver shoes, and bathed in blue light. She is presented in her typical fantasy configuration with a darker man – Tony/Vaughan with black hair and dressed in a dark suit. The images of the song are intercut with shots to Clément/Montand, his eyes closed and a beatific smile upon his face: the image of Bazin's dreaming sleeper and cinematic spectator. The confusion between the performance of the song and erotic fantasy is complete. The song begins with Tony turning off a television set, and Amanda/ Monroe sings: 'No don't turn the TV on/ Instead just turn me on/ I light up like neon/ Let's make love.' Monroe is here figured as the cinema itself. The star designed to lure audiences away from the television screen here invites them to see her be lit up: not just projected onto a cinema screen, the song suggests, but as translucent as it. The song cleverly elides sexual possession with voyeurism, linking the 'turning off' of a television set to go and see a Monroe film with the possibility that one could 'turn her on'. Monroe also had a highly publicised battle against the lure of the television in her private life. Zolotow reports that yet another blemish on the dream of a domestic idyll Monroe was incapable of creating was 'the 21 inch screen' belonging to Di Maggio. 'For Di Maggio had an incurable craving for television, comparable to the addiction some men have for alcohol. He would have his dinner while watching the seven o'clock news, and then he would go straight through an evening watching all the western and crime programmes and even the Late Show and the Late Late Show.'¹⁵⁴ Zolotow speculates that she hoped to reform Joe through her love; whatever the truth of this, upon her divorce, Monroe told the court: 'he didn't talk to me. He was cold. [...] He really watched television instead of talking to me.'¹⁵⁵ Monroe the private individual, Monroe the star, and the character she is playing, Amanda Dell, become one. As they merge in this way, so they become Clément/ Montand's ideal, a mix of domesticity and angelic, pure sexuality; a melange also expressed in the song 'My Heart Belongs to Daddy', but that is untenable in everyday life, that could only exist in mythical Hollywood.

¹⁵⁴ Maurice Zolotow, p. 145.

¹⁵⁵ Maurice Zolotow, p. 211.

This concept of *Let's Make Love* as a mythical fairy-tale that constructs its star's story as one of an American Utopian ideal is reinforced in the following review:

Let's Make Love est admirable parce-que c'est un film biographique [...] *Let's Make Love* est [...] le deuxième épisode [...] de The Marilyn Monroe story. Voilà je pense une des raisons de la grandeur du cinéma américain. Il est d'emblée dans le monde de la fable grâce à quoi chaque épisode de la vie quotidienne prend des allures épiques. Il n'a pas besoin de la littérature puisqu'il sait puiser dans l'inépuisable mythologie américaine [...] la vie mythique de tout un peuple [...] Mais *Let's Make Love* n'est pas seulement une autobiographie, c'est aussi un document [...] sur le cruauté de la civilisation américaine, cette civilisation où tout s'achète et se vend, même les histoires.¹⁵⁶

This review reinforces the links between Monroe's star persona and its construction as a mythical ideal, an ideal that is played out in people's everyday lives. There is no divorce between the everyday and the myth, the star and the person, the film and the myth. The review however reveals one of the motives behind this relentless construction of the ideal star persona: it is to have a commodity. The myth is the commodity object sold by Hollywood. *L'Humanité*, the newspaper closely linked to the French Communist party, appears to be able to reject some of these myths, arguing that the relationship presented in *Let's Make Love*, rather than being 'natural', is the result of labour – the work of the director and especially the stars. An incredibly positive review of 'Le Milliardaire' appeared on 5 October 1960; the headline was 'Marilyn éblouissante, Montand parfait'. It describes Montand's performance as a millionaire as surprising for someone with his working class roots who can sing songs such as 'Le gamin de Paris.' This is due to his great acting talent. As for Monroe, 'on ne peut que la couvrir de l' éloges. Cette grande et intelligente actrice est en progrès constants depuis le début de sa carrière. Son interprétation confine au génie.' Rather than being figured as a symbol of America or stardom, Monroe is here judged as an actress. Rather than the two of them being taken as representatives of a certain way of being French, or American, or male or female, they are here understood to have an unusual plasticity (their acting talent) which allows them to move beyond pre-determined boundaries.

¹⁵⁶ Jean Domarchi, 'Le Milliardaire ou l'apothéose de Marilyn', *Arts* (12 octobre 1960).

Monroe's bloneness connotes sexuality, technology, cleanliness and modernity. She is the perfect Cold War figure, exporting American values across the Atlantic. She is usually figured as a triumph of both American nature and American technological prowess, another bomb to be sent to Europe, although of the sexual rather than the atomic kind. Signoret offers authenticity and tradition – a French way to approach being modern. Yet Monroe eclipses her bloneness. Bloneness is in itself a form of Americanisation. It requires the use of shampoos daily, and possibly bleach (certainly bleach to become as light and ideal as Monroe). Montand did return to Signoret, but one cannot help but feel that Monroe was the more successful blonde. The French were doomed to be mere imitations, consuming the products but ultimately unable to appropriate the values. An impressive array of marketing tools and the power of the studio system supported these values. The communist party appears to appreciate that these values are not 'natural' but the result of many hours of intensive labour. The struggle for whiteness, epitomised by the use of shampoo and the desire for clean, chrome kitchens, left France in an impasse – neither as clean or as sexy as America, yet struggling to retain her earthy past.

Susan Hayward argues that Signoret's 'performativity' – i.e. her star persona's body as a site of (gendered and sexual) performance plays with gender fixity. 'Signoret was aware that the body text, once on display, was potentially an unliberating text to inhabit.'¹⁵⁷ Signoret's work did signal an ambiguity concerning gender stereotyping, as she embodies an active, even predatory sexuality. Yet Signoret is clearly contained within a different bodily text: that of the national body. History and nationality act to claim Signoret and her meanings. In contrast, Monroe, for all that her star persona insists on her body being available for sexual display, is not contained within an unliberating national text. As she operates on a fantasy level, Monroe escapes a unidimensional representation. Her image cannot be pinned down, but rather it escapes, as it inhabits a Hollywood utopia rather than a recognisable national space. This is not to say that Monroe did not operate as an object of the male gaze, or that her body was not on display. Rather, it is to argue that her image, in the context of 1950s France, illuminates the contradictory ways in which femininity was at that time constructed, and that it was only by being an ideal, epitomised in the white-blonde hair, that Monroe's image retained any kind of coherence. Monroe did not avoid the

¹⁵⁷ Susan Hayward, 'Setting the Agenders: Simone Signoret – The Pre-Feminist Star Body', in *Gender and French Cinema* ed. by Alex Hughes and James Williams (Oxford: Berg, 2001), pp. 107-123.

implications of a sexualised body, but she did function as a beautiful fetish who 'holds the gaze with a fascination that blocks out all enquiry and is rendered anathema to traditional and male auteurist critics.'¹⁵⁸ Monroe's body escapes the classification and earthiness that ties Signoret's down to one signification, the national community of France. The American star has the power of the proliferating image to suggest alternative meanings and representations, whereas the French star is tied down to the national text. My next chapter will discuss the implications of the movement of female stars in a more literal sense, as it investigates the fate of the female *flâneuse*.

¹⁵⁸ Laura Mulvey, 'Anita Loos/ Howard Hawks/ Marilyn Monroe', p. 214.

Chapter three: Sex and the single girl, or the New Wave star

The street-walker

‘Que de gênes pour une femme seule! Elle ne peut guère sortir le soir; on la prendrait pour une fille. Il est mille endroits où l’on ne voit que des hommes, et si une affaire l’y mène, on s’étonne, on rit sottement. Par exemple, qu’elle se trouve attardée au bout de Paris, qu’elle ait faim, elle n’osera pas entrer chez un restaurateur. Elle y ferait événement, elle y serait un spectacle. Elle aurait constamment tous les yeux fixés sur elle, entendrait des conjectures hasardées, désobligeantes.’¹

In this quote from Jules Michelet’s pro-marriage tract, the lone woman in the street is assumed to be a prostitute. The only reason a single woman would have to enter the public space is, it is assumed, to sell her body. The boulevard, the bar and the brothel are thus all represented as spaces that women enter as objects to be consumed rather than to consume. Just through entering this public arena, the woman becomes the object of the controlling male gaze that presumes to read her meanings. In Michelet’s account, the eyes that are fixed on the woman both create and contain her as ridiculous or shameful spectacle. The operation of the male gaze creates the lone woman as a prostitute, as it imagines her as (another) spectacular commodity fetish provided by the urban experience.

The man who walks the streets of nineteenth century Paris is the *flâneur*, the artist ordering his subjective experience of the crowd into a beautiful work of art. The woman who walks the streets, ‘the streetwalker’, is, in contrast, literally and semantically identified as a prostitute. She is not someone in charge of ordering experience, but one forced to undergo it out of dire financial necessity. The male gaze upon the woman’s body assumes it as an object for sexual exchange and financial bartering rather than as indicating individual subjectivity. Yet in a typical misogynist move, it is the presence of the lone woman rather than the operation of the male gaze that is believed to insinuate the presence of a prostitute.

For Walter Benjamin, the key to the new urban phantasmagoria was not so much the commodity in the market as the commodity on display. As the commodity presents the market with its own seductive sheen, so both the exchange value and the use value of the object lose practical meaning and

¹ Jules Michelet, *La Femme* (Paris: Flammarion, 1981), p. 66.

representation comes to the fore. As it competes to be desired, so the object must attract the gaze.² The lone woman/prostitute is another of these commodities on display. Her appearance alone disrupts social hierarchies and neat capitalist divisions between the private and the public and the object and the subject of commodity exchange. The nineteenth century prostitute and the twentieth century cinema star thus operate in the same imaginary, as commodified woman whose very visibility disrupts assumptions about the construction of the feminine.

The sight of the lone woman in public was a source of much anxiety in the nineteenth-century city, as her very presence turns the city from a clean Arcadia into a sleazy brothel. She threatens the order of the city with her financial mobility, sexual promiscuity, and blurring of the boundaries discussed above. She implied mobility at a time in Paris of a modernising project aimed to install aesthetic unity and social order. Baron Haussmann's reforms provided new parks and open spaces and claims were made for this allowing a bucolic fraternisation of all Parisians, regardless of social origin (whilst presumably preserving hierarchies). The city also became more 'beautiful', with boulevards, refurbished facades and monumental vistas. Yet this was at the price of hiding much from public view: 'socially it [the city] remained disturbingly opaque and unpredictable. There was simply too much in 'circulation', and circulating too fast, for a sense of stable identity to remain in place for very long.'³ Christopher Prendergast articulates these conflicting ideas concerning fixity and mobility, stable identities and capitalist circulation of objects and bodies, in terms of a conflict between Paris as capital and Paris as metropolis. Whereas as a capital Paris would promote norms (of dress, speech and so on), as a metropolis it is an impersonal space of circulation and exchange, 'all mixture, movement and decentredness.'⁴

The lone woman on the street, automatically assumed to be a prostitute, becomes a figure of attempted regulation and control, in an attempt to install 'capital' order and harmony over 'metropolitan' chaos and circulation. The sense of anxiety over women in public places runs deep, especially as the place of prostitution in the city's economy of sex becomes increasingly visible. Honoré Balzac's *La Cousine Bette* used the diseased body of Valérie Marneffe (the prostitute disguised as the respectable woman)

² Laura Mulvey, *Fetishism and Curiosity* (Indiana: Bloomington University Press/BFI, 1996), p. 4.

³ Christopher Prendergast, *Paris and the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), p.9.

⁴ Christopher Prendergast, p.14.

to organise a whole vision of a corrupted, self-prostituting urban society. The prostitute pervaded the social organism, both necessary for 'correct' circulation of bodies (for the male flâneur, the streets must be furnished with appropriate sexual goods)⁵ yet unable to be fixed, threatening contamination and loss of identity. Classification is attempted as a means to control and master the whore as a prelude to mastering the city, but is constantly overtaken by the fluid urban reality.

Edouard Manet's *Olympia*, a classic representation of a prostitute, was greeted with howls of outrage and incomprehension when it was first displayed at the Paris salon of 1865. Tim Clark argues that the critical 'shock' (one of the hallmarks of an avant-garde text) caused by the image was due to the fact it disrupted 2nd Empire discourses around both the category of the aesthetic (the traditional 'Nude' as critical category) and the category of Woman (the necessary division between the 'femme honnête' and the 'fille publique'). *Olympia* refused to occupy a clearly identifiable space in a painting full of contradictions. The woman is presented invitingly to the viewer, but stares back defiantly at him; her body is painted defined by harsh black lines, (critics described her as 'surrounded by coal'), but there is an elusive fluidity in the body, 'the indefinite contour of Olympia's right breast, the faded bead of the nipple, the sliding, dislocated line of the forearm'; her pubic hair, never present in the hallowed convention of nude painting, is suggested by her hand placed at her crotch and the faint wisps of hair in her armpit, yet the hair allowed to the nude, inviting, unkempt, flowing like a waterfall, is here hidden by its similar colour to the framing Japanese screen, so much so it is usually missed by viewers, who assume her hair is tied back. Clark praises this painting for refusing to enter easily the space of male fantasy, yet the confusion around Olympia's class signals a failure to relocate her in a fully coded social space. She is unreal and ahistoric.⁶

Peter Wollen's reply to this article clearly demonstrates that these inconsistencies in fact keep *Olympia* firmly grounded in male sexual desires.

⁵ A typical example of this desire to both 'cleanse' the streets and yet provide for male sexual wants through the objectification, commodification and fetishisation process women undergo on the street is provided by Parent-Duchatelet's scheme to regulate prostitution. He devised an ingenious system of signs whereby prostitutes would be recognised by men, i.e. potential clients, but not by respectable women. Wives and daughters would escape the moral pollution of the street, while men could continue their full enjoyment of it. Christopher Prendergast, p. 137.

⁶ Timothy J. Clark, 'Preliminaries to a Possible Treatment of *Olympia* in 1865', *Art in Modern Culture: an Anthology of Critical Texts*, ed. by Francis Francina and Charles Harris (London: Phaidon Press, 1992), pp. 105-120.

The endless oscillation between a fantasy of the '*femme fatale*', dominating and ruthless, and the abject 'odalisque', compliant and open, is sado-masochistic fantasy. 'The two graphic styles reflect these two fantasy positions for the woman: soft against hard, open against closed, indefinite against definite, inviting against resistant, yielding against ruthless.' This constant exchange between items revealed and concealed (such as the hair) links to Sigmund Freud's arguments over the recognition and disavowal of the fetishist (an argument not made in the 1860s, adding to the general lack of understanding of the image). The male spectator is in a position of mastery and control. 'This is a picture not about 'Woman' but the production of woman as a fetish in a particular conjunction of capitalism and patriarchy.'⁷

Manet's shocking *Olympia* illustrates the anxiety concerning classification of the woman-prostitute as an attempt to fix her, hold her in place, and the truth that looking at the woman invites mobilising (sexual/financial) exchange and blurring of distinctions.

This picture [...] quotes from the social vocabulary of the Courtesan and the pictorial vocabulary of the Nude, but only in order to equivocate them both, forcing a recognition that the body of the woman in the painting cannot be recuperated into the comfortable space of either; reminding the male viewer that he had, in his own primitive way, actually got the point he wished to ignore when, in his guise as nineteenth century art critic, he described the body as "dirty", "unwashed", "greasy"; namely, that Olympia comes from the streets, and that the happy charade prettifying the money/sex exchange could be accomplished only by a retreat into bad faith, by literally averting one's eyes.⁸

The figure of Olympia sets up a series of questions about how women are to be represented in modernity and the anxiety their representation can provoke. In the public sphere of the art gallery, Olympia is fixed and held for erotic contemplation by a presumed male gaze (of the art critic, the art collector, or the well-educated visitor). Yet the truth of Olympia's condition is that she enters discourses of sexual, social, racial and financial mobility. The painting confuses and conflates the leisurely aesthetic contemplation of the gallery visitor with the urgent gratification of sex. Olympia's class is unlocatable in this painting – she could be a courtesan or a whore. Her flowers, offered by

⁷ Peter Wollen, 'Manet: Modernism and Avant-Garde, Timothy Clark's article on Manet's *Olympia*', *Screen*, 21:3 (Summer 1980), 15-25.

⁸ Christopher Prendergast, p. 138.

her black servant, serve to underline her own painted artifice. She is a spectacle, offered up to the viewer's gaze. Not only is her body on the open market, but so is the representation of her body (indeed, it can be hardly be accidental that a euphemism for a prostitute is a 'painted woman'.) Whilst the impulse of the voyeur/viewer is to fixate upon her offered nude body, such stillness is denied by the painting itself. In subject matter it confirms the possibility of social mobility (the prostitute could be anybody) and in context the existence of a market which demands that (images of) women's bodies be made available for mobilising financial exchange.

Manet's Olympia is part of a fascination with the figure of the prostitute in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. This fascination had little to do with the actual experience of the prostitute; it was her representational value which transformed her into an exemplary character in literature, art, the theatre and photography, such as in Henri Brassai's exploration of brothels in his series *Paris de nuit*. The prostitute is the nineteenth-century female *flâneuse*; the lone woman can only enter the street on this pretext (any lone woman will be assumed to be a prostitute). She is also emblematic of the new woman's relation to urban space. She collapses the distinctions between human beings and commodities as the time of expanding industrialisation and labour value. Benjamin referred to the prostitute as an allegory of the modern and 'the prostitute is so resolutely linked with modernism because she demonstrates the new status of the body as exchangeable and profitable image.'⁹ Modernism and capitalism allow both bodies and *images* of bodies to circulate freely. The prostitute, the 'painted woman' ostentatiously exhibits the commodification of the body, the point where the body and exchange value coincide, where capitalism's ruse (human labour having a monetary exchange value) is exposed. The prostitute uses the mechanisms of display and spectacle that are intrinsic to capitalism's marketing techniques. In a small autobiographical detail in his essay on the uncanny, Freud describes how, lost in a provincial town in Italy, he finds himself in the red light district, with 'nothing but painted women.' He hurries away along the winding streets only to find himself back in the same square three times.¹⁰ Aside from the humorous image of the grey suited psychoanalyst desperately trying to escape the embarrassment of the situation, the anecdote also reveals how the prostitute is the figure around whom neat distinctions that sustain both psychoanalysis and capitalism are

⁹ Mary Ann Doane, *Femmes Fatales: Feminism, Film Theory, Psychoanalysis* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991), p. 263.

¹⁰ Mary Ann Doane, p. 260.

revealed to be flawed. For the prostitute sex and work, the body and the commodity, are the same things. She is the figure that threatens social collapse, yet at the same time is figured as the 'necessary sewer' for societal waste.

Mary Ann Doane argues that in contrast to this overdetermined use of the figure of the prostitute in literature and art, the cinema offered nowhere as near a pervasive and insistent a view of this woman, even in the pre-censorship era. She argues that this is because the 'social function of the cinema and its deployment of bodies [...] mobilises some of the connotations of prostitution conceived on a figurative level.' In a discussion of the changing topoi of prostitution in the twentieth century, Corbin comments that the rapid growth of the number of cinemas in the city meant changes in how trade was solicited, as they did not lend themselves to this practise. 'The spectacle and exhibitionism associated with prostitution in its take-over of the streets was now on the screen, and the re-arrangement of public space transformed the process of commodification of the body.'¹¹ In other words, the literal representation of the prostitute in the cinema was no longer necessary as cinema itself filled the streets with images of highly visible women who were a humanised version of the commodity object. The female cinema star can now occupy the role of the human spectacular commodity fetish in the cultural imaginary. (It is also interesting to note that in 1946, the year that American films flooded the market place following the blanket ban on them during the Occupation, was also the year that the loi Marthe Richard of 13 April closed the *maisons de tolérance* or organised brothels. It is almost as if one particularly disturbing 'visible' woman is to be replaced by another). This collapsing of the representational resonance of the prostitute onto the female cinema star particularly fascinated Jean-Luc Godard, who made explicit the links between the female cinema star, the prostitute, and the city/market-place she serves, most notably in *Vivre Sa Vie* (1962) and *Deux ou Trois Choses que je sais d'elle* (1965). Not only was this wandering prostitute daringly visible, she also articulated the contradiction Prendergast identifies between stillness and mobility. The image, the star, the whore, and the city; all are caught in a bind between containment, contemplation, and constraint; and movement, exchange, and traffic. This chapter will explore the resonance of this paradox and how it affected the self consciously urban woman of the street, especially as she was represented in New Wave cinema.

¹¹ Mary Ann Doane, p. 263.

The self-consciously urban modern films of the New Wave placed women on the streets at a time when ideology still worked to confine women to the private sphere of the home and the domestic. This privileging of private space as the arena for women was also carried out by the mainstream '*tradition de qualité*' cinema prevalent in France in the 1950s 'where women were confined to the salon or the kitchen.'¹² The New Wave set out to rethink representation within cinema, placing it into a historical and critical context. Whereas the films discussed starring Monroe and Signoret unconsciously construct modern femininity through sex appeal, cleanliness, and shining surfaces, the New Wave film self consciously seeks to historicise and critique *how* femininity and modernity are represented. In re-invigorating image making in this way, the New Wave is treading a thin line between disowning the patronising literary productions of the '*tradition de qualité*' and rescuing the image from its ubiquity in the explosive visual culture of time (advertising, popular press and so on). The 'excessive visibility' of women discussed previously is here investigated as a symptom of a modernising society.

Whilst the deconstructive thrust of the New Wave is traditionally located in its disowning of the literary influence upon cinema, location shooting and new methods of cinematic punctuation (the 'jump cut' and so on), it also sought to problematise star images and representations.¹³ In a 'typically bombastic' statement François Truffaut said he would never work with five of the most successful French stars of the time (Fernandel, Michèle Morgan, Jean Gabin, Gérard Philipe and Pierre Fresnay) as he felt that they imposed their own image upon the film.¹⁴ The New Wave discovered new stars, female and male, who redefined notions of glamour. No longer located in polished studio close-ups, star quality was found in freshness, youth, vitality and improvisation. These images challenged and updated the topography of femininity as they featured modern girls in the city.

New Wave women inhabit traditionally male encoded spaces – the street and the cafe. As such, they are both entering 'male' areas and invoking a self consciously modern representation of femininity. Corinne Marchand in *Cléo de 5 à 7* (Varda, 1962) has encounters in the cafes, parks,

¹² Ginette Vincendeau, *Stars and Stardom in French Cinema* (London: Continuum, 2000), p. 120.

¹³ Although it should be said here that technology is never neutral. The mobile gaze that can take in several topoi facilitated in the city can be far more successfully cinematically represented than ever before thanks to the new technology exploited by the New Wave – light, hand-held cameras, 16mm film, and synchronised sound.

¹⁴ Ginette Vincendeau, p. 110.

and streets of Paris, anxiously awaiting the results of her medical tests. In a more carefree mode, Stefania Sabatini/ Juliette and Yveline Céry/ Liliane mooch around the street together, hoping to meet a nice boy in *Adieu Philippine* (Rozier, 1963). The two stars this chapter will concentrate on are Jean Seberg and Jeanne Moreau, both of whom had star images constructed through a concept of modern urban femininity which featured them walking the streets.

Moreau was the archetypal New Wave star: young, fresh, darker and less overtly glamorous than Bardot or Monroe. In *L'Ascenseur pour l'échafaud* (Malle, 1957) she paces the night streets, a twentieth-century female noctambulist, walking in the electric light filled city. In *Heures parisiennes*, devoted to the second hour after midnight, Delvau, quoted by Benjamin, writes: 'a person may take a rest from time to time; he is permitted stops and resting places; but he has no right to sleep.'¹⁵ This restless nocturnal errance becomes Moreau's motif: *La Notte* (Antonioni, 1960) is dedicated to the female protagonist's exploration of her relationship through one wakeful night. In *Jules et Jim* (Truffaut, 1961), a night time walk is once again used to affirm her subjectivity (this time in the German countryside, the long walk where she succeeds in taking Jim as her lover). In *Jules et Jim* Moreau further functions as a symbol of modern mobile femininity, running across a bridge, driving a car, and leading a treasure hunt. She wanders along la *Promenade des Anglais* in *La Baie des Anges* (Remy, 1963). She even has a (literal) walk-on part in *Les 400 Coups* (Truffaut, 1959). Dressed in a mink and soaring high-heels she accosts Antoine Doinel/ Jean-Pierre Léaud in the street as she walks her dog, in a New Wave in-joke.

Jean Seberg also captures much of the spirit of the New Wave in her beguiling performance in *A bout de souffle* (Godard, 1960). Young, pretty, insouciant, and androgynous rather than glamorously feminine, she epitomises 'modern' femininity. She touts the American view of the world, selling *The International Herald Tribune* on the Champs Elysées. The New Wave film (re)presents 'modern' femininity as it illustrates women entering and participating in the public sphere of streets, bars and cafés. The tropes of this modern femininity – the city, the night, the walk in the street, became so prevalent a way to explore issues of modernisation, alienation, and female social emancipation, that *l'Express* can parody them.

¹⁵ Walter Benjamin, *Charles Baudelaire: a Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism*, trans. by Harry Zohn (London: Verso, 1983), p. 50.

La scène se passe généralement au crépuscule, parfois de nuit, quelquefois au petit matin. Le décor: Une rue, presque toujours déserte, dans la banlieue d'une grande ville. [...] La caméra panoramique sur une femme (Jeanne Moreau? Monica Vitti? Anouk Aimée?...) qui se livre à La Marche. [...] La Marche n'a pas d'autre utilité technique, selon ses promoteurs, que de récréer l'errance sans but qui est un élément si importante de la Vie. Quand on lui demande pourquoi ses personnages marchent tant, Antonioni s'indigne: 'Pourquoi Joyce a-t-il terminé *Ulysse* avec un monologue?'¹⁶

This chapter will aim to address the question of the walking woman in a more fruitful way than Antonioni's response. It will ask if this new movement (both literal and metaphorical) frees women from the social anxiety engendered by 'the lone woman' to encounter pleasure, or if they are still victims of gendered concepts of space. This chapter will demonstrate that gender and nationality impact on the very ways in which women occupy space in modernity. As such, it will argue that the contrast between the American cinema star and her French iconographic equivalent illustrates that nationality can be constructed as a performance, a way of behaving in the world, rather than a fixed essence. American nationality necessarily maps onto an ability to move beyond boundaries in the context of French cinema whereas Moreau's urban mobility is still contained within a national context.

Painters of Modern Life: Jules, Jim and Jeanne Moreau

The most obvious place to begin this investigation of the modernist *flâneuse* is Truffaut's film *Jules et Jim*. This is because Moreau/ Catherine is identified with the feminine beauty Charles Baudelaire, the poet of the city *flâneur*, espouses. She is discovered by Jules and Jim as a statue before she is presented to them as a flesh and blood figure. Jules and Jim fall in love literally with a (slide) projection, a projected ideal of femininity. They then make the identification between the statue and Catherine. This places Catherine within the realm of the eternal feminine, consecrated and frozen into art object. Yet the statue's appearance as the vivid, powerful, tempestuous Catherine marks it also as a contemporary beauty. Catherine combines the pull of the eternal with the contingency of the modern,

¹⁶ Anon., 'L'homme, la femme et le lampadaire', *L'Express* (8 novembre 1962).

fulfilling Baudelaire's definition of beauty espoused in his essay *Le Peinture de la vie moderne*.¹⁷ As such, she is the modern Baudelarian creation of two 'painters of modern life', the bohemian Jules and Jim. Nor is this the first time that they have created beautiful women for themselves through this mixing of immediate sexual desire and artistic fetishising/ distancing – they perform exactly the same operation on Lucie, Jules's erstwhile girlfriend, discussing her and sketching her stylised features in chalk upon a table. They are thwarted in their ownership of that image not by Lucie's subjectivity, but by the refusal of the male café patron to sell them the table. This fetishistic fixation on the distant body of a woman is echoed again in Jules's story of the soldier writing to his sweetheart and falling in love with her through his letters. Stuart Mc Dougal links this anecdote to the experience of the poet Guillaume Apollinaire in his letters to Madeline Pagès, collected in *Tendre Comme le Souvenir*.¹⁸ The incident is changed in one significant respect – the soldier dies before being reunited with the girl, before the beautiful image created through a combination of physical desire and aesthetic text can be compared to the corporeal, contemporary woman.

The most 'modern' woman of them all, the smoking, flirting Thérèse, whose appearance is absolutely up to the minute, fluctuating from belle époque girl to twenties flapper, is notably never involved in a sexual liaison with either Jules or Jim. They cannot identify her with yet another frozen artistic image because she has already identified herself with a moving, speedy, modern machine – the locomotive. The two dizzying camera spins as she puffs her cigarette backwards; her breathless, comically speeded-up recounting to Jules of her sexual conquests in the decade since they last met; both distinguish Thérèse as wholly modern. Her giddy persona embodies the thrill of motion and incessant (ex)change, the modernist love of transition, speed and fluidity and appreciation of its utter inconsequentiality.

Catherine's modernity (her running in the street as Thomas, her sexual daring, her clothing) is, in contrast, accompanied by a contradictory identification of her with the eternal feminine (her desire to be a mother, her

¹⁷ Baudelaire's famous essay is an eulogy to the painter Constantin Guys in which Baudelaire argues that the consummate painter of modern life is the one who creates a work of artistic beauty which draws on a constant ineffable soul and a contingent, fleeting, modern element. The absolute artistic masterpiece will combine both these characteristics in a harmonious whole. Charles Baudelaire, *The Painter of Modern Life and other essays* trans. by Jonathon Mayne (New York: De Capa, 1986), pp. 9-43.

¹⁸ Stuart Y McDougal, 'Adaption of an Auteur: Truffaut's *Jules et Jim*', in *Modern European Filmmakers and the Art of Adaption*, ed. by Andrew Horton and Joan Magretta (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1981), pp. 89-99 (p. 91). Whereas Jules's soldier dies before his fantasies are challenged, Apollinaire married a woman he met while convalescing, having severed the affair with Madeline.

synonymy with the elements – fire, water, wind). Catherine is further identified with Baudelaire's vision of the feminine beauty when the characters are returning from a viewing of a Swedish play and Jim begins to dismiss Catherine's opinion of it. Catherine is praising its modernist flux, commenting 'on ne sait pas à quelle époque ça se passe, ni dans quel milieu', the heroine is 'libre, elle invente sa vie à chaque instant.' Jim however retreats to visions of eternal, unchanging, and unholy femininity as supported by Baudelaire to counter Catherine's praise of a woman who is free to invent her own meanings. He declares 'Comme dit Baudelaire, la femme est naturelle, donc abominable' and quotes Baudelaire to prove his point that women should not go to church. Women are removed from the divine act of creation, as they are to be created by others. Catherine's response to this contempt is to try and create her own moment of meaning by jumping into the Seine. 'She mocks Baudelaire's vision of women by acting nobly, artfully, creatively, creating "a moment of meaning"'¹⁹. It is only the (threatened) destruction of the self that allows Catherine to force the men out of their Baudelairian aesthetic distancing of her. If Catherine is to break the men's objectifying vision of her as fetishised feminine ideal, it is at the cost of her own existence.

Catherine is closely associated throughout the film with destructive elements. Not only is there the plunge into the Seine, but also a mad zig-zag driving of the car through a deserted square, and a strange, strained scene early in the film when Jules comes to collect her and she sets fire to her dress while burning old love letters. These scenes foreshadow Catherine's death, as she drowns by driving a car off a bridge and is subsequently cremated. In the context of the men's visions of her as an apparition, a queen, or a goddess, her determination to establish her freedom and subjectivity seems less the psychopathic misuse of her 'modern' liberty, as expressed by several critics, than a desperate attempt to become a woman rather than a statue.²⁰ Her attempts to enter the public sphere as herself are constantly thwarted. Furthermore, her modernity functions not to free her from idealisation and objectification, but to make her more susceptible to it, as it is precisely her

¹⁹ Kathleen Murphy, 'La Belle dame sans merci', *Film Comment* 28:6 (Nov-Dec 1992), 28-30, (p.29).

²⁰ French censors would only pass the film for those over eighteen to watch, and had initially sought to ban it. Jean-Claude Moireau, *Jeanne Moreau* (Paris: Ramsay, 1988), p. 89. In the United States, *Jules et Jim* was condemned by the Legion of Decency on the grounds that its story developed 'in a context alien to Christian and traditional moral decency'; Stanley Kauffmann labelled Catherine a psychopath and Pauline Kael argued that Catherine abuses her freedom to the point that she becomes 'morally insane' when balked of her selfish desires. See Kathleen Murphy, p. 29.

modernity that creates Catherine as ideal in the eyes of the painters of modern life, Jules and Jim in the film, and Truffaut the New Wave auteur beyond it.

The scenes where she disguises herself as Thomas, a young, Chaplinesque boy, are the most literal interpretation of Catherine's predicament in the film. The men help her in this construction of an image, painting on her moustache, just as they always create images of Catherine. Susan Hayward uses 'game theory' to produce a persuasive reading of *Jules et Jim*. She argues that Jules and Jim's friendship itself is founded in games of mimicry and illusion. At the start of the film, a series of silent scenes shows them preparing for a masked ball. The narrator then comments 'C'est pendant que Jules fouillait doucement parmi les étoffes et se choisissait un simple costume d'esclave, que naquit l'amitié de Jim pour Jules. Elle grandit pendant le bal.' Their friendship came at the very moment Jules chooses his costume. Their friendship is thus born in the category of games belonging to illusion and disguise.²¹ However, their '*travesti*' takes place within a strictly coded and indeed socially privileged context, a masked ball. The participants and the audience are one and the same in this game; there is no one privileged manipulator of images, and the illusion is enacted through free choice and desire for pleasure. Catherine's disguise as Thomas belongs to an entirely different category of game playing. When Catherine disguises herself as Thomas, the '*travesti*' is total (of both costume and sex). The place for this game is not a ball but the streets of Paris. Catherine's image will not be part of a friendly joke, but is to face 'l'épreuve des rues', to be judged by passers-by. When the trio race across the bridge, she dominates the competition by cheating. She dresses up not as part of a coded game but as a test. She can only pass this test of the street by 'cheating' (dressing as a boy, beginning to run first). Although at first this may appear liberating, it serves also to freeze her out of societal norms – later in the film she be the object of village suspicion. The *only* way she Catherine can win is through recourse to illusion and image determined by the male gaze, rather than through establishing her own subjectivity. She cannot move beyond representation and aesthetic codes.

This is especially apparent in the sub-Hitchcockian scene where Catherine brandishes a pistol at Jim. In a relatively unsuccessful scene in the film, Truffaut abandons his usual restraint and uses melodramatic devices such as rapid editing and thriller type music. It is as if he has returned to the

²¹ Susan Hayward, 'Theorie ludique et *Jules et Jim*', *Nottingham French Studies* 32:1 (Spring 1993), 55-64.

clichés of genre film making rather than being able to break out beyond them. This is the moment when the film loses its light touch, and has indeed been severely criticised.²² Diana Holmes and Robert Ingram argue that it is difficult to tell whether this 'lapse' was deliberate or unconscious on Truffaut's part, but it is surely the former. The moment when the film draws attention to its own constructedness through this rather crude scene is the moment when Catherine's game of illusions finally fails. The limits of representation become apparent. Catherine is trying to win Jim through the illusion of threatening to murder him. He refuses to play the game, leaving by a window and she is now forced go beyond illusion, beyond representation. Her moment of true selfhood is also her moment of death. Disguised as Thomas, she may be able to win the game, but the real point is surely to survive as herself, a task she cannot manage.

This doomed attempt to escape illusion and image is held in the very fabric of the film. Imperceptibly at the ends of several scenes, and flagrantly on one occasion, Catherine's image is literally frozen into a photographic pose to be held in the eye and the mind, as if she were being returned to the statue from which she emerged.²³ The film itself records Catherine as frozen image, as a fascinating object of desire. Truffaut examines the feminine features of the statue in detail. Brief shots of her eyes, nose and smiling mouth contribute to the aesthetic fetishism of the female figure. He repeats the fragmented scanning of the statue's facial parts when the real Catherine appears, confirming the aesthetic rapport between the two of them and positing Catherine as another unattainable object of desire, frozen in time and space, captured on celluloid as the original was in stone.

Even Catherine's most spontaneous acts are re-created as art by and for the male gaze. The male narrator speaks nearly a third of the words in the film.²⁴ When Catherine jumps into the Seine, this male voice-over immediately frames and interprets this event. Truffaut slows and freezes her moments of descent, creating an aesthetic image out of even this most spontaneous gesture. When Jim tells Catherine he understands her, she replies that she does not wish to be understood, i.e. to be framed and attributed motives. In this context, her descent into the Seine could be read as successful as Jules's only response is 'mais t'es fou, Catherine, t'es fou.' However as

²² See for example Diana Holmes and Robert Ingram, *François Truffaut* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1998), p. 124.

²³ Dudley Andrew, 'Jules, Jim and Walter Benjamin', in *The Image in Dispute: Art and Cinema in the Age of Photography* ed. by Dudley Andrew and Sally Shafto, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1997), pp.33-53 (p. 39).

²⁴ Graham Petrie, *The Cinema of Truffaut* (London: Barnes and Zwemmer, 1971), p. 86.

Hayward comments his use of the masculine *fou* as opposed to the feminine *folle* recalls Catherine's disguise as Thomas. This is a second game of illusion and mimicry rather than unmitigated sensation. Catherine acts out her liberation in disguise.²⁵

Catherine must act out her liberation by mimicking men. This motif begins with her Charlie Chaplin costume; it ends with her in a jacket and tie, severe wire-rim spectacles, and very short hair efficiently manipulating the controls of the automobile [...] Discovered as an art object [...] she ends as a technician. [...] We may sense that behind these roles there is a whole person, but we never really see it. And neither do Jules and Jim. These are elective affinities, ideal and unreal.²⁶

Life is lived by Jules and Jim as an artistic project – for example, Jim writes an autobiographical novel, to be immediately translated by Jules into German. Their relation to Catherine echoes this: they see her as a dream, a symbol of femininity. Catherine never escapes this: existentially, the only concrete choice she has is to break the artistic circle and drive off the broken bridge. Their artistic remove is echoed in the way Truffaut stylises the film and frames Catherine as a projected ideal, a beautiful image who cannot move beyond representation into the real. Yet as she is figured into sexual desire, so she enters the arenas of exchange and dynamism. The film itself has a similar tension between fixity and flux in the tension between its witty fixing of the three main characters in a triangular formation, most notably in the scenes at the beach house, and lyrical, sweeping circular motifs, from the 360 degree panning of the four playing at being idiots to 'the tadpoles squirming in a round bowl of water.'²⁷

Therefore in Catherine's representation there is the tension identified in Manet's painting of Olympia, between the woman as idealised art object, and the woman as figure of sexual exchange. Jules attempts to stop this modernist exchange, asking Jim not to sleep with Catherine, who is at this moment, 'declared unexchangeable, unreproducible, absolutely different: she is sheathed in an aura.'²⁸ He cannot hold onto her, however. Catherine is sexually modern, 'off the gold standard', available to the highest bidder (and

²⁵ Susan Hayward, 'Théorie ludique et Jules et Jim', *Nottingham French Studies* 32:1, 55-64.

²⁶ James Monaco, *The New Wave: Truffaut, Godard, Chabrol, Rohmer, Rivette* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), pp. 50-1.

²⁷ Roger Greenspun, 'Elective Affinities: Aspects of *Jules et Jim*', *Sight and Sound*, 32:2 (Spring 1963), 78-83.

²⁸ Dudley Andrew, p. 47.

even while she is involved with Jim, Catherine continues to sleep with Albert). This openness to transaction does not free Catherine from her position as imagined ideal. On the brink of a relationship with Catherine, Jim admits that he has been involved in reifying Catherine into the voyeur's sex *and* art object when he declares: 'J'ai toujours aimé ta nuque... le seul morceau de toi que je pouvais regarder sans être vu.' Here, Catherine's sexual appeal and her beauty, the many masks of illusion she has shown herself adept at wearing, are collapsed into total fetishised objectification (she is looked at, but can't return the gaze).

Her total collapse into singularity occurs not in matters sexual, however, but around her nationality. Her nationality, together with the French literary and cinematic devices discussed above, is what acts to hold Catherine within tradition and representation. Jules and Jim's friendship crosses national boundaries; Jim is French and Jules is Austrian. They symbolise the modernist possibilities for exchange, one translating for the other. Texts are promiscuously available, freed up from their national borders.

The film undercuts this Utopian image of pleasurable transactions in the scene where Jules, the Austrian, is in bed with Catherine, the French woman. (The figuring of Catherine as French is also a major change from the Henri-Pierre Roché novel, where she is Kathe, a German). Jules and Catherine have at this moment in the film formed a stable, monogamous couple about to marry, an icon of the possibilities for sexual transactions across borders. Jules is talking to Jim on the telephone, a further indicator of modern possibilities for communication across borders. Jules begins to sing *La Marseillaise* with a heavy German accent down the telephone to Jim, in response to his teasing. As this, the quintessential moment of linguistic, sexual and national hybridity, the image of Jules singing dissolves into actual footage of the First World War. The sound track continues, so that his voice carries on, no longer a joyful proclamation of the delights of transnational relationships, but an ironic comment upon nationalism and patriotism. Jules and Jim find themselves on either side of the border. Jules is convinced that he and Catherine are now bound for happy marriage, whereas she is about to embark on her relationship with her compatriot, Jim.

Many commentators have remarked how the War marks a decisive break in the film: from luminous and happy to dark and sombre; from Catherine and Jules to Catherine and Jim; from child-birth to sterility; from

cosmopolitan gaiety to rural isolation.²⁹ It also marks a move in the film from celebration of the possibilities of translation to a denial of its possibility. Catherine may be capable of translating a stanza of Goethe's '*Rastlöse Liebe*' into French, but it is an abbreviated, unsatisfactory translation, and she prefers to read Goethe in French. In Germany, Jules discusses at length with Jim the problems of translation, as the word with the same signification in French and German can have a different gender, and therefore a different connotation. He then invites Jim to transcend national boundaries by learning to appreciate German beer, but is interrupted by Catherine who harshly recites a litany of French wines, which serves as a preface to her night time stroll with Jim. This affirmation of her subjectivity through a night-time walk thus occurs within the context of a bond of nationalistic and linguistic unity with Jim. Catherine's modern mobility is denied through her containment within a demarcated national, gendered space. Whereas the male subjects enjoy the possibilities of translation and movement, the female protagonist is contained and ultimately killed.

Catherine is utterly contained within the (male) artistic, literary and cinematic conventions that criss-cross the text. Catherine operates as fascinating image but the narrative 'demonizes the woman in order to require her destruction [...] The film thus dramatises the culture's complicated relation to the feminine as both fascinating vision and destructive essence.'³⁰ Catherine's attempts to escape male possession are thus demonstrated not to be revolutionary and modern but part of a misogynistic process that eliminates her from the narrative precisely through displacing the destructive force onto her. In the dramatic denouement of the film, it will be shown that Catherine is the cinematic *femme fatale*, a figure whose revelation is dependent on a fixing and holding of the female star's image.

When, in the final sequence of *Jules et Jim*, Catherine drives her car off a broken bridge, killing herself and Jim as Jules watches, Jules's gaze is powerless to determine the meaning of Catherine's act. This suicide and murder is undoubtedly the moment in the film where Catherine appears in control of events. However, it is ironically also the moment where her possession by discourse is total. She is revealed through this action to be the *femme fatale* of cinematic convention. Her association with sexual jealousy,

²⁹ See for example Tony Williams, 'World War One in Truffaut's *Jules et Jim*', in *Modern War on Stage and Screen/ Der moderne Krieg auf der Bühne* ed. by Wolfgang Gortschacher and Holger Klein (Lewiston, NY: Mellen, 1997), pp. 401-14.

³⁰ Sandy Flitterman-Lewis, 'Fascination, Friendship, and the 'Eternal Feminine': Or, The Discursive Production of (Cinematic) Desire', *The French Review*, 66:6 (May 1993), 941-46 (p. 943).

forbidden desires, and treachery has suggested this throughout the film. Catherine's narrative function as *femme fatale* culminates in her and her lover's death, a fate warned about in the film's central song, *Le Tourbillon*, sung self-reflexively by Catherine. As in the song, the *femme fatale* is deadly not only to others but also to herself. If Catherine's death could arguably be seen as a moment of self-determination, it is achieved only at the highest price. Her song has located the *femme fatale* in a whirlpool of movement, fluidity and exchange. In contrast, the denouement of the film reveals the fixity of the *femme fatale* hidden behind her gloss of modern freedom and movement. The car, driven by Catherine and symbol of her modern independence and movement, is transformed into a coffin. Her body finishes not in the swirl of a whirlpool but in the stillness of a millpond.

The deadly image, the damaged woman

This fixity is essential to the discovery of the *femme fatale* by the male protagonist, as he needs to fix the woman in order to unmask her 'deep' truth. The spectacle of deadly female sexuality is one of surface and secret. The *femme fatale* projects a seductive surface, in order to hide the truth of her fatal intentions. Thus the *femme fatale* is

the figure of a certain discursive unease [...] for her most striking characteristic is that she never really is what she seems to be. In thus transforming the threat of the woman into a secret, something which must be aggressively revealed [...] the figure is fully compatible with the epistemological drive of the narrative. [...] Cinematic claims to truth about women rely to a striking extent on judgements about vision and its stability or instability.³¹

The topography of female sexuality is figured as a topography of image and depth. The woman functions as a fascinating image that hides or glosses her threat. Deadly female sexuality lying underneath the gloss of modernity is an important element in much of Moreau's work. The revelation of her truth relies on a fixed vision at the end of the film. The male protagonist's view must be stable in order for him to discover her secret. Moreau's entrance into the public sphere functions not as a declaration of independence but as an instability of vision finally unmasked by the gaze of the male protagonist.

³¹ Laura Mulvey, *Fetishism and Curiosity*, p. 46.

The still image is Moreau's emblem and her portrayal, as in *L'Ascenseur pour l'échafaud* (Malle, 1957) where a photograph betrays her to the police. In *Eva* (Losey, 1960) she lures men to their ruin. Malevolent and inscrutable, she hides her drunk, lonely, shabby life behind a seductive glamour, her very name linking her to historical representations of femininity.³² Even in *La Notte*, Lidia is associated with death; the film opens in a hospital and it is revealed that Thomasso, the dying patient, always loved her. Her star image is one of doomed love and death hidden behind a gloss of modernity. She is the *femme fatale* par excellence; it is her modernity that ironically enables her to function in the traditional, misogynistic cinematic mode of female representation as surface image and deep truth, rather than escaping its conventions. Moreau herself has commented:

Si je voulais refuter quelque chose, ce serait l'idée de *femme fatale* qu'on associe à moi. C'est de la misogynie. Dès qu'une femme vit sans hypocrisie, elle est fatale, possessive, destructive. J'ai peut être rendu ce personnage crédible, mais je l'ai fait sans l'attrait des autres qui m'a précédée. Ma séduction – si séduction il y a – vient de mon absence de coquetterie, de ma franchise, de ma volonté opiniâtre d'obtenir ce dont j'ai envie.³³

Yet Moreau's star image does function exactly as that of the traditional *femme fatale*. She may not have all the glamorous accoutrements, but this is simply because her modernity performs the same task, as a surface cover for destructive behaviour.

The *femme fatale* is almost invariably a male invention, the projection – and prisoner – of a director's or writer's fears and fantasies, and probably a means of satisfying his own destructive urges. In return, she is flattered by being worshipped as a goddess and given god-like powers. One often feels that trapped inside the man-eating female is a cheerful, nonvoracious woman trying to get out.³⁴

In other words, the *femme fatale*, whilst appearing to be in control, is contained within masculine fantasises of femininity. Susan Hayward has commented upon the ways in which the powerful *femme fatale* figure, the

³² Ginette Vincendeau, p. 127.

³³ Michaël Delmar, *Jeanne Moreau: portrait d'une femme*, (Paris: Norma, 1994), p. 74.

³⁴ Molly Haskell, *Holding My Own in No Man's Land: Women and Men and Feminism and Film* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), p. 67.

phallic woman, is in fact an image of containment and restraint. Sheathed in a tight fitting dress, the emphasis in her image is on constraining 'a female phallicity' that may otherwise pose a threat.³⁵ The sexual appearance, whilst seeming to suggest the freedom of the 'roving phallus' in fact symbolises the exact opposite. Moreau as *femme fatale* has her star image constructed in exactly this paradoxical way. Whilst she has the sheen of female independence in her restless frustration the narrative denouements of her films signal her constraint and stillness. She is trapped in representations of femininity. In *Jules et Jim*, this entrapment was symbolised by her appearance as the frozen statue, framed as a slide projection. In *L'Ascenseur pour l'échafaud* she is literally a prisoner of the French state.

L'Ascenseur pour l'échafaud is directly concerned with immobility and entrapment. Moreau walks the city at night, to the soundtrack of cool jazz wholly improvised by the American jazz musician Miles Davis, but ultimately the film is moving towards stillness and closure over mobility and openness. Its very title suggests this, taking a movement impossible without modern technology – a controlled movement upwards and downwards through space – and condemning it to the gallows. Technology is alienating and mechanising, controlling and holding movement, most notably where the electricity supply being switched off holds her lover Julien in the lift overnight. Julien, who was once a mythical paratrooper roaming the jungles of South-East Asia, is now contained within the space of a lift in Paris.³⁶ Technology is the nemesis of all four main characters. It is because they have been 'captured' on film by a mini camera that Florence and Julien can be attributed motives for the murder of Carala and Véronique and Louis are associated with the German couple at the motel. The frozen image again works to hold Moreau, not this time as a projection of male fantasy, but as a prisoner.

Society works to contain and classify its members and their movements, especially those of women. Louis Malle comments that the attraction of night is that it is a time when an other-worldliness comes to the rescue of those trapped by technological innovations, that it seems a time when individual subjectivities have a greater chance to be negotiated, as the bright decoding gaze of modernity is hindered. 'Dans notre vie minutée de

³⁵ Susan Hayward, 'Setting the Agenders: Simone Signoret', in *Gender and French Cinema* ed. by Alex Hughes and James S. Williams (Oxford: Berg, 2001), pp. 107-123 (p.123).

³⁶ For a discussion of the colonial implications of Julien Ronet, see David Nicholls, 'Louis Malle's *L'Ascenseur pour l'échafaud* and the presence of the colonial wars in French cinema', *French Cultural Studies*, 7:3 (21), October 1996, 271-282.

citadins, la nuit est le seul moment propice à l'abandon des attitudes; c'est une trêve, une sorte de paradis artificiel où la notion du temps n'est plus de tout le même.'³⁷ Florence/ Moreau walks the streets at night in an attempt to impose her own meaning on her experience: 'je t'ai perdu cette nuit Julien [...] Il faut que tu reviennes, il faut que tu sois là, vivant, avec moi. Il faut, il faut...' Yet night does not function in this way for Florence. She will be stopped in her walking, mistaken by the police for a prostitute. Rather than the solitary woman asserting her subjectivity, she is misidentified and labelled, and here this leads to a literal imprisonment. It is not until Florence tells the police man she is Carala's wife, and she is re-identified as a respectable wife, that she is freed. The woman cannot function or even exist outside of these sets of classifications – the only way Florence could be proved not to be a prostitute is to be identified as Carala's wife.

The scenes in the street in *L'Ascenseur pour l'échafaud* were filmed using natural light sources (mainly neon, electric street lights, and shop lighting). This necessitated the use of very fast film, with quick exposure times, which tends to create harsh, sharp images. The technicians in charge of developing the film in the laboratory were shocked by these shots 'qui ne dissimulait ni ses cernes, ni ses imperfections. Ils se liguèrent contre le chef opérateur, Henri Decaë, futur favori de la Nouvelle Vague, et contre Louis Malle: "On ne peut pas faire ça à Jeanne Moreau" [...] L'anecdote souligne la modernité du film.'³⁸ Moreau is presented by the camera in contrast to the glossy perfection of the studio star. The New Wave female star appears in a film that is defined as modern, different, and interested in representing contemporary experience. Her looks reinforce this interpretation of the film. Certainly Jeanne Moreau was a new type of star whose beauty (an attribute generally considered necessary for cinematic stardom) was unconventional. She was a talented actress and had worked on the stage and in films in minor roles throughout the 1950s. However, Julien Duvivier famously commented that she was not photogenic and when she worked in studios, she had makeup heavily applied to her face to even out her skin colour and make her features appear more symmetrical. In the perceptive words of Alan Stanbrook, she was 'the star they couldn't photograph,' a talented actress rather than a woman ready to become celluloid image.³⁹ With the different demands of the New Wave, however, Moreau was able to become a star,

³⁷ Henri Chapier, *Louis Malle* (Paris: Seghers 1964), p. 79.

³⁸ Michael Delmar, p. 45.

³⁹ Alan Stanbrook, 'The Star They Couldn't Photograph', *Films and Filming* (February 1963),

embodying as she did the authenticity and modernity required by the auteur. *L'Ascenseur pour l'échafaud* was the film that launched Moreau as a star. It played on notions of her contemporaneity, her sexual daring, her different looks and her modern, urban femininity. She appears to be a modern, independent woman as she walks the streets by herself, accompanied only by an improvised jazz soundtrack. She appears as a modernist *flâneuse*, someone believed capable of ordering and owning her own experience as she enters the public sphere.

This modernity does not mean however that Moreau, or by extension the New Wave female star, escapes the male cinematic gaze. The modern technology (hand-held cameras, 16mm film) that allowed filmmakers such as Malle, Truffaut and Godard to fulfil their aesthetic criteria of realistic, contemporary images shot in recognisable spaces, also allows the surveillance and possession of the female star to reach new extremes. Dressed for the street in plain clothes, her hair flattened by rain, the lighting harsh and unflattering, Florence/Moreau is utterly different in appearance from the glamorous image produced by traditional studios. Yet her position as a visible *flâneuse* does not allow her to escape objectification. Until her emergence as a New Wave star, Moreau was considered unrepresentable in cinematic terms. However, her unglamorous appearance, read by the New Wave as modern, is conversely what makes Moreau representable. The New Wave directors exploit this modern look and independent attitude to enhance the contemporariness of their own films. It is precisely Moreau's unconventional, independent, free-spirited persona that is recuperated and objectified by the gaze of the male auteur.

Modernity is thus present only in Moreau's appearance; her meaning is utterly conventional. This summarises the position of the female New Wave star: rather than functioning as a radical break with tradition, she only enters the cinematic arena once the means of her recuperation and 'normalisation' have been found. The criteria for female stardom may have changed with the New Wave auteurs but its ultimate meaning has not. Moreau does not have the regular features of previously admired female stars, yet her unconventional appearance functions in exactly the same way as the most normative beauty. She is admired as artistic image by the male auteur who reifies his own gaze through the operation of the camera. She becomes the object of artistic idealisation and various aspects of her image are fetishised. In the case of Moreau, this fetish works to emphasis her sullen, pouting mouth (Truffaut wanted to her smile in *Jules et Jim* because it was so

rare for her to smile in films); her high forehead; and her eyes rimmed with dark eyeliner. Male auteurs possess their female stars through a very traditional gaze, even if they do present their own presentation of them as modern and different.

It is thus not so much the case that women have entered the public sphere, it is more that the scope of their objectification and control, usually linked to the private sphere, has been enlarged. Rather than the public sphere being a place open for the subversion of traditional femininity, in modernity it seems to serve only as a reflective mirror bouncing back to the woman idealised images of herself. The *flâneuse*'s image is reflected back to her from shop windows filled with mannequins wearing the latest fashions. As she walks, she sees beautiful pin-up girls pictured in advertising hoardings and displayed magazine covers. She is thus contained within a hermetically sealed space surrounded by idealised images of femininity. The modern woman escapes the private sphere, only to have an idealised femininity predicated on the gaze constructed in the public sphere. The New Wave's emphasis on location shooting moves the female star from the enclosing studio to the city street, but she is still possessed by discourses of idealised femininity. The female *flâneuse* projected into the public sphere is not thus enjoying the modern city as a site where she can construct her own identity, but rather is possessed by discourses of literature, cinema, capitalism and consumption that can now contain her wherever she may be.

Lack of traditional star glamour does not prevent Moreau from operating as an image of dangerous, damaged femininity. It simply places it into a different cinematic context. Moreau's 'liberated' 'modern' heroines are reduced to an essential, unchanging femininity (*la femme fatale*) that can be labelled and represented, regardless of how modern an appearance Moreau's performance may give them. Whether wearing no make-up and pacing the streets, or applying creams to her face watched by her lover in the privacy of a hotel bedroom, the woman is an object to look at, appraise and enjoy. The irony of Moreau's position as the New Wave heroine can hardly be overstated. She is operating as a symbol of modern femininity. The very fact she has become a symbol rather than a subject indicates that these films are still operating with the feminine figure as an allegory. The surface may be modern, but the subtext remains: the woman can be possessed, held by the gaze of the (male) *flâneur*/auteur/camera/viewer. This is perhaps what Godard was hinting at when he allegedly declared that she was a slut and the

only role he'd ever cast her in was that of a waitress.⁴⁰ Moreau operated entirely within traditional concepts of femininity, as Madonna or whore, goddess or slut, and her appropriation of one of the locales of the Baudelairian flaneur, the café, can not prevent her from being in a position of objectification and servitude.

'Une actrice est une femme-objet absolue, mais cela n'a aucun importance, quand on est libre de choisir son maitre.'⁴¹ Here, Moreau admits the absolute nature of the objectification the actress. She seems to argue this is inevitable as the actress functions as a model, to be manipulated by a director. Moreau certainly had very strong relations with her directors, choosing her work on the strength of who would direct it, working with auteurs such as Truffaut, Antonioni, Malle and Losey and in the theatre with Peter Brook. In this way, she became the grande dame of auteur cinema.

Sa carrière s'est trouvée liée, exemplairement, à la nouvelle promotion du cinéma français; et les conséquences et responsabilités de cette rencontre furent très vite assumées par une actrice qui sut réfléchir aussi à l'évolution de l'art qu'elle voulait servir.⁴²

Moreau identifies her conscious choice to choose to star in this kind of film as more important than her objectification by the director/master within it. Yet this comment places the male auteur/master firmly in control of the image and meaning of his female actress/slave.

The very process of being represented in this cinema is thus highly problematic. In New Wave auteur cinema, so focussed upon the director's vision, the actress does offer herself as pliable image. Geneviève Sellier argues that the typical New Wave hero is a vulnerable young man whose 'wounded masculine subjectivity' echoes that of the young male director.⁴³ It is hardly surprising that Moreau, the ultimate New Wave star, is represented

⁴⁰ Molly Haskell, *Holding My Own*, p. 66. This story may be more apocryphal than based in fact. Its existence does however amply demonstrate Godard's dislike of Moreau's image, a notion developed in *Vivre Sa Vie* (1962). This film, which insists on the links between the female cinema star and the prostitute as commodity objects, features a sequence with a billboard advertising a film to the crowd in the street, just as Nana works the streets. The featured film is *Jules et Jim*, with Jeanne Moreau in the middle of two men, just as Nana herself has emerged from a ménage à trois.

⁴¹ Jeanne Moreau, quoted in Michael Delmar, p. 143.

⁴² Michel Delahaye, 'Jeanne la sage: Entretien avec Jeanne Moreau', *Cahiers du cinéma* 161-162 (janvier 1965)

⁴³ Geneviève Sellier, 'Gender, Modernism and Mass Culture in the New Wave', in *Gender and French Cinema* ed. by Alex Hughes and James S. Williams (Oxford: Berg, 2001) pp.125-137 (p. 127).

as a *femme fatale*, when, Sellier suggests, any kind of love of a woman by the male protagonist is seen as damaging to his creative development.

The hero's destiny turns on an entrapment that takes the form of his love for a woman who causes him to lose his creative capacities, or, more generally, his ability to be himself. The fundamental misogynist dimension of Romanticism [...] establishes as mutually exclusive the construction/ consolidation of male subjectivity and man's love for woman. It is a dimension that is no less evident in most New Wave films which [...] present as fateful the mismatch between male subjective evolution and love.⁴⁴

The New Wave cinema, dominated by young men, and concentrating on (de)constructing the subjectivity of the young male hero, can thus find little room for an active feminine subjectivity. The privileged identification between the auteur, the camera he controls and his screen alter-ego means that the female protagonist has little space in which to construct her own subject position. She is a fascinating image for all three. She functions within the film as a series of feminine images, some of them frozen for greater contemplation, rather than as an equal. Moreau's modern, different, fresh star image does not disguise her reduction to the eternal feminine. Underneath the surface changes, she is the French *femme fatale*, sexy, beautiful, fascinating and deadly. The New Wave film presents her as threatening the male protagonist with her own fate, that of stasis, immobility and constraint, rather than the freedom of action associated with modernity and the flâneur. Her move into the public sphere indicates more a new ability to map the previously unpredictable public space under the organisation of the masculine gaze than a liberation for women to encounter pleasure.

Moreau functions as so many images of femininity: modern, intelligent, luminous, voluptuous, authentic, sophisticated, chic 'terriblement changeante, imprévisible, énigmatique, toutes les facettes du talent de Jeanne Moreau font qu'elle réunit mille femmes en une.'⁴⁵ Yet her films work towards closure and stillness. Their interest and her charisma may partially lie in the fact that she does attempt to overcome this fixity and to embrace a modernist flux. She performs many 'femininities', but the camera ultimately catches her and freezes her in time and space, and she becomes the prisoner of the male auteur's fantasy of or gaze upon the *femme fatale*. There is no

⁴⁴ Geneviève Sellier, p. 126.

⁴⁵ Jean-Claude Moireau, p. 87.

space in the film for her to establish her own independent subjectivity. She remains a beautiful, dazzling image, rather than being able to move beyond representation and classification. Her emergence into the public sphere is accompanied by image making technology. As with the nineteenth century physiognomies that tempted to make sense of the city through the operation of an informed gaze, so in cinema the woman's face is made sense of through the male auteur's representation, held and objectified for fetishistic contemplation.

Deconstructing the star: *La Baie des anges* (Demy, 1963)

“je croyais que ça n’existait plus qu’au cinéma ou dans un livre américain[...] cet hotel, cette terrasse, cet orchestre, vous aussi...”

Given the non-traditional star persona of Moreau, *La Baie des anges* forms a fascinating reflection upon the nature of cinematic feminine figuration and its links to modernisation and Americanisation. Instead of her different, modern, natural look, in this film, Moreau is ‘starified’ and ‘Americanised.’ She is never without her cigarette in its long holder and her scotch, she dresses in smart white suits and flamboyant evening dresses, she accessorises with high heels, black stockings and feather boas, she wears heavy make-up and her hair is bleached platinum blonde. Several journalists picked up on the most immediate Hollywood reference point, calling her ‘Marilyn Moreau’, and Jacques Demy himself placed her within a history of Hollywood females, saying ‘je n’avais pas pensé à une actrice précise pour incarner cette joueuse que je voyais inspirée par les vamps 1930 comme Jean Harlow.’⁴⁶ Demy also compares her to Veronica Lake in his fictionalised treatment of the film.⁴⁷ She could be almost any American female film star, with all her fetish objects. She is a composite fantasy figure, ‘tout droit sorti d’un roman américain’,⁴⁸ as the comment made by her lover Jean in the film and quoted above reveals. In contrast to her previous roles discussed above, she is also a paean to the power of artifice: her hair is dyed, her beauty mark is painted, her nails are manicured, her body is controlled by a bodice, her eyelashes are false, her diction is mannered.

⁴⁶ Jean Claude Moireau, pp. 94-5.

⁴⁷ Camille Taboulet, *Le Cinéma enchanté de Jacques Demy* (Paris: Cahiers du cinéma, 1996), p. 73.

⁴⁸ Camille Taboulet, p. 73.

As the New Wave star, Moreau seemed to exemplify a peculiarly French tradition of Baudelairian beauty. Combining modern attitudes and dress with an eternal femininity, she fulfilled the criteria to be an object of beauty created by a 'painter of modern life'. Her modernity is thus recuperated into older discourses concerning feminine ideals, the (image of the) woman as a beautiful object of exchange, and her representation as providing a moment of contemplation for the masculine gaze. Her very ability to reconcile the contradiction of tradition and modernity thus leads to her downfall. As she is absorbed back into discourses around femininity and national specificity, so the New Wave star can be fixed. In her typical New Wave roles, as demonstrated above, Moreau is fixed into representation, the still photograph her emblem and her betrayal.

As the Americanised star of *La Baie des anges* Moreau suffers an altogether different fate. Moreau is set up as spectacle from the very first moment we see her on the screen. Jean and his friend Caron are talking at the casino entrance, when they both turn to look at a woman. The camera moves between the men in close up, and long shot of the woman, who is clothed completely in white. All the men in the shot are looking at her, and furthermore, she is demanding their attention. 'Je vais vous préparer un joli scandale' she declares. Moreau's physical transformation signals an entire transformation of the way she is perceived and used in the film. No longer a different, modern French star, she operates in *La Baie des anges* as an 'American' star spectacle. This film suggests the difficulties for the French woman in appropriating this vision of stardom.

Richard Dyer argues that stars embody and authenticate certain myths within society. One of the most potent American myths is that of success regardless of background. In Hollywood publicity material about stars, their success is attributed to three main areas: talent; a 'lucky break'; and hard work/professionalism. This suggests that given the right qualities of hard work, timing, and raw talent, anyone can be a star, and enter a professional arena.⁴⁹ The cultural model of the 'American Dream' thus heavily influences this version of stardom and it is at odds with a French stardom that is rooted in earthiness; literary and cultural specificity; and notions of authenticity. Moreau does not sustain her freedom as American star in the film *La Baie des anges*. For all her seductive techniques, Moreau will end the film in the most traditional role of them all, as a wife. If the New Wave star reveals that the public sphere is mappable and recuperable for the

⁴⁹ Richard Dyer, *Heavenly Bodies* pp. 12-13.

masculine organising gaze, so as the (possibly more self-determined Americanised star) Moreau is removed from the public sphere entirely.

It is in this guise as the Americanised modern woman/cinema star that she introduces the traditional Jean to a fantasy world of luxury and ease. Cinema, America and sensual 'star' femininity operate as a tautology within the film. No longer the French literary ideal, Moreau functions as another kind of imagined ideal in this film: the American movie star, an ideal both for the director of the film and its male protagonist.

Il la rêve en blond platine comme ces fatales et sensuelles actrices américaines, et n'oublie aucun accessoire: long fume-cigarette, talons-aiguilles, boa et guêpière de satin blanc, bas soyeux sechant à la fenêtre. Autant de signes érotiques qui parsement la ligne pure, droite, rapide, dure, même abstraite du film, et que la présence charnelle de Jeanne Moreau réfracte en la contrebalançant.⁵⁰

Jackie is the epitome of modernity: a sexy, erotic, platinum bombshell, operating in total contrast to the traditional Jean, 'jeune premier un peu monocorde, 'a la manière d'un modèle bressonien.'⁵¹

This antithesis is echoed in the insistent black-white colour contrasts made in the film. Jackie wears sharp white outfits while Jean is clothed in traditional dark suits. This colour contrast also resonates within the spatial organisation of the film. In the scenes which emphasise freedom and space, such as Jean arriving at the Cote d'Azur, Jean and Jackie driving to Monte Carlo, and the final scene where Jackie leaves the casino, the camera operates in long shot and the palette is dominated by whites and light greys and fills with sky. In the scenes which emphasise claustrophobia and fixity, such as Jean in the office, the players hooked to gambling and crowded around a table, and Jean's home, the shots tend to be in medium close up or close-up and dark suits and black wood work predominate. The dark suited Jean comes from a background emphasising stability and authority. The white, light, sparkling Jackie introduces him to a modernist world of flow. The abstraction of the film comes partially from this striking use of colour: '*La Baie des anges* [...] cristallise purement, presque d'une manière abstraite, ces effets de contraste (d'abord visuels, noir et blanc) puis soumettant la courbe du récit aux caprices de la roulette...'⁵²

⁵⁰ Camille Taboulet p. 106.

⁵¹ Camille Taboulet p. 106.

⁵² Camille Taboulet, p. 67.

This insistence on the use of colour contrast to determine meaning is hardly surprising given the gambling context of the film, a world in which outcomes are entirely decided by colour contrasts. As Jean-Pierre Berthomé argues, this (often witty) play on black and white (for example, the brand of scotch that Jackie drinks is, of course, *Black and White*) goes beyond a mere decorative scheme to become a sign of the conflicts that regulate the film, between stability and vitality, between tradition and modernity, and even between heaven and hell.⁵³ It also works to indicate the gradual formation of the Jean-Jackie couple in the film. In the euphoria of their enormous winnings in Nice, the two of them go out on a shopping spree together. Jackie buys Jean a white dinner suit, in contrast to his usual dark attire, and she buys herself three dresses. One of these is white with a dark floral motif; another is black and dotted with small white flowers; the third completely black, worn with a black and white feather boa.

Cette contamination d'une couleur par l'autre, cet abandon même de leur couleur au profit de celle de l'autre, Demy nous dit mieux qu'avec des mots comment, un bref instant, nos deux personnages acceptent d'aller l'un vers l'autre, incertains encore du côté où ils vont basculer – ensemble.⁵⁴

The two characters are initially total opposites, however. Jackie is debauched, fantastical, vibrant, insouciant, and free of authority. She operates entirely as a free agent, divorced and with a son she hardly ever sees. She rejects traditional morality and throughout the film refuses to enter a traditional romantic relationship with Jean. 'Je ne dois rien à personne. Puisque cette passion m'aide à vivre pourquoi m'en priverais-je? Au nom de qui, de quoi, de quelle morale? Je suis libre.' When Jean begins to tell her he loves her, she replies: 'Tu n'as aucun droit sur moi.' In common with other Moreau heroines, Jackie cannot abide enclosure and the absence of movement. Her love of gambling is not because of the money she can win, but rather a love of the game of chance and change: one moment she is rich, the next destitute. To value the money she wins would be to fix herself, to calculate, to tie herself down with possessions, whereas she prefers to trust to Fate. Money is for spending, wasting, and losing. One day a millionaire, the next day penniless, Jackie lives her life according to the fluctuations of the

⁵³ Jean-Pierre Berthomé, *Jacques Demy: Les Racines du rêve* (Nantes: L'Atalante, 1982), pp. 139-142.

⁵⁴ Jean-Pierre Berthomé, p. 142.

roulette wheel. It does not matter where she is, or whom she is with; rather, what matters is change, liberty, and movement: the provisional over the definite. The links between her modernity, her femininity and her love of chance are confirmed by the brand of cigarette she chooses to smoke: *Lucky Strike*. This cigarette's name recalls fate, chance, and luck, is synonymous with the 'American way of life,' and is marketed as a woman's cigarette. Throughout the film she changes her clothes, her location, her attitudes and her resolutions. She is a woman who acts upon caprice, such as when she buys an ice-cream, has a bite, then abandons it, declaring she is no longer hungry. 'Le caprice de Jackie échappe à ces catégories – la vivacité de ses gestes, de son bavardage, de ses mimiques, sont déjà à l'ordre de la danse.'⁵⁵ She is forever packing and unpacking her suitcase, mobile and able to enter all spaces. She is the modernist *flâneuse* par excellence, embracing change and variety, at ease in all the locales of the traditional male *flâneur*: the promenade, the casino, the bar and the hotel bedroom. The entire pattern of the film is marked by this frenetic change, with the roulette wheel entering as a character in the casino sequences, filmed in medium shot and cut into medium shots of Jackie and Jean, and these images are accompanied by a frenzied piano score.

Jean, in contrast, is stable, fixed, ethical and ordered, operating entirely within a rational patriarchal order (his mother is dead). He works in a bank, another building dedicated to money, but here to keeping, saving and investing it. He never loses his faith in the power of money: he plays to win, rather than simply to play. He always saves enough money for his room for the night. The very first sentence Jean utters in the film is a comment to his friend Caron when handing over a file: 'je l'ai vérifié deux fois.' He is not given to improvisation. His father is a clockmaker, the most orderly relation one can have to figures and time. Jackie gambles her watch, and frequently asks Jean the time: he and his father allow their lives to be regulated by it. His father disapproves of gambling because it disrupts the logic of the hierarchical, patriarchal capitalist order which links monetary wealth to a moral work ethic. The idea that you can earn a week's wages in an hour is abhorrent to him. Gambling tips up social conventions and orders. In a comment that reveals the patriarchal interest in maintaining an idealised feminine figure, with fixed images of women in the stained glass behind him, he orders his son not to gamble, saying 'C'est comme ta mère a dit: 12 chasseurs, 12 pêcheurs, 12 joueurs, ça fait 36 feignants.'

⁵⁵ Jean Collet, 'L'Ombre blanche', *Cahiers du cinéma* 142 (avril 1963), 48-51 (p.50).

For all that Jean is tied to his home life and his work at the bank, he also feels a dissatisfaction with this ordered and predictable existence. He is torn between his social 'duty' and his desire to rebel. The film hints at earlier struggles between a patriarchal order bound upon fixing Jean into a certain way of life and his own desire for risk and surprise when he tells Jackie that he broke off his engagement. His holiday in Nice was a similar act of rebellion; he chooses Nice over the traditional family holiday to Beaugency. He sees Jackie as the incarnation of his dream, the one who will show him a way of life beyond dull mediocrity. She is a feminine ideal to him, a dream: but a specifically American, cinematic one. He cannot imagine her elsewhere than 'au cinéma ou dans certains livres américains.'

However, despite Jackie's freedom and identification with a luxurious Americanised modernity, this film also works to bring the Moreau character toward stillness, stability and closure. Its interest lies in the way in which her new star persona dictates the way this occurs. Jackie, despite, or maybe because of, her glamorous exterior, does not embody the traditional *femme fatale* role. Unlike her previous *femme fatale* characters, neither Moreau nor her lover die at the end of the film. Rather, her slide into fixity comes from an acceptance to join the patriarchal order. There is no establishment of an individual subjectivity: rather, Jackie falls into her traditional role as wife and daughter (in law). The film confirms Jean's father's dictum that 'En jeux, on ne gagne jamais' when the fantastical, fairy-tale existence the two of them have been leading falls apart when they lose all their money. Jean decides that he will have to contact his father, and it is when his voiceover dictates the letter he will send to his father than he and Jackie are united as a traditional cinematic couple, framed in close-up kissing. Later in the same hotel room sequence, Jackie embraces the traditional moral attitude towards her gambling when she declares, 'J'ai honte, je suis pourrie à l'intérieur, je mens, je trahis, je saisis tout ce que je touche'. Jean asks her to return with him to Paris. She refuses, and returns to the casino. Jean comes to say good-bye to her, and leaves. She then realises that she loves him, and runs out of the casino and into his arms, towards his father and Paris, to 'une vie sans risques, sans surprises' – a life of order, hierarchy, and stability. The virtuoso penultimate shot has Jackie running out of the casino. She runs past a mirrored hallway consisting of five panes, each of which offer a glimpse of her white form. She is not captured by the mirror or the camera which is filming the mirror. She escapes representation, however, only because she is no longer the property of all men, but just one

man. This is confirmed by the final shot of the film where Jean and Jackie stand on the steps of the casino, framed by its entrance, her in white and him in black. Berthomé declares that it is difficult to tell whether the Jean and Jackie couple would move towards the 'white' or the 'black.' As they leave the shadows of the casino for the bright day light of Nice, it is clear that they have moved toward a combination of them both that combines Jean's stability with Jackie's vitality. Yet the overall effect is that of stilling Jackie. She is framed twice over, by the threshold of the casino, and by Demy's camera. The image could be that of a newly wed couple leaving a church, a feeling enhanced by Jackie's earlier declaration that casinos reminded her of churches, with playing roulette being a kind of religion.

Quand je suis entrée pour la première fois dans un casino, j'ai eu l'impression d'entrer dans une église. J'ai ressenti la même émotion. Ni ris pas, essaie de me comprendre.. J'essaie de t'expliquer pourquoi le jeu est devenue ma religion et tu ricanes... Le gain, l'argent ne signifient rien pour moi, ni cette robe, ni cette chambre. Rien. [...] Un jéton, un seul jéton, me rend heureuse.

In this long speech, Jackie identifies her absolute and exclusive passion for playing with religious faith. The casino is figured by Demy as 'une descente aux enfers assez prodigieuse.'⁵⁶ Like Dante's hell, this is organised into several circles. The first is the circular bay itself. Demy comments 'Et puis la Côte d'Azur a toujours représenté pour moi une espèce de perversion. Il y a toujours ce mélange de richesse et de pauvreté, on y sent le vice comme ça.'⁵⁷ The second circle is formed by the players around a table, and the third is the roulette wheel itself 'dans le mouvement de laquelle se dilate l'instant, se fige le cours du temps.'⁵⁸

This is of course in contrast to the regulated time keeping of the Great Watchmaker, Jean's father, his profession a biblical reference. As Jean enters the casino for the first time, his image fragments in the entrance hall's mirrors, as if in entering this gaming temple he loses his own identity. 'C'est ce que j'ai voulu montrer dans le plan où Jean, en y entrant, longe les glaces, il se dilue et on a l'impression qu'il va se répandre dans la salle.'⁵⁹ Caron and Jackie together tempt Jean to visit and remain in the casino, but he will eventually escape and return to his father as the prodigal son, having learnt

⁵⁶ Jean-Pierre Berthomé, p. 133.

⁵⁷ Jean-Pierre Berthomé, p. 149.

⁵⁸ Jean-Pierre Berthomé, p. 150.

⁵⁹ Camille Taboulet, p. 176.

his lesson (and with the girl on his arm). When Jackie and Jean leave the casino, they are leaving a chaotic, darkened space for an earthly paradise of calm and control. They will have a regulated, ordered existence, with a respectful attitude toward both time and money. Yet this not an entirely satisfactory outcome for either, when both locate a certain aspect of happiness in an Americanised, modern, cinematic fantasy life.

This is a film which itself revels in the possibilities offered by movement and exchange. Each time one or other of the characters approaches l'Hotel des Mimosas, their approach via the passage way is filmed, in not less than six successive shots, and is highlighted by its own distinctive melodic score. We also see the couple en route to Monte Carlo in Jackie's white MG and Jean and Caron go to their first casino game in his black DS. It is as she walks along the Promenade des Anglais that Jackie explains herself to Jean. 'Nul ne peut, semble-t-il, interrompre ce mouvement perpétuel, sous peine de le voir s'arrêter à jamais, comme par exemple M. Fournier emmuré dans sa boutique.'⁶⁰ Thus it seems the characters face a harsh choice, between an Americanised, incessant movement, or a traditional, French stasis. Jackie must either remain rootless, or she must settle down as a wife and mother. There can be no compromise.

This may explain why Jackie seems so attached to movement, not only in her passionate declarations of her independence cited above, but also in her solicitude for the way she walks. When she stops for the first time on the Promenade, she removes her shoe because it is hurting her foot; when she returns with Jean to the hotel, she bends to pick up her stocking, snaking its way down her leg; she dries her stockings over the window; and it is their absence which tells Jean they are gone. Shoes and stockings obviously play into sexualised images of femininity and are fetish items. They also illuminate the Moreau problematic in this film. They illustrate the fragility of means of movement and constructions of independent femininity. As she strides along the street, the woman in heels is always threatening to topple over. Her ability to move is always on the point of being undermined. Moreau is another temptress Eve, heading for a fall, only able to be 'rescued' by marriage.

The American woman is thus not free to wander the streets either, but becomes part of a couple. The Americanised Moreau thus has a very modern fate. She is not hemmed in by French artistic practises as her more orthodox New Wave star image is, but she is still not able to operate as a free

⁶⁰ Jean-Pierre Berthomé, p.136.

agent. This representation of modern, Americanised femininity ends up on the arm of a man, as wife and potential mother (she even has a large, black flower splashed across her womb area on one of her white dresses, as if confirming its potential for Jean's off spring). The modern woman is as determined by gendered and national roles as her nineteenth century equivalent. The single woman entering a restaurant still operates as Michelet's spectacle. Her move beyond representation (in death/ in marriage) involves the loss of her subjectivity. The modernist *flâneuse* appears as impossible a creation as ever. The quintessentially French Moreau is unable to escape the bonds of her gender and nationality.

Jean Seberg: the American flâneuse.

Jean-Luc Godard cast Jean Seberg as the American *flâneuse* in Paris. With the title of an American newspaper emblazoned across her chest, Seberg encapsulated a particular take on the familiar cosmopolitan figure of the American in Paris. Young, female and contemporary, Seberg was an intriguing representative of American modernity and cultural imperialism and French cultural and cinematic traditions that Godard was keen to exploit in his film. She was ideally suited to the role of the feminine muse in his exploration of American cultural models and their translation into French cinematic and national life. Jean Seberg was a young college student from Marshalltown, Iowa, when she was thrust into the limelight by being cast as Joan of Arc by Otto Preminger following an intensively publicised international search. Preminger organised the contest in order to find someone young and fresh to play the saint who was also plucked from obscurity by destiny. Seberg's construction as an amalgam of an American woman and a French cultural and cinematic icon was thus overdetermined even before her career had really started.

An all-American small town girl with blonde colouring she was launched into *international* stardom as the quintessential icon of *French* femininity and history. Seberg was thoroughly grounded in French historical, literary and cinematic discourses as Joan of Arc in *Saint Joan* (Preminger, 1957), as Cécile in *Bonjour Tristesse* (Preminger, 1958), a film based on a Françoise Sagan novel, and as Patricia in one of the outstanding New Wave films, *A bout de souffle* (Godard, 1960), respectively. The contrast between this and her American mobility and modernity (and indeed youth, an ingredient exploited by the films above) gives a particularly rich insight into

the issues of gender and nationality and how these attributes determine the occupation of space. Whereas Moreau's gender and nationality combined to contain her thoroughly within representable space, Seberg's gender and its 'traditional' objectification in cinema contradicted her more powerful and assertive nationality in the context of a rapidly modernising and increasingly Americanised France. Her occupation of space is therefore more open to negotiation and is able to move beyond representation, allowing the attempt to establish an independent subjectivity.

Seberg thus illustrates a particularly arresting aspect of the American female star phenomenon in France. The impulse to fetishise the female star into, for example, blonde hair, curvaceous breasts, long legs, pouting lips, into a collection of body parts, leads to a stilling and holding of the star image. Yet at the same time, there is a connected resistance from the star image itself, toward mobility and modernity through technological and cultural means (international stardom, images reproduced across varying media and texts). This tension between stillness and mobility inherent in the star image becomes especially acute in the case of the New Wave stars Moreau and Seberg and their relation to their nationality. This is because this style of cinema was especially interested in cross-cultural exchange between France and America in particular, and the placing of women into 'mobile' settings in general. In the case of Moreau, her nationality combines with her gender to hold her totally within representation and discourse. She is linked to an organic earthy Frenchness. Seberg's gender aligns with her fetishisation, as is illustrated by Godard's filming of her body in *A bout de souffle*, while her nationality necessarily maps onto her ability to move beyond boundaries. This free floating quality allows her to escape the stilling representation.

A Star is Burned

Preminger promoted his new film, *Saint Joan*, by taking his protégée on a tour of France. Seberg visited Domrémy, the birthplace of Joan of Arc, Orléans and Rouen, all sites vividly associated with Joan and bound up into a certain iconography of Frenchness and its links to the soil and the peasant. Commenting on the difficulties she had incarnating Patricia for Godard, Seberg explained: 'Je me sentais trop saine, trop fille de la terre en un sens,

trop proche de ce personnage de “petite paysanne” que Preminger avait exploité dans *Bonjour Tristesse* et surtout dans *Sainte- Jeanne*.⁶¹

Not only did the role of Joan insert Seberg into a robustly French national iconography, it also placed her into a long cinematic tradition covering both art-house and Hollywood productions. Renowned early directors such as Abel Gance and Carl Dreyer had made versions of the Joan of Arc story. One of Hollywood’s most famous stars, Ingrid Bergman, had twice starred as Joan, once in 1948 in a Victor Fleming Hollywood production and once in 1954 directed by her husband and Italian neo-realist Roberto Rossellini. She wrote Seberg a letter congratulating her when she was chosen for the role of Joan, telling her it was the best part an actress could hope to play.⁶² Seberg was further tied into cinematic and French cultural discourses because this film was to be made by Preminger, one of the Hollywood directors identified by the *Cahiers du cinéma* as an auteur. Both *Saint Joan* and *Bonjour Tristesse* received critical attention from the Cahiers and Godard claimed that he saw Patricia as an extension of the role Seberg played in *Bonjour Tristesse*.

Seberg arrived on the international film scene as the mythical figure Joan of Arc. The film had its world première in Paris on the 12 May 1957. This role served to identify Jean with a powerful cinematic and historical heritage. Yet already her defining characteristics of ambiguity, mystery, and challenging hegemonic star representations shone through. If modernity is in the words of Baudelaire ‘the transitory, the fleeting, the contingent’, Saint Joan, a Christian martyr and part of the permanent narrative of the French nation is the very antithesis of this – offering perpetuity, continuity and stability. Preminger’s Joan however, far from being a presentation of feminine stability and purity, becomes entangled with the confusions of modernity. Penelope Houston wrote of Seberg’s performance in Saint Joan: ‘she is more likely to arouse pity than any other emotion... she gives the impression of trying desperately hard.’⁶³ Such a review underlines Seberg’s own uncertainty as a performer, but it seems likely that some of the problems involved in appreciating Seberg’s performance as Joan come not so much from Seberg’s inexperience as an actress than the deliberate ambiguity Preminger was seeking.

Gender is shown as a fluid and shifting concept in the film. Preminger’s film shows a remarkable interest in blending gender roles,

⁶¹ Jean Seberg, ‘Lilith et moi’, *Cahiers du cinéma* (avril 1966), 42-45 (p.42).

⁶² Henri Magnan, ‘Brève Rencontre avec Jeanne d’Arc’, *Le Monde* (30 janvier 1957).

⁶³ Penelope Houston, ‘Film Review: Saint Joan’, *Sight and Sound* (Summer 1957), 38.

especially around the characters of the Dauphin (Richard Widmark) and Joan. The Dauphin is first presented to us engaged in 'woman's work'; helping with the spinning, the quintessential sex- stereotyped activity. He consistently rejects the patriarchal role assigned to him. He hates his son, resents his father and grandfather, fears to be King – he repudiates all that is associated with paternity and authority. His court plays Blind Man's Bluff, another symbol of frivolity, juvenility, emasculation and weakness. The Dauphin cannot command quiet. Joan takes on this 'masculine' role, ordering silence.

The suggestion throughout this film is that traditional gender roles are open to interpretation and re-negotiation through actual performance. Joan tells her commander: 'I do not care for the things women care for – they care for lovers and money'. Joan's interest in this war and involvement with its concern for who owns which spaces identifies her as 'masculine.' Joan will be a soldier, one of a series of (suggested) 'masculine' acts, including action, bravery, and she later reveals, 'really living.' In this film, conquest of space is associated with excitement and masculinity. Joan does not want to return to her previous peasant girl existence as it is 'so dull', a dullness associated with stillness and containment. Femininity is here associated with lust and avarice, a sensual, cosseted and contained existence. Soldiers, obviously associated with action and the dominance of space, represent the masculine ideal of bravery, action, and conquest. To be condemned to life imprisonment would be to be condemned to a life of feminine passivity. Joan's decision to tear up her recantation and thus be burned at the stake rather than remain imprisoned is presented as a desire for freedom of movement. Joan admits she could just about to bear to 'drag around in a skirt,' but she could not give up the masculine world of action, adventure, and spatial freedom. 'Light your fire! You think life is just not being stone dead [but I wish to] ride with the soldiers, climb the hills...'

This crossing of traditional gender boundaries is especially summed up in Joan's cross-dressing. After she has overseen Charles VII's coronation, Joan is told to leave the court and rejoin her parents or her husband – in her ordained role as daughter or wife. Joan has not stopped being female: underneath the male garb, Joan is still of the female sex. Yet she is in her own words no longer a woman, as she is no longer confined in space. Seberg's sleek haircut and men's clothes signal her transformation from a peasant into a soldier in the film. They also indicate Seberg's modernity and youth beyond the film. This androgyny, both in and outside of the filmic text,

is a kind of womanly ideal, with a literary heritage going back to Virginia Woolf,⁶⁴ and as Marina Warner comments, Joan's own androgyny played into medieval discourse about sexual differentiation, which claimed a mystical perfection for the androgyne.⁶⁵ Joan clings to her male dress throughout the trial; she declares in the film that 'my voices have told me I must dress as a soldier.' She will not change the clothes and the status they give her. Warner argues:

through her transvestism, she abrogated the destiny of womankind. She could thereby transcend her sex; she could set herself apart and usurp the privileges of the male and his claims to superiority. At the same time, by never pretending to be anything other than a woman and a maid, she was usurping a man's function but shaking off the trammels of his sex altogether to occupy a different, third order, neither male nor female, but unearthly, like the angels.⁶⁶

Joan was part of a long tradition of sexual obliteration through dress, both a disruption to and a perfection beyond the natural order. Preminger's film insists on this aspect of Joan's character by placing her in such contrast to the effeminate Dauphin and through its emphasis on dress. The courtier's dress is revealed as totally inadequate. Joan mocks the women with their hair 'tied up in horns'; the Queen's clothes are too expensive; the Dauphin cannot cope with his heavy robes, whereas Joan's clothing chimes perfectly with her role, although it is the masculine coded armour.

The figure of the ideal androgyne, with its daring, disruptive and divine presentation of the self, a self that refuses easy classification, also coheres around the figure of Seberg. Flat-chested, androgynous, cool and retentive, Seberg is a very different version of femininity than that offered by stars such as Marilyn Monroe. While Monroe's curves spelt availability and maternity, Seberg's cool looks suggested someone not defined by their body in the same way as Monroe was. Far from being the cornucopia of plenty, Seberg's body suggested mystery, the unknowable and the indefinable. Seberg was famed for her ability to just be on camera, to stare impassively into it. This is most marked in *Saint Joan* when we have the full frontal shot of Joan burning at the stake, her eyes, earlier wide with pleading and

⁶⁴ Stella Bruzzi, *Undressing Cinema: Clothing and Identity in the Movies* (London: Routledge, 1997), pp. 193-6.

⁶⁵ Marina Warner, *Joan of Arc: The Image of Female Heroism* (London: Vintage, 1981), p. 141.

⁶⁶ Marina Warner, pp. 145-6.

disbelief, staring indifferently back at the camera. The denial of the camera and of bodily definitions occurs at the most extreme moment of the film.

Joan is not merely a victim of medieval society, she is also highly disruptive to it. Her defiance of boundaries makes it more difficult for her to be understood and represented. Moreau as Catherine in *Jules et Jim* similarly struggles to establish an independent subjectivity through dress. However, her cross-dressing as Thomas is obliteration of the self (she 'becomes' Thomas, she fools spectators into thinking she is a boy, she still cannot compete on equal terms with Jules and Jim). Seberg's cross-dressing in contrast is a strong assertion of self. She remains Joan, a woman, and claims through dress a male power and spatial freedom. This ambiguity is intrinsically threatening to the medieval order and Joan is put to death. The very point of her death though, is to maintain her subjectivity. She presented herself as '*la Pucelle*' – from the evidence of her trial and in the letters that have survived, there is only one name she used – Jehanne la Pucelle. Warner argues that the choice of the term *pucelle* (as opposed to, for example, *vierge*) was particularly effective in capturing 'with double strength the magic of her state in her culture. It expressed not only the incorruption of her body, but also the dangerous border into maturity or full womanhood that she had not crossed and would not cross.'⁶⁷ In other words, it reconciled her otherwise contradictory maiden soldier performance. She would preserve both bodily and national purity. France and Joan were to be kept safe from conquest, either military or sexual. Her burning at the stake is so that she remains intact. She will be forever a maid, always a soldier, living and dying as a contradiction in terms.

This defiance of boundaries makes Joan/Seberg equally problematic for modern representations of women and their reliance on binary oppositions to understand gender difference and location. Michel Mourlet argues that the elusive, unreadable face is essential to an understanding of Saint Joan: an understanding that ironically has to allow some information to remain unknown. Commenting on how difficult it is to classify Preminger's work, and how this leads to controversy over whether he is an *auteur*, Mourlet concludes that his very aim is to be multiple, confusing and contradictory. 'Des moments d'être nous sommes proposés, bruts, dans leur incohérence originelle [...] connaissant l'impossibilité de

⁶⁷ Marina Warner, p. 23.

toute explication totale. Un visage, et en particulier de femme, ne sera qu'un beau jardin clôt sur un secret.'⁶⁸

Such a reading maintains that *Saint Joan* resists absolutes. Each character is enclosed in their own version of the Truth, hence Mourlet's contention that Seberg incarnates 'la quête angoissée du regard' – the desperate desire for a reciprocal look of understanding from another. While Seberg's character is locked into such an unconventional *auteur* method, the organising camera/male subject will not return the gaze. Joan is left utterly alone, her only reciprocal understanding coming from an unearthly other, but this also leaves her free from being determined by representation, captured by a static camera. Joan/ Seberg's ambiguity is born of Preminger's style. Ironically, it is the *auteur* who allows or even demands that his actress escapes representation. Preminger's filming style is to allow the action to unravel in very long takes, preferring the wandering camera to cutting, and allowing for shifting points of view. 'Il poussait sa volonté d'objectivité jusqu'à diluer ses thèmes dans les méandres de l'histoire dans laquelle aucun personnage ne pourrait prendre au statut de porte parole.'⁶⁹ No one person, including the director, holds the key to the meaning of the film: rather it is dispersed throughout the text. Such a disowning of an overarching grand narrative in favour of ambiguity, confusion and unreadability gives the actress a freedom in the text to determine her own meanings and escape objectification.

Colin McCabe claims that one can analyse any classic realist text as based on solving the initial incongruence between looks; those of the on-screen characters, the camera and the audience. In the course of the narrative, the camera privileges one character's view as correct, this is usually the man's, while the woman is the disruptive presence, so much so that classic realist cinema can be defined as trying to keep one's eyes upon the problematic woman, to hold her in view, to possess her. The woman cannot avoid the gaze of the camera, she cannot escape narrative determination.⁷⁰ In Preminger's film, the point of the view of the camera is forever changing as it weaves its way between and around characters and the *mise-en-scène*. Preminger himself stated that his aim in filming was to 'trust in the intelligence of the audience': to let them have an objective presentation of

⁶⁸ Michel Mourlet, 'Saint Joan d'Otto Preminger', *La Revue des lettres modernes*, nos 71-73 (1962).

⁶⁹ J-C Biette, 'Le minimum de Preminger', *Le Journal de cahiers du cinéma* no. 381 mars 1986, viii.

⁷⁰ Colin Mc Cabe, *Godard: Images, Sounds, Politics*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980) p. 60.

the characters involved, with as little cinematic punctuation as possible.⁷¹ Rivette describes this as a kind of 'pure cinema', where the object 'loin d'être détruit, révèle et superpose tous ses visages menant notre art au point où Picasso a porté la peinture, cette idée du cinéma moderne.'⁷² In this 'cubist' cinema, then, the actress-object is both revealed and hidden by a new objectivity of representation (more of her faces are shown, yet the overall image becomes harder to discern). Seberg is not possessed by the subject, director and audience of the film the way Moreau is. While Moreau's gender and nationality act to hold her still, in the space defined by the camera lens, Seberg has the freedom to exist in a space that exists beyond representation. How this freedom of movement is linked to her Americanness, her modernity and her youth will be discussed in my next section.

Negotiating freedom:- the case of *Bonjour Tristesse*.

Bonjour Tristesse was marketed as a daring, shocking, amoral film. Columbia studios press book describes Seberg's role as that of 'a teenager who is one of five unconventional people competing with each other for "kicks", pleasure and love.' The posters used to publicise it took an extremely suggestive shot from the film, of Seberg and Horne's legs entangled peeping out from under a parasol. Columbia exploited the French/fashion connection by marketing 'Paris-poster skirts' and 'Seberg tie-up dresses' which it claimed would have 'immediate popular appeal to the younger set.' Columbia's strategy to sell the film thus exploits many of its major leitmotifs: youth, sexuality, fashion and France, all themes associated also with Seberg.

Bonjour Tristesse, the book on which the film is based, was first published in 1954. It was a *succès de scandale* and catapulted its author, Françoise Sagan, into the limelight at the age of 18. Sagan came to represent the young, cosmopolitan French girl who positively embraced American culture and modernity. When Françoise Giroud resigned from *l'Express* in 1960, Sagan was briefly employed in order to keep a 'feminine touch' on the editorial team and cover 'everything that wasn't politics.' It was thought that her presence would safeguard *l'Express*'s eclectic style, where private and public concerns met, and would enhance the magazine's youth appeal. She

⁷¹ Peter Bogdanovich, *Who the Devil Made it?* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1997), p. 626.

⁷² Jacques Rivette, 'Sainte Cécile', *Cahiers du cinéma* (avril 1958), 52-4. This vision of Preminger's work as 'Picasso-esque' is reiterated in the American publicity posters and film credits for *Bonjour Tristesse*, which featured a stylised chalk silhouette of a woman crying.

went to New York and met Truman Capote, and then went to Key West where she met Carson McCullers and Tennessee Williams. Involved in a horrific car accident in April 1954 that became a focus of print obsession for months, even years afterwards, and with a career whose rise coincided with that of the cheap paperback edition,⁷³ Sagan appears as a kind of French literary alter-ego to Seberg. She is daring, dangerous, young, fresh, modern, fascinated by and part of an American 'pulp' culture which values speed and style.

Bonjour Tristesse thus exploits and extends Seberg's qualities of youth and modernity. Rivette comments that the film 'rendre l'accent de la nouveauté et de la découverte, voire celui de la jeunesse.'⁷⁴ Seberg plays a petulant teenager, Cécile, who refuses to study for her philosophy examination and delights in surface pleasures and amusements: the sun, the sea, and the possibility of sex. Youth is a much vaunted quality in this film. Anne, a replacement mother figure for both Cécile and, it would appear, her father, will never win the battle, try as she does to establish more 'serious' values in a household dedicated to pleasure, sexual transactions, dancing and games. Modernity is represented through constant mobility and movement, with visits to the casino, walks through meandering woodland paths, and new sexual partners. Preminger's fluid camera work enhances this feeling of mobility and consequent fragmentation. Relatively long takes that place the characters in tableaux form an impression of ever expanding, ever shifting space. Preminger often transforms static shots of conversations when a character leaves the group by following that character without cutting back to the main group. This repeated device means that in the film, every static group is undermined: the viewer comes to learn that they are soon to change in composition. Flashbacks reveal how impermanent these relationships are. The sensual, sun-drenched world presented to us is a mere interlude between the black and white shots that frame the film. Preminger's profoundly ungrounded camera underlines the fickleness of his main characters, Cécile and Raymond. Their affection survives only because each allows the other multiple sexual partners. Anne, in trying to curtail Cécile's interest in Philippe, also shuts her in her room. Sexual and spatial freedom are co-

⁷³ Kristen Ross, *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies: Decolonization and the Re-ordering of French Culture*, pp. 22-56. Paperbacks were first marketed in France in 1952 by Hachette. The success of *Bonjour Tristesse* was spectacular: by 1962, 840,000 copies had been sold in France and over 4, 500, 000 in translation

⁷⁴ Jacques Rivette, 'Sainte Cécile', *Cahiers du cinéma* (avril 1956), 52-4.

joined, symbolised by the sea stretching to the horizon where Cécile swims with Philippe.

However, this freedom ultimately leads to isolation. Fragmentation occurs in various ways in the film's key scenes. When Raymond tells a lie to conceal his planned meeting with Elsa, he is framed at the table with Anne and Cécile. However, he soon wanders off into the background of the shot. When Cécile begins to doubt the wisdom of her actions, she stands against a wall to the right in a geometric image that shows Anne seated in a window to the left, then suddenly rising and going outside where she appears on Cécile's right and moves into the foreground before finally moving away. Just before Raymond and Cécile see Philippe and Elsa lying together literally at their feet, they take a twisting path through the woods, which the camera records by swooping around and under them, finally finishing filming them from slightly above. These ever-changing perspectives radically open up cinematographic space. They imply that the composition we see is only a momentary holding of bodies in a wider, free space. Any tight image will inevitably open up, creating a dialogue between restraint and movement in the very fabric of the film, and the overwhelming feeling that movement will conquer. Anne represents stability, order, maternity and depth in a world and film dedicated to freedom, chaos, flirtation and superficiality.

The greys of present day Paris frame this colourful, carefree existence. The final shot of the film is an anomalous close-up. The close-up is of Cécile/Seberg's reflection, as she applies moisturiser. Her voice-over describes the wall of loneliness and isolation her failed plotting has erected around her. Here, Cécile is held still and pinned down in close-up. Both the camera and the mirror reproduce Seberg's face: she is represented twice over. However, this sudden interest in stillness, stability, and being held (both threatening and protecting) comes too late, and, aware of Anne's suicide and her father's distance from her, her orphan-like status, Cécile weeps.

It is tempting to read this final take as a warning. Despite her attempts to flee imprisonment and cross boundaries in both *Saint Joan* and *Bonjour Tristesse*, at the end of both these films, Seberg is firmly immobilised, either tied to a stake or held in close-up looking into a mirror, respectively. The Cinemascope picture surrounding Seberg opens up the space around her: it is empty. She is utterly alone. Her desire to exist beyond convention and outside of representation, to freely inhabit (sexual and social) space, results in her utter isolation from society. She exists beyond

conventional understanding, so there can be no possibility of reciprocal relations with the other. Joan's 'quête angoissée du regard' is here drastically refigured as the haunted gaze of the female flâneuse. While she may wander the street, this is still dangerous and difficult. Either this public space becomes mapped and understood due to improving technology and thus in some way an extension of the safe, readable, feminine private sphere, as is the case with the French Moreau, or it becomes a space that is empty of others, that exists so far beyond meaning as to be unliveable within, as is the case with the American Seberg. There is not the cosy territory of the male flâneur, where he can be the appraising subject of the city street. Both Moreau and Seberg pay dearly for their desire to enter the public space, with the actual or symbolic violence of death or isolation.

Matricidal texts

In this way, *Bonjour Tristesse* invites a pessimistic reading as *Jules et Jim* concerning its female protagonist. Both films deal with variations on a classical oedipal theme, the 'love triangle.' The original love triangle for Freud was of course that of the mother, the father and the child. These films re-figure this triangle in various ways: between Jules, Jim and Catherine in *Jules et Jim*, and between Anne, Raymond and Cécile in *Bonjour Tristesse*. The only way either of these triangular configurations resolves themselves is through the death of the maternal figure. The texts that allow women some entry into the public sphere can thus be seen to be profoundly matricidal, a telling comment on access to power within cinematic convention and patriarchal society as a whole.

The notion of female absence in film is a commonplace of contemporary feminist film criticism. Woman has to be seen to suffer a narrative lack in the patriarchal cinema that is equivalent to her alleged physiological omission. Canonical modes such as the Western or the action movie either ban women from centrality in the scenario or include them in pernicious incarnations (the *femme fatale*). When women do populate the screen, such as in melodrama or sex comedy, they are frequently fashioned as the patriarchal construct – the 'pseudo-centre' of the film. Such a case can be made about the melodramatic *Jules et Jim*. As the title indicates, this film is about the relationship between two male friends rather than between a man and a woman. Indeed, the trio seem at their happiest when they are all men together: when Catherine disguises herself as Thomas. The two men use

Catherine in order to maintain their fusional link with each other. When Jim 'betrays' Catherine by returning to Gilberte in Paris, Jules castigates his friend for his infidelity, commenting 'J'ai peur qu'elle *nous* quitte.' [my italics]. The exchange of a woman to forge and preserve male bonds is a typical symptom of patriarchal location of women. It has been argued that patriarchal heterosexuality can be best discussed in terms of traffic of women: women as exchangeable, perhaps symbolic, property for the primary purpose of cementing bonds between men. For example, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick quotes Lévi-Strauss: 'the total relationship of exchange which constitutes marriage is not established between a man and a woman, but between two groups of men, and the woman figures only as one of the objects in the exchange, not as one of the partners.' Kosofsky Sedgwick then goes on to explain that Lévi Strauss's normative man is thus one who uses the woman as a conduit of a relationship in which the true partner is another man.⁷⁵

Catherine is thus perhaps more of an absence than a presence at the heart of the story. She figures as an object of exchange between Jules and Jim, another piece of beautiful art work created by them and to be shared between them in acknowledgement of their joint endeavours. Yet Catherine is also a mother. The film if anything plays down her maternal role compared to the book. In the novel, Kathe declares, 'je suis une mère [...] une mère avant tout'; this sentence is erased by Truffaut in favour of concentration upon Catherine as a lover.⁷⁶ This does not prevent the issue of children and child-birth dominating the second half of the film. Jules's daughter Sabine was conceived before the First World War, when there was still hope of beneficial exchange between nationalities and genders. She is fully integrated into the family circle, an expression echoed in the use of circular camera movements to film Sabine, as for example when they all imitate village idiots, or in images such as that when Jim and Sabine roll down a hill together. Much of the praised tenderness of the film comes from this charming and captivating intimacy between Sabine and her 'parents'.⁷⁷

Sabine the daughter acts as a double for her mother. This doubling is set up in the credit sequence.

⁷⁵ Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), pp. 25-6.

⁷⁶ Annette Insdorf, *François Truffaut, le cinéma est-il magique?*, trans. by Bruno Joliet and Yves Coleman (Paris: Ramsay, 1989), p. 149.

⁷⁷ For example, René Cortade in *L'Express* called it 'le premier film attachant de la Nouvelle Vague' and Jean Louis Bory in *Arts* described it 'une fête de tendresse et d'intelligence.' Quoted in Antoine de Baecque and Serge Toubiana *François Truffaut* (Paris: Gallimard, 1996), p. 265.

In an atmosphere of hilarity supplied by fast-paced circus music on the sound-track, the credits show partial and diverse scenes of friendship between the two men: only twice are we treated to close-ups of people, and these are of, significantly, the primary female character, Catherine, and her off-spring, Sabine.⁷⁸

Women are still image-objects presented in contrast to active male bonding, homosocial activities that Kosofsky Sedgwick's argument reveals depend on the disavowed presence of the woman. Sabine is figured in exactly the same way as her mother. Before we even know the fictional persona, the girl has been linked to her mother and to woman-as-image. Within the film, further doubling will occur, as for example in the scene where they sit together, knitting, the child's expression of concentration echoing her mother's. The ease with which Jules, Jim and Albert act as Sabine's father undermines biological claims to heredity in favour of the power of social norms in deciding who fathers/owns women and their children. Sabine is the proof of a state of affairs that neither Jules, nor Jim, nor according to T. Jefferson Kline in his discussion of the film, Truffaut wishes to admit. The triangular relation between Jules, Jim and Catherine is part of wider social convention in which women and girls act as objects of exchange in male rituals.

The only way Catherine can act to stop this exchange is through death. As she kills herself, she is also abdicating the matriarchal role. Sabine has gradually faded from the film before this point, and is not present at her mother's funeral or burial. The woman enters the public sphere as an object in a market-place. Catherine stops this incessant pattern of exchange in her own death and in the symbolic death of the mother. The mother is the woman who gives birth to a concrete representation of her own diminished status in male bonding relations, another conduit for a relationship, another example of male bonding over feminine 'legacy'. The only way it appears that women can relocate themselves within heterosexual relationships in this particular configuration of patriarchy is through refusing maternity, refusing the reproduction of their own status. The liberation of the daughter can only come at the price of the death of the mother.

Bonjour Tristesse acts out a much more conventional Oedipal relation than that of *Jules et Jim*. The daughter and the father, Cécile and Raymond, have an idyllic, quasi-incestuous relationship. Elsa, Raymond's

⁷⁸ Sandy Flitterman-Lewis, 941-46 .

mistress, comments upon seeing them together, 'You two don't even need words: the perfect marriage.' The lover Elsa furthermore functions as a kind of double for the daughter Cécile, being young and blonde, unlike the older, red-haired Anne, clearly identified as a maternal figure. Not only was Anne Cécile's mother's best friend, she is also Cécile's god mother. She thoroughly disapproves of Cécile's lifestyle, and moves to contain the girl, both literally and figuratively speaking. She locks Cécile into her room to study philosophy, she designs her a modest, bodiced dress, and she tries to prevent her from seeing Philippe. She also acts to assert an immobilising, maternal influence upon Raymond, trying to stop him seeing unsuitable friends. This maternal influence is anticipated before Anne even arrives: Cécile knows her visit will damage her relationship with her father.

This maternal figure effortlessly infantilises Cécile. Cécile's frustration at her situation is acted out by her placing pins in a doll, for example. Her petulance is explained away by Anne as a symptom of her youth. However, in this film, the young virginal girl has power on her side. Colette Audry comments that the book by Françoise Sagan can be interpreted as a re-telling of the *Liaisons dangereuses* story as indeed can the thematically identical film. However, in this version of the tale of sexual intrigue, rather than the naïve young Cécile being a dupe for the experienced Mme de Merteuil, here the younger woman manipulates the older one. 'Dans *Bonjour Tristesse*, Cécile de Volanges a l'audace de Mme de Merteuil et c'est elle qui manoeuvre un Valmont paternel.'⁷⁹ Feminine power is located in the narrative with youth and beauty. In a further parodying of the *Liaisons dangereuses* theme, rather than the 'mother' wishing to liberate the 'daughter' from the convent into patterns of sexual exchange, here she wishes to prevent sexual and spatial mobility. For the woman, then, movement and youth are synonymous within the film. The maternal instinct and age brings with it a desire for stability – Anne wishes to marry rather than simply have an affair. (It is notable that in the final scene of the film, where her father has another mistress, he again chooses a young girl). Thus the mother acts as a brake upon the daughter's desire to enter the public sphere as a mobile subject. It is only when the rival-mother is removed that the daughter is able to enter the public sphere, and even then with a shattering sense of loss and isolation.

This film thus perfectly illustrates the dilemma of the young modern woman entering the public sphere. The daughter is caught in a terrible

⁷⁹ Colette Audry, 'Bonjour Tristesse de Françoise Sagan', *Temps Modernes* (juin 1954).

position, where her freedom to encounter pleasure can only be bought at the price of the (symbolic or actual) death of her mother. In Freudian accounts of the process of 'feminization', the young girl's growth to womanhood is strewn with snares. In the pre-Oedipal phase, the little girl, like the little boy, will feel a libidinal attachment to her mother. The period of identification with the mother is thus a necessary pre-history of every woman. Freud found in analysis that women often revealed childhood fantasies of seduction by the mother and it was argued by other psychoanalysts, such as Marie Bonaparte, that a check on female development was a strong desire for the mother in childhood. The discovery of her 'castration' and subsequent 'penis envy' will lead to three paths for girls: the renouncement of sexuality (neurosis), the insistence upon aggressive masculinity (vindication) or 'normal femininity' where the desire for a penis is substituted by the desire for a child.⁸⁰ So, for Freud, the girl has a tortuous path to socialised femininity. Lacking the boy's motivation for overcoming the Oedipus complex (fear of castration), she will preserve this complex for longer and only ever overcome it late and incompletely. Consequently, the development of her superego is compromised and she will not attain masculine power and independence.

Whilst this account is obviously highly problematic (for example, Karen Horney has argued that men could suffer womb envy as much as women suffer penis envy), it does account for how women are/were socialised. As Helene Deutsch commented, the mother is an inhibiting influence on the daughter as she cannot attain complete independence while involved in a fusional relationship with her. Her femininity must be formed in competition with her mother for attention from her father, while she also has close, libidinal attachment to her from early childhood. This scenario is furthermore almost completely re-enacted in *Bonjour Tristesse*. Raymond and Cécile have both escaped adult responsibility. They 'smell the day' together, and are bonded by a love of teasing and silliness, their physical needs met by a string of sulky housemaids. Anne acts as a maternal presence for them both, dividing Cécile from her father and 'normalising' the family relationship, which involves the daughter being placed in a position of entrapment, dependence, immobility and asexuality.

Regaining her privileged position in the public sphere of the bar, the disco, and the casino (as her father's partner) thus necessarily involves Cécile plotting against Anne. The daughter can only fully access the public sphere

⁸⁰ Elisabeth Badinter, *The Myth of Motherhood: A Historical View of the Maternal Instinct* trans. by Roger de Gans (London: Souvenir Press, 1981), pp. 258-269.

without the inhibiting presence of the mother. In *Bonjour Tristesse*, the 'mother' kills herself because of the daughter's schemes. In a cruel twist on the daughter's new access to mobility, she does so by driving her car (a white, American convertible) off a cliff. This does free Cécile, but she has become an orphan. One of the scenes set in Paris shows Cécile dancing, and brilliantly illustrates both her entrance into the public sphere and her isolation. She is dancing with man, but we only see his dark shoulder and the back of his head. Cécile/Seberg's face is impassive and her head is surrounded by space. Held in the arms of this faceless man, she is isolated, utterly alone, with her 'wall of memories' cutting her off from the others in the room. Again, a car, symbol of modernity and mobility, has acted as a coffin. Water, set up in both *Jules et Jim* and *Bonjour Tristesse* as able to contain the contradiction of feminine 'eternal' beauty and limitless expanse and movement (Catherine's plunge into the Seine: Cécile's swimming with Philippe) is a final resting-place. The waves re-claim their Venus. The daughter enters the public sphere, freed from constraint, but utterly isolated and alone. The sense of loss is palpable. It seems women can only escape the suffocation of the family triangle through the loss of the maternal figure, through symbolic or actual harm.

Thus if the public sphere actually functions as such, i.e. as a place where women are subjects rather than objects of the gaze, where they are free to encounter pleasure beyond rigid social conventions, where they behave as their male counterparts, these women only achieve this through symbolic or actual violence. Death and or/isolation awaits the lone(ly) female *flâneuse*. The only occasion upon which Moreau escapes such a fate she falls into the more traditional feminine role of marriage and motherhood. Happy femininity and existence in the public sphere is impossible for these New Wave heroines. In the words of Seberg herself: 'apparently for the French, at least, I seem to express a basic melancholy, a sense of loss that says something about all young women today.'⁸¹

Beyond representation – Michel and Patricia in *A bout de souffle*

Godard said that he could have started *A bout de souffle* by simply putting the intertitle 'three years later' after Preminger's final close-up of

⁸¹ Jean Seberg, quoted in Robert Emmet Ginna, 'On Screen: Jean Seberg', *Horizon* 4:5 (May 1962), 38.

Cécile and opened on a new close-up of Patricia Franchini in Paris.⁸² The character of Patricia is self-consciously playing on the character developed in *Bonjour Tristesse*, then. She is the rootless, unhappy, American girl trying to find her place in French society, acutely aware of her isolation. 'On dit dormir ensemble, mais ce n'est pas vrai. On se sépare', she comments: or 'Je ne sais pas si je suis malheureuse parce que je ne suis pas libre, ou si je ne suis pas libre parce que je ne suis pas heureuse.' Such comments by the heroine reveal an intense loneliness that cannot be overcome through a sexual relation or through social intercourse. Annie Goldmann comments that what frightens Patricia about a relationship with Michel is that he is 'l'homme qui refuse systématiquement le compromis et, par cela même, les lois de la société, celui qui, comme la lithographie de Picasso qu'elle a accrochée dans sa chambre, ne porte plus de masque et montre son vrai visage' whereas she 'ambitionne de réussir dans le monde.'⁸³ It is true that Patricia is more implicated into social structures than Michel, who ignores them utterly, stealing cars and money, shooting a policeman, and simply walking into hotel rooms. However, both of them have a far more complex relationship to images, representation and 'masks' than the above comment allows.

Jean Paul Belmondo plays Michel Poiccard, a petty crook who explicitly models himself on the type of B movies made by Monogram pictures, to whom the film is dedicated. He drives Thunderbird or Cadillac cars, uses slang, wants an American girlfriend, and smokes constantly. The shooting of the scene where Michel comes across a poster of the ultimate smoking American gangster, Bogart, is filmed as intercut shots of Michel and Bogart. Each is in medium close-up and fills the frame, unmistakably suggesting the effect of a mirror: Michel's gaze is clearly an act of narcissistic self-identification.

American movies are thus demonstrated as providing mimetic behavioural models for the French male. Poiccard is the perfect model of Edgar Morin's cinema goer, involved in a process of projection and identification. American cultural and cinematic forces are ever present in the picture-postcard Paris Poiccard walks through. During the course of the film, Poiccard will see the poster of Bogart, discuss Faulkner, see a dubbed Western, and make love to an American woman, Patricia (Jean Seberg).

⁸² Michel Marie, 'It really makes you sick! Jean-Luc Godard's *A bout de souffle* (1960)' in *French Film: Texts and Contexts*, ed. by Susan Hayward and Ginette Vincendeau, (London and New York, Routledge, 2nd edition, 2000), pp. 159-174.

⁸³ Annie Goldmann, *Cinéma et société moderne* (Paris: Denoël/Gonthier, 1974), p. 87.

Patricia touts the American view of the world as she sells her paper on the Champs Elysées. Even the Paris we see, diverse, entertaining, beautiful and historic (the very first shot of the city is a tracking shot along the Ile de la Cité, crossing the Seine and featuring Notre Dame) is the Paris of the American tourists filling the hotels.

Steve Smith argues that *A Bout de souffle* is not so much a homage to Hollywood and American pulp culture as a problematisation of the imitation of American models in French cinema. Jean-Pierre Melville, who has a cameo role in *A Bout de souffle* as Parvelescu, the writer Patricia interviews at Orly, made a string of noir-style thrillers in the 1950s, and Smith believes Godard may be questioning the point of imitating the American models. Michel has to try and live up to the Hollywood image, a task he cannot manage (perhaps, Godard is suggesting, like French cinema itself). All the American icons 'remain so many fetishes' and cannot be integrated into a convincing identity.⁸⁴

Michel is subsumed back into his Frenchness, both in literary and cinematic terms. When he is driving along the RN7 at the start of the film, Michel holds his gun up, remarks 'c'est beau, le soleil' and fires – a clear link to a French literary ancestor, Meursault. However, whilst Meursault is the colonising white man on the North African beach, Michel is the colonised French man in the colonial space behind the wheel of an American car. He is also linked to the emblematic French cinematic male, Gabin. Michel has the same doomed trajectory as the hero of Carné's *Le Jour se lève* (1939), his chain smoking and the tension of the chase in contrast to a fresh-faced young girl with a teddy-bear.⁸⁵ It seems that he is condemned by his Frenchness not to be the powerful figure of Bogart, but the fated Gabin, dying not against a dramatic backdrop but in an anonymous Parisian street. Passivity, fate, and untimely death are identified with the French male and his ever present cigarette, supposedly symbolic of his defiance but ultimately confirming his downfall. He could not compete with the original American model, Bogart. The cigarette is not a symbolic amulet warding off death, but rather an empty object. Poiccard attempted to be the American gangster, but had neither the power nor the institutional expertise to achieve his aim. Rather, his narcissistic and nihilistic consumption of American images of Bogart's cinematic death-defying stardom contributes

⁸⁴Steven Smith, 'Godard and *film noir*: A Reading of *A Bout de souffle*', *Nottingham French Studies*, 32:1 (Spring 1993), 65-73 (p.67).

⁸⁵ Michel Marie, pp.158-173.

to his downfall. In his eagerness to emulate the American cinematic model, he forgets his own vulnerability.

On the RN7, for all his proclaimed love of France, (the sea, the mountains, the countryside and the city, i.e. Paris, the mythic France of holiday brochures), Michel is speeding past a monotonous landscape to the Anglo-Saxon Patricia with her fair colouring, having rejected the dark haired girl at Marseilles. Once Michel had slept with Patricia, 'ça gazait absolument pas' with other women. Clearly, it is not woman Michel lacks, but American woman – the girl who can complete this image of himself as noir hero. The powerful American woman is in a position to reject this, and the narrative determination that would accompany a classic Hollywood film. She refuses to go to Italy with Michel, she worries about the role women can play in society, about loosing her independence if she loves him: as an American, modern woman, Patricia can dominate her French man, and ultimately betray him.

The film sets up a relation of equality between Patricia and Michel. As they stroll down the Champs Elysées together, they are filmed side-by-side, three-quarter length rather than in the traditional shot-reverse shot of classic Hollywood cinema where the man is the subject and the woman the object of the gaze. This traditional relation posits the woman as enigma. Her meaning is to be deduced by the male hero. Patricia escapes this final determination as her condemnation remains incomprehensible to her. Her last line is to ask the inspector what Michel's dying words were. Furthermore, for all that Michel may have labelled her as '*lâche*' for seeing freedom as only possible within the given social system, rather than in his romantic existentialism, (MacCabe sees this as Patricia succumbing to the woman's 'normal' cinematic fate of being labelled by the hero), Patricia eludes such a totalising reading from the spectator. Her very last act in the film is to stare the camera in the face before defiantly turning her back on it and the screen turning black. The American woman's desires, both sexual and political, are confused, contradictory and unknowable. She retains her independence and subjectivity, rather than becoming the gangster's moll of conventional film noir.

Patricia may be presented as the cliché of cinema, the feminine enigma. However, if in classic narrative cinema, it is believed that the woman will be revealed to the male hero/spectator through the operation of the gaze upon a close-up of the face, *A bout de souffle* frustrates this belief. The lingering close-up at the end reveals nothing, nor is there ever any

promise that it will. Whereas Catherine/ Moreau petulantly declares that she does not wish to be understood (but tacitly accepts that she will be framed with motives), Patricia/Seberg dryly dismisses any chance of such a connection. 'Tu ne sais pas ce que je pense – c'est impossible.' *A bout de souffle* undermines the meaning of the close-up. Usually used in cinematic punctuation to underline moments of deep emotion or crisis, this is impossible here, as there will be no deep emotion or crisis. The camera films two beautiful people who perform meaningless gestures and defy interpretation. In his documentary film on Jean Seberg, Mark Rappaport has Mary Beth Hurt conclude when discussing the film '*Breathless* was an extended close-up on two people who would never understand each other [and whom we would never fully understand].'⁸⁶

In an early article, written under the pseudonym Hans Lucas, Godard associated femininity and the close-up ontologically to the cinema.

Le gros plan le plus simple est aussi le plus émouvant. Notre art sait ici le plus fortement marquer sa transcendance. [...] De ces yeux immenses qui se plissent, pleins de prudence et de luxure, de ces lèvres qui pâlisent, [...] nous ne voyons que ce qu'il suppose de noirs desseins, de leurs avoux ce qu'elles cachent d'illusions. [...] Le cinéma ne s'interroge pas sur la beauté d'une femme, il ne fait que douter de son coeur, enregistrer sa perfidie [...], ne voir que ses mouvements.⁸⁷

Seberg/Patricia's profound beauty is linked to an insouciant treachery of Michel; Godard wished to further the betrayal by showing Patricia rifling through his pockets for money, a scene Seberg flatly refused to act.⁸⁸ The belief that an alluring surface disguises only a dangerous sexuality is acted upon in *A bout de souffle*'s narrative. However, as Laura Mulvey comments on his statement, 'the dichotomy between surface and secret, artifice and truth is paradoxical. The artificial surface of feminine beauty may disguise an inside that can only be unveiled to reveal the danger of the *femme fatale*. But the artificial surface of cinematic illusion may disguise an inside that can be unveiled to reveal the true beauty of its materiality and its potential to analyse political reality.'⁸⁹ Mulvey's statement most obviously refers to

⁸⁶ *The Journals of Jean Seberg* (Rappaport, 1995, USA).

⁸⁷ Hans Lucas, 'Défense et Illustration du découpage classique', *Cahiers du cinéma* 47 (septembre 1952), 28-32, (pp.30-32).

⁸⁸ David Sterritt, *The Films of Jean-Luc Godard: Seeing the Invisible* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p.42.

⁸⁹ Laura Mulvey, p. 77.

Godard's later work where he reformulated his attitude toward representations of women in keeping with a broader struggle against consumer capitalism. He was also later to refer to *A bout de souffle* as fascist because it still places women in discourses of dangerous sexuality and representability, without questioning how the meaning of these images is produced. In this film, he sets up eroticised feminine beauty, representation and shining surface as a tautology. Yet it is also possible to see the seeds of his far more radical later cinema in the portrayal of Seberg in *A bout de souffle*, rather than there being a radical 'coupure' between the two.

Filmed in close-up, Seberg however remains unreadable at the end of the film. The power of representation is denied as the close-up has told us nothing: Seberg/ Patricia stares down the camera and the screen turns black. The spectacle is over, and the woman is free to exist beyond it. The cinema, the beautiful woman and the shining object for consumption all share the attribute of spectacle. This linkage means a series of analogies becomes possible: the prostitute, the female cinema star and the commodity all offer themselves for sale in the market place and must all therefore produce a desirable surface. Patricia shops to create this desirable surface, the 'look' that is produced by a Dior dress, dark sunglasses and make-up. As Mulvey comments, the seductive surface implies something hidden. This structure of the alluring surface covering the real aims of the woman can be applied to cinema as well, as it conceals its mechanisms of production underneath a glossy surface. Cinema is also another commodity that circulates successfully through its seductive power, and its seductiveness is encapsulated by the presence of the eroticised female body on the screen. There is thus a neat channel through which the feminine enigma is linked to the process of representation itself. The fetishised female star is held still and hides the ugly reality of cinematic production and circulation of images in a capitalist system. The de-fetishisation of the woman allows the beginning of the de-fetishisation of the cinematic form.

In *A bout de souffle*, some of this defetishisation is beginning. Just as the use of the jump cut draws attention to editing, unlike its normal smooth processes, so Patricia functions as a disruptive element. Operating outside of surface/depth- appearance/truth dichotomy of the *femme fatale*, Patricia has notions of truth radically inscribed onto her body when she wears the *New York Herald Tribune* T-shirt. Rather than being hidden, what she is selling is emblazoned across her chest. Patricia is thus figured into two economies. She circulates in the 'traditional' economy for cinematic

women, that of (mysterious/dangerous) desire, but also, thanks to her nationality, operates beyond it. As a beautiful woman, she is a surface circulating without any reference to history, the 'eternal feminine': selling the newspaper, and proclaiming her role in selling it on her body, she is circulating within an economy of truth and information within historical discourse. The body underneath the T-shirt may speak of (stilling) desire, the T-shirt itself speaks of cultural imperialism and American mobility.

Another item of Patricia's clothing also works to illustrate how she operates across two different sets of discourses, that of the traditional feminine figure (desire, treachery, heterosexual love) and that of political and economic power through access to the media and discourses of history, information and 'truth'. When Patricia buys a dress for her first professional interview, the one she purchases is a black and white striped sweetheart style Christian Dior. Maureen Turim comments:

Black and white striped for graphic pleasure, but also to recall the headlines, text, the newspaper appearances throughout the film, and Patricia's desire to become a serious professional writer. But the dress, the sweetheart line, will forever bind her to being a decorative woman; her interviewee, a male writer, tells her he knows the place for a woman with a very pretty dress like hers, and we are left to assume it is not posing questions about the role of women in contemporary society, as she had tried to do.⁹⁰

The dress with its black and white stripes thus also creates Patricia as 'newspaper text,' mobile and informative. Its shapes, which emphasises her feminine curves, creates her contradictorily as image, sexualised and fetishised. Patricia/Seberg thus collapses two contradictory economies into one figure. As a woman, she is treated as a spectacular commodity. Within France, her nationality allows her claims to certain discourses of empowerment, truth, history and mobility. This collapsing of separate sexual and political discourses onto Patricia is confirmed later in the film when Michel compares their sexual relation to Eisenhower's visit to Paris reported on the radio in their hotel room. Patricia does thus operate as a political subject as well as a desirable object. Her nationality allows her to move beyond the stilling male gaze and fetishisation of her body. She is not operating only as image, but is also figured as text. At this moment, her

⁹⁰ Maureen Turim, 'Designing Women: The Emergence of the New Sweetheart Line', *Wide Angle* 6:2, 1984, 4-11.

truth (she is an American journalist selling a newspaper) is blatant for all to see. It is this that gives her equality to Michel.

This equality is confirmed by their choice of cigarettes. Cinematic smoking is a rhetorical device used to suggest women as an equal to men. Lauren Bacall met Humphrey Bogart on the set of *To Have and Have Not* (Hawks, 1944) and their on-screen flirtation was founded around a matchbox. 'Anybody got a match' she enquires. Bogart searches his desk, and tosses a box across the room: without shifting her position, she languidly scoops it from the air. This scene sets up a deep intimacy between them. They exchange the means of smoking as a prelude to doing it (that is to say, smoke or have sex, the one suggesting the other). Unlike Ingrid Bergman in *Casablanca* (1942), Bacall smokes as much as her man, appropriating similar values of self-sufficiency, independence and control. As the two stars of the film became lovers in real life, so their on-screen relationship was one of remarkable equality. Hawks reported that Bogart was only too happy to allow Bacall to occupy a privileged position in the film as himself, despite her lack of acting experience compared to his own monolithic star status. *Cahiers du cinéma* concluded: 'Lauren Bacall n'est ni la maitresse, ni la femme, ni l'amie, ni la complice de Bogart, elle est sa compagnon.'⁹¹ Her relationship to him is one of equals. In *The Big Sleep*, (Hawks, 1946) a reprise of their successful pairing two years earlier, the opening credits show their silhouettes, him lighting her cigarette, before they are both placed in an ash-tray side-by-side. There is no difference between them.

French publicity was quick to exploit the links between the sexual and the smoking act. In the 1940s, advertisements for Armada cigarettes had the slogan 'longue, extra longue, pour faire durer le plaisir', and if this allusion was not enough, the advertisement featured an ecstatic feminine face to whom this message was addressed. The reunion of souls through co-joined smoke was a common theme in French advertisements. *Gitane* advertisements promised: 'Les fumées de vos Gitanes s'unissent en de gracieuses volutes bleues. Vos pensées s'y rejoignent.' Balto cigarettes employed the artist Gouju Amalric in 1953 to design an advert where the smoke formed itself into the shape of a heart.⁹²

⁹¹ Robert Lachenay, 'Portrait d'Humphrey Bogart', *Cahiers du cinéma*, 52 (novembre 1955), 30-37 (p. 31).

⁹² Eric Capello, 'La publicité et le tabac', in *Anthropologie du tabac* ed. by Sylvain Bouyer and Alain Gaffet (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1997), pp. 215-224.

Chesterfield cigarettes used this image of the happy, egalitarian heterosexual couple to sell their cigarettes in France. A variety of adverts issued in 1959, the year *A bout de souffle* was made, feature a dark-haired man and a blonde woman smoking cigarettes together, their heads or their cigarette butts touching in a gesture of intimacy. The slogan proclaims 'Chesterfield – celles qu'on fume avec ceux que l'on aime'. The successful heterosexual relationship was very important to the Chesterfield image, so much so that *Paris-Match* reports that when Eddie Fisher scandalously became involved with Elizabeth Taylor he was sacked from his contract to advertise Chesterfield. Winston cigarettes (incidentally advertised in the 1940s by Humphrey Bogart) explicitly take this relationship and place it in a Franco – American context. The following copy in an advert featured in *Paris-Match* could be the paradigm for Patricia and Michel's relationship: 'Il est français/ She comes from New York/ Il aime les Winston/ she loves them/ Tous deux sont d'accord/ longue et filtrée/ Winston est leur cigarette préférée.' Smoking, complicity, a sexual relationship based on agreement and equality are all suggested by the copy. This equality seems especially likely in the relationship between a French man, with his 'passive' fatalistic masculinity and an American woman with her dynamic and innovative nationality. This mixing of national 'behavioural' characteristics, language, romantic love, equality and cigarettes in the paradigmatic relationship between a French man and an American woman is echoed in Winston's slogan: 'Quand il y a de l'amour dans l'air/ there is a Winston somewhere.'

The links between national and sexual relations and cigarette smoking are explicitly raised in *A bout de souffle*. The title itself draws attention to the process of inhalation and exhalation, the drawing of breaths required for smoking nearing their end. Poiccard is 'clothed in death' – he passes a sign saying 'Nous sommes tous des morts en permission' and his very gasps of smoke are numbered. Cigarettes are linked to this existential anguish at the inevitability of death when Michel visits a young woman in her apartment to try and borrow money off her. She has painted the walls of her apartment black and begun to spell out the word '*pourquoi*' in empty Gauloises cigarette packs. In fact she only managed the first five letters of the word before abandoning her 'French' questioning and anguish in favour of a change of brand, to the American Lucky Strike. While she is telling Michel about this, he looks down at an object. There is then a cut to an extreme close up which reveals it to be an ash tray featuring a 1904 Rolls Royce, a further symbol of lost glory and gradual decay. Whilst America is

becoming the world leader in manufacturing cars, the British version is used as a decorative device and covered in ash. Michel steals the ash tray and the money from her purse. The dark haired French woman, semi-naked throughout this scene, cannot escape exploitation at the hands of her male compatriots – there is a strong suggestion she has been a prostitute. Although she may aspire to American liberation and equality, the change of brand is not enough.

Patricia also smokes an American brand of cigarettes. When she and Michel are in the hotel room, he tells her: 'Que une fille dit que tout va très bien et qu'elle n'arrive pas allumer sa cigarette, eh bien c'est qu'elle a peur de quelque chose.' Patricia rejects his interpretation of their relationship (as doomed because she is too *lâche* to abandon social convention and leave for Italy with Michel) when she then lights her cigarette, a Chesterfield, and offers him one. She is offering him a relationship of complicity and equality as suggested by the Chesterfield and Winston advertisements discussed above. The offered American cigarette is a metaphor for a sexual and national exchange, and despite all his Bogart-esque posturing, is rejected out of hand by Michel. His response is 'Merde! Pas les Chesterfields!' He smokes his French cigarettes, aping the American gangster but unable to create this tic into anything more than an affectation. His cigarette is not the cigarette of self-sufficiency, nor is it that of a stable relationship founded along egalitarian lines. He wishes to be in a position of power over Patricia, but this is impossible. As Parvelseco comments, the American woman is in a position of power over French men. This is the difference between her and French women. 'Les femmes américaines dominant l' homme: les femmes françaises ne le dominant pas encore.'

This is not so when Patricia meets Van Doude for lunch. Patricia is shot in shot reverse-shot; he is controlling the play of gazes. Whereas she descends the Champs Elysees with Michel, Patricia ascends (as if to heaven?) a light-filled escalator to meet the journalist. He is both physically and metaphorically above Michel in the city of Paris. Slipping between French and English, the man controls both languages, and Patricia has to be aware of every nuance in his meaning: the veiled sexual threat and invitation, rather than the free and easy banter she enjoys with Michel. She barter her sexuality in return for professional advancement. Metaphorically, she becomes a prostitute as she sells her body to advance herself. It is noticeable that when Patricia becomes involved with the American journalist, Van Doude, he does have the power to relegate her

entirely to the eternal feminine. Her selling of the paper becomes a prostitution of herself, and her journalism, located above as placing her into mobile discourses of history, truth and information, here serves only as a lever for her exploitation and fetishisation.

The issue of female prostitution is a complex one in Godard's films. Godard uses the image of the prostitute as a metaphor for the construction of femininity in a consumerist society, in which the woman constructs herself as an idealised commodity through her consumption of commodities. Idealised representations of women hide the fact that all women are essentially engaged in prostitution as they offer up a seductive surface in order to be bought by men. Michel flips through a women's magazine lying in Patricia's hotel room, offering up glamorous images of women; at one moment the screen is filled with them. Patricia surrounds herself with images of women from Art, specifically comparing herself to a Renoir portrait. She even has her own image hanging on the wall and is constantly looking at herself in the mirror. As the spectator gazes voyeuristically at her image, so does she; she views herself as a sex object. Both she and Michel seem to engage in a self-destructive, albeit it romantically attractive, narcissism, consuming images (of American film noir, of women) that they allow to determine themselves. Whilst Patricia may be able to escape the fate Michel wishes for her, she certainly cannot escape the wider implications of a sexualised femininity: any role she may have to play in modern society boils down to her pretty smile, sharp haircut, 'cool' cigarettes, sunglasses and striped dress.

In an article on smoking in the cinema, Michèle Lagny argues that smoke allows the deconstruction of cinema's framing device.⁹³ She figures it as *mise en abyme* of the cinematic form. Smoke is visible when there is a play of light and movement in an enclosed space, the same tension (between movement and the frame) that creates cinematic images. Lagny argues that clouds, fogs, mists, steam and smoke all remind the spectator of what constitutes cinema itself: light forms that move in an strictly enclosed interior. Directors can exploit cigarette smoke to create a 'doubling' effect of the play between the frame and the movement within that frame. For example, in *Sunset Boulevard*, (Wilder, 1955) the heroine, Norma Desmond (Gloria Swanson) is in a cinema watching images of herself as a silent movie star, discussing the romance of early cinema. As she does so, she smokes,

⁹³ Michèle Lagny, 'Ecran de fumée à l'écran', in *Anthropologie du tabac*, ed. by Sylvain Bouyer and Alain Gaffet (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1997), pp. 199-214.

and the smoke is caught in the light path of the projector, one illuminating the other. Her cigarette crudely exhibits the mechanics of filmmaking whilst she is praising its magic.

Godard was eager both to denounce the illusions of filmmaking and to glorify its magic. As Patricia and Michel chat in her hotel room, the smoke and mirrors allow Godard to play as many games with movement and framing as possible. In front of the mirror in the bathroom, Patricia tells Michel she is pregnant. Michel blows smoke clouds into the air that obscure the mirror and blur Patricia's face and the edge of the frame. The cloud of smoke both hides and reveals the entries and exits of the close-ups of Michel and Patricia into the frame, so the spectator of the film can never be totally sure of where the character leaves and enters the shot. This double framing (the mirror/the limits of the shot) marks the very limits of representation. Once again, the defetishisation of the female star and the cinematic form goes hand-in-hand. Hollywood chimeras will follow Michel like a cloud of smoke until his death, whereas Patricia manages to retain some sense of reality beyond representation, at the price perhaps however of her independence, as she is (possibly) pregnant. The pregnancy is perhaps symbolic of women's sexual vulnerability as suggested by the Faulkner novel discussed during the film. Michel chooses nothing, the non-place of Hollywood illusion; Patricia chooses grief, the real mourning of some magic lost.

Patricia does thus have some existence independent of cinematic representation. Mulvey's comment discussed above links this material reality with the possibility for political analysis, and this is certainly the case with Patricia. In complete contrast to Goldmann's remark that started my discussion of this film, it is Michel who plays with masks of illusion, and Patricia who slips beyond them. She moves into the socio-political 'real' first with her T-shirt, and then into the feminist 'real' with her pregnancy, which Michel dismisses with a callous 'tu aurais pu faire attention.' It is after Michel has dismissed his role in her pregnancy that Patricia declares, 'Je ne veux pas être amoureuse de toi.' At the moment when representation begins to fracture, so too does Patricia's belief (if ever she had one) in the relationship between men and women. She forces Michel to leave by betraying him to the police. She wants to leave the romantic, idealised cinematic boy-girl, Bogart-Bacall relationship, the reality of which is her pregnancy and her dependence, and Michel's insouciance and irresponsibility. Patricia thus operates as a subject in the public sphere of

(nascent) feminist and political knowledge as well as a spectacle. She cannot be entirely held in representation, or understood by the hero/director/audience of the film. Her fate will be entirely unknown to us.

Moreau and Seberg are thus fascinating paradigms for discussing the topography of femininity in French cinematic discourses of the New Wave. Both appear to operate as mobile subjects within a newly opened up public sphere. Yet Moreau's image works toward stillness and immobility. She is fixed as an image of French femininity. This is especially the case in *Jules et Jim*, where French literary, cultural and cinematic discourses frame her as an ideal. In *L'Ascenseur pour l'échafaud*, the film that launched her as a New Wave star, Moreau is unable to escape the gaze of the camera. Her walk through the streets, an attempt to establish and order her own experience, becomes a moment for the cinéphile's contemplation. Moreau is the walking wounded – beautiful, but damaged and deadly. Held within accepted notions of femininity, her nationality and gender operate together to keep her firmly within established discourse. Despite her surface modernity, Moreau functions in a similar way to Simone Signoret. Both embody the notion of an organic Frenchness, in which femininity is linked to a performance of suffering. Moreau is not the traditional glamorous cinema star, but she is caught within an equally powerful reading of femininity within French discourses as organic, earthy, and authentic. She cannot move as she is (in some cases literally) buried into the French earth, entirely contained within gendered and nationalised space.

Seberg is altogether more complex. Her nationality automatically implicates her in international movement and mobility in a French context. When an object is fetishised, there comes a reciprocal movement from the object itself, a kind of resistance which opens the possibility for negotiation and undermining certainties. This disruption is especially apparent in the case of the American female cinema star in France. Her gender may mean she is treated as a spectacle, a beautiful object, as Seberg undoubtedly was, but due to her nationality she also necessarily involves movement and exchange. Although Seberg began her career as Joan of Arc, literally tied into the French earth, and into French discourses of martyred femininity, she is able to exist beyond representation. In *A bout de souffle*, she is a material being, rather than entirely a beautiful recorded image. As such, she offers the nascent potential to explore political reality. Her literal movement into the public sphere may offer an early indication of the metaphorical woman's 'movement' that was so acutely considered in Godard's later work. However,

Patricia/ Seberg pre-dates this movement by a decade (born out of May 1968, it was 1975 that was declared 'l'année de la femme' by the *Mouvement de libération des femmes*. It was also in this decade that abortion was legalised and access to contraception made easier). Thus, although Patricia/ Seberg may appear ready to take her place in the public sphere, this will be as an isolated, motherless individual, ten years away from sisterly solidarity and a chance to form alternative relationships and representations.

Chapter four: Fashioning Femininity

Introduction

'Hepburn is to haute couture what Bardot is to bath towels.'¹

This chapter will consider the fashioning of the body in modernity in its most literal sense: how clothing or fashion is used to bring forth a certain configuration of the body. It will contrast Audrey Hepburn, famous for her collaboration with the French couturier Givenchy and Brigitte Bardot who was in contrast renowned for her young style. While Hepburn was celebrated for her smart Givenchy suits and beautiful hats, Bardot was dressed in skimpy clothes, with little jewellery, often no shoes, and certainly no hat. While Holly Golightly/Hepburn in *Breakfast at Tiffany's* (Edwards, 1961) might have been down on her luck she still had Givenchy dresses in her wardrobe; in contrast, Juliette/Bardot's grey dress in *Et Dieu créa la femme* (Vadim, 1956) is a work overall. Her unusually thin, angular body; her notably sleek hairstyle; and above all, her ever-stronger identification with Hubert de Givenchy meant that Hepburn was a star whose image was heavily informed by the clothes and accessories she wore both on and off-screen. Givenchy became a standard requirement on a Hepburn film contract (from 1956 onwards) and he also designed key clothes in her personal life, such as her wedding dress when she married Mel Ferrer in September 1954, and her son's christening robe. From 1957 onwards she marketed his perfume. From 1962 to 1966, she regularly modelled Givenchy's clothes for *Vogue* and *Life* magazine. The association with Givenchy thus allowed Hepburn a homogeneity across the textual boundaries of advertising, journalism and cinematic creations. Givenchy clothing created an image of Hepburn as having a personal style based on European haute couture. Hepburn's star image was of a groomed, self-contained young woman who was far removed from 'cheesecake' pin-up photographs, and would certainly never be photographed in a bathing suit. In a particularly ironic contradiction, the Hollywood star was dressed by a French couturier. Bardot was an icon of French womanhood dressed not in the national dress of Dior, Givenchy or Fath but in a youth-oriented, sporty, 'American' fashion of slacks, sweaters, blue jeans, shorts and bikinis. She eschewed the traditional markers of femininity, spurning 'jewels and

¹ Art Siedenbaum, 'Audrey Hepburn: The making of *My Fair Lady*', *McCalls* (October 1964), p. 97.

cosmetics and high heels and girdles,' in favour of a style of dress that allowed her body to be free of constraint and thus connoted freedom and sexual equality within the context of the 1950s.²

Fashion was key to the construction of modern femininity in both France and America in the 1950s as it was mobilised by key texts such as magazines and films and especially publicity to offer up that problematic concept, an attainable ideal. 'Fashion [was] arguably the essential subject addressed with constancy to women, certainly from the years of the Dior 'New Look' to Jackie Kennedy as First Lady.'³ As will be demonstrated in this chapter, both these stars' clothing came to connote a certain way to be a woman in the 1950s, which I shall argue is linked into the notion of a masquerade, which reveals there is no such thing as 'femininity' but rather different performances of femininity. This use of the psychoanalytic concept of the masquerade, which sees femininity as a precariously held, anxiety-ridden and ultimately impossible position to maintain may seem to feed into early feminist discussions of fashion as restrictive and dominating for women. Costume was initially rejected as a site of feminist inquiry because of the ways in which it reinforces the sexual objectification of women; for its associations with conspicuous consumption and the position of women as economic chattels, as property. Elizabeth Wilson is the most noted of critics who object to the view that fashion operates as a 'seamless web of oppression' arguing that it is rather 'the most wide-spread medium of women's self-expression'. In this view, clothing is a 'cultural metaphor for the body [...] the material with which we write or draw a representation of the body into our cultural context.'⁴ In other words, fashion allows us access to the body itself. This discussion of access to the body is influenced by Michel Foucault's arguments, in which fashion is interpreted as one of the 'disciplinary modes' through which power is exercised and recognisably feminine bodies are produced. However, as will be demonstrated in this chapter, as well as being feminine, these bodies were also recognisably young, modern and Americanised. There is a contradiction here. While clothing worked on the one hand to contain Hepburn and Bardot and the women encouraged to identify with them, it also had a subversive power. Fashion confirms these women's status as objects of male vision and desire and also expresses their

² Simone de Beauvoir, 'Brigitte Bardot and the Lolita Syndrome' (London: André Deutsch and Weidenfield and Nicholson, 1960), p. 21.

³ Richard Martin, 'Style from Paris, Reality from America: Fashion in Life magazine 1947-1963', *Journal of American Culture* 19:4 (1996), 51-5 (p.52).

⁴ Juliet Ash and Elizabeth Wilson, 'Introduction', in *Chic Thrills: A Fashion Reader* ed. by Juliet Ash and Elizabeth Wilson (London: Pandora, 1992), p. 6.

modern independence. 'Women of fashion become the 'speaking' subjects of a symbolic system which inseparably entangles signs of oppression and liberation within the fashionable feminine body.'⁵ Hepburn and Bardot embody this uneasy contradiction. Their clothing, which acts to underline their elegant femininity or exuberant sexuality respectively, is both part of a dominant discourse on women and their representation (as aspects of the idealised 'eternal feminine') and yet also undermines it.

This subversion operates in the following ways. Firstly, both Hepburn and Bardot offer an alternative femininity from that more currently available in the 1950s. The slender Hepburn was a representational alternative to the usual voluptuous Hollywood star such as Monroe or Taylor while Bardot was perceived as having a revolutionary free sexuality. Furthermore the way in which these stars dressed, however extreme the differences between them may at first seem, both emphasised their modernity and their youth. Hepburn's casual wear of ballet pumps, capri pants, black polo necks and peasant shirts, showcased in her 1950s films *Roman Holiday*, *Sabrina Fair*, *Funny Face* and *Love in the Afternoon*, alongside her chic minimalist evening wear; and Bardot's long t-shirts without skirts, minimal bikinis, tight black trousers and ski pants; both were in sharp contrast to the dominant 1950s silhouette, that of the 'sweetheart line.'

With its tight, bare bodice, nipped-in, accentuated waist, and full, billowing skirt this gown came to dominate the image of women in American films and popular fashion magazines in the 1950s. This style that both echoes the curves of the idealised female body and uses a lot of material was a reaction against the necessarily utilitarian, 'masculine' and thriftily made clothing of the Second World War. It was first exemplified in high fashion by Dior's New Look, launched in 1947 as part of a French desire to reinstate its fashion industry upon the world stage. However, high fashion was already beginning to modify the silhouette in 1949 and by 1953 was attempting to introduce a straight chemise line and dropped waist. Resisting the lead of high fashion, popular culture and the mass of consumers retained the silhouette of the belted waist and the full skirt through the mid-Fifties. It was produced for the Hollywood screen by powerful designers such as Paramount studio's costume designer Edith Head, who designed Elizabeth Taylor's clothes in *A Place In the Sun* (1951). Taylor's dresses, playing a major role in the film in allowing Taylor to appear both sexual and ethereal, more sympathetic maiden

⁵ Leslie W. Rabine, 'A Woman's 2 Bodies: Fashion Magazines, Consumerism and Feminism', in *On Fashion* ed. by Shari Benstock and Suzanne Ferriss (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1994), pp. 59-75 (p. 62).

than spoilt high society girl, were four gowns all in the sweetheart style, embroidered with lace or flowers. Edith Head won an Academy Award for the design of these gowns and the film got tremendous publicity for displaying them.

The garment industry and fashion magazines then reproduced these designs. Head famously commented that upon attending a debutante party someone from Paramount saw 37 Elizabeth Taylors dancing. The widespread use of the sweetheart style in films did much to bring the style to mass audiences and mass manufacture for such middle-class social events as high school proms and sorority balls. Dependent on structured underwear (moulded bras, corsets or girdles, crinolines), with layered ruffled skirts and typically made of lace, satin or organza, this style came to be associated with iconic 'good' femininity, women as brides, debutantes, princesses. (In *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*, Monroe and Russell's reformation through marriage is signalled when they swap their slinky show girl numbers for the billowing bridal skirts in the final marriage scene).

Maureen Turim argues that the style refers to femininity through its recalling of the idealised feminine figure but that it spreads out discretely from the wider hips to conceal the true signifier of sexual difference, the pubic area. Its function as cover to the woman's sexual organs is made into a metaphor through the use of ruffles, layers and folds of shiny, frilly material.

The ideology that surrounds this metaphor is one that functions through opposition, restriction and limitation. Just as these decorative dresses were often very uncomfortable and impractical to wear, so the decorative and passive function assigned women by their metaphorical inscription in such clothing was the ugly underside of the charming appearance. In fact, the sweetheart line can also be seen as a form of gilded bondage. For clothing [...] establishes identities; this style, by enforcing symbolic femininity, allowed for a great restriction of the female role to be attached to very notion of the feminine.⁶

Neither Bardot nor Hepburn dressed in this iconic feminine style. Their looks were constructed in opposition to this prevailing norm. Givenchy's clothing emphasised the linearity of Hepburn's figure and he was himself an unconventional couturier, opening one of the very first off-the-peg boutiques for couture clothing in Paris in 1952, a move which signals

⁶ Maureen Turim, 'Designing Women: The Emergence of the Sweetheart Neckline', *Wide Angle* 6:2 (1984), 4-11 (p.11).

modernity, a loosening of hierarchies, and a new appeal to a younger, trendier audience. Bardot's clothing emphasises her freedom to move, her sexuality, and her role as an icon of youth rebellion.

Verena Aebischer and Sonya Herzbrun in their analysis of the impact various female stars had on French adolescent female film fans argue that this oppositional look allowed greater identification between stars such as Hepburn and Bardot and the fans than was the case with the more traditional Hollywood star. They argue that 'Audrey Hepburn que son amoureux d'un jour promenant à travers Rome sur un scooter, comme le furent ensuite bien d'autres amoureux anonymes, ne correspondait cependant pas au type de la grande star hollywoodien'. Her youthful appearance and her body signalled as 'different' through its clothing together with a European setting conspire to make Hepburn less of an impossible ideal and more of an identificatory figure for young French female fans. For some, Grace Kelly and Marilyn Monroe 'étaient trop femmes, presque trop célèbres pour qu'on s'identifie très facilement à elles'. Bardot fulfils a similar role to Hepburn as a star for imitation and identification. 'Par opposition à ces stars, Brigitte Bardot va remplir la fonction d'une femme à laquelle une adolescente des années cinquante peut, partiellement au moins, s'identifier.' Through a style that appeared to reject just one interpretation of the feminine ideal, Bardot and Hepburn both functioned to offer alternatives to the ideal represented by Kelly and Monroe. The ideal presented by Bardot and Hepburn was probably equally unattainable. As many of the interviewees report, Bardot's sexual freedom would not have been a practical route to take in a 1950s French village. The majority of the interviewees may have worn a gingham dress in imitation of Bardot but they nearly all married young, as virgins.⁷ However, the very fact that alternative representations of femininity are available suggests a positive freeing-up and introduction of instability into what has been traditionally held as a fixed, fetishised form, that of the female cinema star.

Secondly, the importance of clothing in the construction of these stars' identities frees the woman slightly from the objectifying gaze: are we looking at the woman or her clothes? The sweetheart line that Hepburn and Bardot so obviously rejected was as Turim has argued heavily promoted in Hollywood film. Edith Head also took pride in the way in which her designs established character and served narrative function. They were called 'story telling

⁷ Verena Aebischer and Sonya Herzbrun, 'Cinéma et destins de femmes', *Cahiers Internationaux de Sociologie* 30 (1986), 147-160.

wardrobes', in which clothing is subservient to narrative, one of many semic codes within the *mise-en-scène*. Bardot and Hepburn's clothing functions as more than just plot development fodder: it serves to establish star image across the divide between the on-screen and off-screen persona. The Givenchy clothing allows Hepburn to maintain a homogenous star image across the textual boundaries of advertising, journalism and cinema. Bardot was a star at Cannes almost before her first films were released and it was her private life rather than her films that became an object of fascination.

Within the films themselves, the clothes could thus function to remind the audience of the existence of the star beyond the individual film narrative (this is something Godard deliberately plays on in *Le Mépris*, 1962). Stella Bruzzi labels the clothes that have an autonomous narrative function 'iconic' clothes and it is my contention that such items offer a chance, however subtle, for the female star to displace attention from her ceaselessly inscribed body onto an alternative object (of course, attempts are made in discourse to collapse the difference between the body and the clothes)⁸. The fact that both Hepburn and Bardot, despite their wildly differing star images (this difference largely informed by the clothes they wore) were both routinely described as free spirits shows an awareness that iconic clothing can function as a liberator as well as a constraint for women. Hepburn's haute couture and Bardot's bath towels function for both stars as discursive strategies that allow them to perform successfully their femininity *and* to suggest alternative ways to perform that femininity. Perhaps above all these are the iconic stars of the 1950s who got away – who, through the emphasis on their clothes, managed to escape the relentless representation and grounding of the body described in the previous chapters. In later life, both these stars would also turn their backs on representation in a way none of the others described here have done. Hepburn moved to a Swiss retreat, only leaving to work as a Special Ambassador for UNICEF until her death in 1993, and Bardot retired to the South of France only emerging to work for animal rights.

From Spectator to Star

⁸ Stella Bruzzi, *Undressing Cinema: Clothing and Identity in the Movies* (New York and London: Routledge, 1997), p. 34.

‘We had a gamin, a waif, a lowly caterpillar. We opened the cocoon. But it is not a butterfly that emerges [...] it is a bird of paradise.’ (On Jo Stockton, played by Audrey Hepburn, in *Funny Face* (Donen, 1957)).

‘I think it is quite wonderful that this skinny broad could be turned into a marketable commodity.’⁹

The first quote above is from the film *Funny Face* in which an intellectual Jo Stockton (Audrey Hepburn) is revealed by a combination of skilful photography, heterosexual love and a Givenchy wardrobe to be an ideal feminine figure. Paul Duval, the couturier in the film, utters the quote, as Hepburn stands on the catwalk having made her triumphant entrance. She is surrounded by approving gazes as she models not just clothes but a perfect femininity that is, Duval’s phrasing suggests, both objectifying and yet heavenly, both constrained and poised for flight: she is a bird of paradise. Hepburn’s more down to earth comment reveals the imperative behind the miraculous transformation effected in *Funny Face*. Cinema stars are made for profit. Just like her beautiful clothes, Hepburn herself, in her own words, is a marketable commodity – indeed, her clothes are partially responsible for transforming her from a ‘skinny broad’ into a star, a profitable human commodity. So in Hepburn’s star image of transformation is the myth of an ideal femininity that can be constructed through clothing and cosmetics – that the right wardrobe can turn one into a bird of paradise. In many of her film roles, Hepburn typifies the ‘ugly duckling’ who will become a swan, not through experience (indeed, as Marilyn Throne argues, the plot of *Love in the Afternoon* (Wilder, 1957) revolves around the preservation of Ariane’s innocence)¹⁰ but through acquiring the correct plumage. At the ‘ugly’ start of the narrative, Hepburn’s character occupies the ‘masculine’ space of the voyeur. In *Sabrina Fair* (Wilder, 1954) she spies on David Larrabee’s romantic encounters on the indoor tennis court from a convenient tree. In *Love in the Afternoon*, she peeps through a cleaned space in the window into her father’s office where he keeps his files on illicit love affairs. Rather than this position placing her as the recipient of sexual pleasure, as with the male voyeur, within the narrative logic of these films she needs to become the object rather than the subject of the gaze in order to gain sexual pleasure,

⁹ Audrey Hepburn, Lincoln Center ‘Gala Tribute’ held at Avery Fisher Hall, New York 22 April 1991. Quoted by Barry Paris, *Audrey Hepburn* (London: Orion, 1996), p. 326.

¹⁰ Marilyn Throne, ‘Love in the Afternoon: A Cinematic Exposure of a 1950s myth’ *Literature-Film Quarterly* 16:1 (1988), 65-73.

always through a romantic partnership. In other words, as she 'transforms' herself (i.e. constructs her femininity through commodities such as clothes and cosmetics), the Hepburn heroine attracts the gaze of the male hero. It is this gaze that confirms Hepburn as the eternal feminine Other to the male Self. Her use of commodities turns her from a transvestite, invisible 'voyeur' into the feminine ideal, clothed in a way that both adds to and confirms her beauty. It is this transformation that allows Hepburn access to sexual and emotional fulfilment in the 'correct' feminine role.

This transformation is thus also a commodification, as it turns the woman herself into a desirable object in the (sexual) marketplace. This is especially the case with the female cinema star, whose image is itself a highly profitable commodity. As Richard Dyer explains in his work on stars, the fact that the star is flesh and blood individual works to make the myths they support and 'act out' seem plausible.¹¹ Hepburn's star image dramatises and renders plausible the narrative of transformation offered by fashion in women's magazines, films and other popular media. Her image as a cinema star and as a consumer of haute couture clothing together form to confirm her as commodity. Her image in France thus links the visual politics of the cinematic gaze and the textual politics of the classic Hollywood film with the impact of post-war modernising discourses of advertising, consumption and the mass media.

Edgar Morin wrote in his study of star culture that the appeal of stars was based on a system of identification and projection. The spectators of a film could both aspire *to be* and believe themselves to *be like* the star they were watching. He goes on to argue that this identification process touches at the very heart of what creates a human 'personality', i.e. how our individual subjectivity is constructed.

Qu'est-ce que la personnalité? Mythe et réalité à la fois. Chacun à sa personnalité, mais chacun vit le mythe de sa personnalité. Autrement dit, chacun se fabrique une personnalité de confection, qui est dans un sens le contraire de la personnalité vraie, mais aussi le truchement par lequel on accède à la vraie personnalité. La personnalité naît aussi bien de l'imitation que de la création. La personnalité est un masque, mais qui vous permet de faire entendre votre voix, comme le masque de théâtre antique. Ce masque, ce déguisement, la star nous donne l'image et le modèle: nous

¹¹ Richard Dyer, *Heavenly Bodies: Film Stars and Society* (London: Macmillan Educational, 1986), p. 10.

l'intégrons à notre personnage, l'assimilons à notre propre personne.¹²

In this account, the star is both the model for and the image of a process of self-transformation. Audrey Hepburn has a particularly interesting star image in relation to Morin's concept of how the star functions. Many of her films thematise the transformation of the self, which can be seen here to act as a metaphor for the creation of and influence of the movie star (and vice versa). She goes from being a Princess to an ordinary girl in *Roman Holiday* (Wyer, 1953); from a chauffeur's daughter to lady of the house in *Sabrina Fair*; from Greenwich village intellectual beatnik to international model and wife in *Funny Face*; from Texan child bride Lulamae Barnes to cocktail sophisticate Holly Golightly in *Breakfast at Tiffany's*; and from Cockney guttersnipe to polished aristocrat in *My Fair Lady* (Cukor, 1964).

Hepburn's transformation is effected through the use of the accoutrements of consumer culture: a new haircut, a better outfit. Women's relationship to consumer culture has been a central one since its emergence.¹³ Towards the end of the nineteenth century, changes in the organisation of capitalism positioned women as key subjects in commodity exchange. The home, posited as the women's sphere, increasingly became a place of consumption rather than production. The nineteenth century thus saw a gendered division of labour in relation to consumption, with women being chiefly responsible for the purchase of goods. This assumption still held true in 1950s France. 'Entrées dans la production, les femmes régissent la consommation; elles choisissent, et c'est presque devenu une fonction sociale.'¹⁴ Women, not men, govern buying. As Jackie Stacey argues, this is not necessarily a liberating event; rather, it sets women up as willing female consumers to be seduced by male producers. While men experienced modernity through processes of industrialisation and economic rationalisation, for women shopping was the privileged space of modernity. The emergence of department stores can be seen to mark the beginning of consumer culture, and furthermore the beginning of a particular connection between looking, desiring and buying. 'Department stores, using new glass technology and electricity to create a space characterised by openness, light and visibility with large expanses of display windows, became the new palaces of consumption

¹² Edgar Morin, *Les Stars* (Paris: Seuil, 1957), p. 173.

¹³ For a discussion of this, see Jackie Stacey, *Star-gazing: Hollywood cinema and female spectatorship* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994).

¹⁴ Henri Lefebvre, 'Introduction à la psycho-sociologie de la vie quotidienne', (1960), in *Du rural à l'urbain* (Paris: Anthropos, 1970), pp. 89-107 (p. 104).

offering women the pleasures of escape from dull domesticity.’¹⁵ The display of commodities as spectacles, offering the female shopper pleasure in looking, contemplation and the fantasy transformation of her self and her surroundings through consumption thus prefigured similar pleasures to be gained in the cinema.

Charles Eckert argues that the cinema functions as a shop window for the female spectator.¹⁶ In this case, the consumption is entirely imaginary and the process of looking itself has become commodified. Eckert argues that Hollywood cinema acted as a showcase for fashions, accessories, cosmetics, furnishings and other manufactured items. Women, as the chief consumers, were the subjects of this address. The pleasurable gaze for women then is addressed as if predicated on looking as the precursor to buying, and buying as the precursor to transformation of the self. Hepburn, in roles such as that of Holly Golightly, the 5am window-shopper, thus functions as both the female shopper and the model for other female shoppers. Within her films, she plays a model, a call-girl, a princess, all roles that depend on the market value of a public icon of femininity. Outside of her films, she is a star, another public feminine icon whose success is presented as relying on the consumption of commodities. So when the female spectator watches Hepburn she is consuming an image of the process that she herself is being asked to undergo: the transformation of the self into a fantasy ideal through the consumption of goods.

The female cinema star produces a glamorised marketable femininity for public consumption. Hepburn’s image crystallises a complex web of identifications between commodification, femininity, fashion and spectatorship. The *mise-en-scène* of the famous breakfast scene that opens *Breakfast at Tiffany’s* communicates glamour beloved of fashion and cosmetic advertising. A series of whimsical oppositions between Hepburn’s long evening gown and the hour of the day, her cheap Danish and the expensive goods she covets, accompanied by ‘Moon River’, a hymn to drifters ‘off to see the world’ gives a wistful, adventurous feel to the pursuit of goods.¹⁷ As Hepburn stares into Tiffany’s window, so the larger shop window of the cinema frames her, a window through which female spectators could glimpse an illustration of the feminine ideal. The rhetoric surrounding Holly Golightly

¹⁵ Jackie Stacey, p. 178.

¹⁶ Charles Eckert, ‘The Carole Lombard in Macy’s Window’, in *Stardom: Industry of Desire*, ed. by Christine Gledhill (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), pp. 30-39.

¹⁷ Dabrina Anne Taylor, *Fair Lady, Huckleberry Friend: Femininity and Freedom in the Image of Audrey Hepburn 1953- 1967* (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Maryland, 1997), p. 14.

here is that of the poetry of publicity that Lefebvre identifies as essential to the creation of a new social reality in the France of the 1950s.

La publicité ne fournit pas seulement une idéologie de la consommation; une représentation du "moi" consommateur qui s'accomplit en tant que tel, qui se réalise en acte et coïncide avec son image (ou son idéal). Elle se fonde aussi sur l'existence imaginaire des choses. Elle en est l'instance. Elle implique de la rhétorique, la poésie, superposées à l'acte de consommer, inhérentes aux représentations. Cette rhétorique n'est pas seulement verbale mais matérielle: un étalage rue de faubourg St Honoré, une présentation de haute couture, ne doivent-ils pas se comprendre comme un discours objectif, comme une rhétorique des choses?¹⁸

The shopping scene at Tiffany's further telescopes these issues, being both verbal – an imagistic representation – and material – the window display itself. In this moment we have both the window display and the fashion show (Hepburn's evening gown) (i.e. Lefebvre's material rhetoric) and the idealised, glamorised representation (i.e. Lefebvre's verbal rhetoric) of these items. It is the perfect illustration of how advertising functions to close the gap between the consumption of an object and the signs attached to the object such as happiness, eroticism, or in this case, ideal femininity. 'Consommation imaginaire, consommation de l'imaginaire – les textes de publicité – et consommation réelle n'ont pas de frontières qui les délimitent.'¹⁹

L'Express's interpretation of the film illustrates how it can be read as a re-interpretation of the waif in a society no longer predicated upon a consumption dictated by need but a consumption dictated by desire. It argues that the French title, '*Diamants sur canapé*' is a mis-translation. The point of the film is that a century ago, the window that Holly was looking into longingly would not have contained priceless jewels but warm bread. 'Elle n'a plus faim mais elle grelotte de peur [...] De nos jours, les besoins sont satisfaits. Mais les désirs et les rêves que fait miroiter la société détruisent les êtres autrement que le faim.' It is hardly surprising that *L'Express* given its own role in promoting American solutions for French problems reads this film as both a paean to and a critique of American consumption. In a French context, Holly's longing for jewels only serves to illustrate further the frustrations of living in a society where desires for consumption (of both an

¹⁸ Henri Lefebvre, *La Vie quotidienne dans le monde moderne* (Paris: Gallimard, 1968), pp. 172-3.

¹⁹ Henri Lefebvre, *Le monde moderne*, p. 174.

object and its connotations) are still met more on an imaginary than a real level, certainly in comparison to the United States.²⁰

In many of her films, Hepburn's transformation occurs through the consumption of clothes. In *Sabrina Fair*, for example, it occurs when Sabrina returns from a cookery course in Paris and is waiting at the station. The camera tracks up her in a Givenchy designed fine grey wool suit, vindicating Sabrina's voice-over that she has become 'the most sophisticated woman.' The grey suit, expertly modelled by Hepburn, operates in the film as stilling spectacle. The clothes stop the narrative flow of the film, underlined by a close-up of the screeching tyres slamming to a stop on David Larrabee's sports car. Clothes are at this moment prioritised over narrative. All the previous experiences Sabrina has had have led up to this point when she can be contemplated as a beautiful woman, operating as a potential sexual object within the film's narrative for David and as a star for the spectator watching the film. At the start of the film, the spectator identified with Sabrina as she watched the dazzling spectacle of the Larrabee ball from a tree. Now, the spectator watches Sabrina, who herself has become dazzling spectacle. Her transformation from a figure of identification to one of projection, from ordinary girl to star, has happened within the film itself.

The confirmation that she is now a star to be looked at rather than a spectator looking in occurs when David invites her to the ball. In a thrilling moment, Hepburn enters in her 'lovely dress with yards of skirt – way off the shoulders' to the admiring stare of all the men – and the women – at the ball. Stella Bruzzi describes the gown itself as stunning, innovative in its mixture of lengths and shapes, juxtaposing a tight above the ankle dress, a long trailing train and strapless bodice. Significantly, the other young women at the ball are wearing standardised, unremarkable dresses. Hepburn's gown is set apart in its style and also in its detail, the dark floral embroidery on white chiffon and the dark tasselled trim. Hepburn's dress does not serve to show case a buxom body promising to spill out of the top or threatening to split the seams; rather, in contrast to the more traditional Hollywood stars of the time, Hepburn's lithe, slim form serves to showcase the dress. Bruzzi thus concludes that the dress operates in *Sabrina Fair* as iconic clothing. In her argument, iconic clothes serve a proclamatory function in the film, colliding in the sequences in which they are placed with an alternative, independent meaning.²¹ In Hepburn's grand entrance, her gown has the power to generate its own set of

²⁰ Anon, 'La Vitrine du Boulanger', *L'Express* (25 janvier 1962).

²¹ Stella Bruzzi, p. 37.

meanings, connoting Paris/European sophistication/Givenchy/star quality that then impact onto Hepburn, rather than (as is more usually the case) Hepburn's meanings impacting onto the gown. The gown feeds into and plays on Hepburn's power to suggest the possibility of transformation. Molly Haskell writes that the dress captures Hepburn's 'double essence':

[A] strapless organdy sheath with a buoyant overskirt, [...it mixes] the straight, slim boyish figure with the airborne femininity. The double skirt, attached at the waist, suggests the co-existence (both separate and joined) of girl and woman – the tree-climbing child encased in the flowing gown of a socialised woman.²²

Thus it can be seen that the couture dress itself is a particularly rich source of meaning in relation both to Hepburn and as a beautiful object to be admired in its own right in this film. The use of French couture design in a Hollywood film was at this time revolutionary. In 1931, Coco Chanel was offered a million dollars to design for MGM studios, bringing the glamour of a name to costume design, but she left less than a year later, in a haze of bad feeling and recrimination about her refusal to modify her trademark understated style and prioritise the narrative demands of the film over the look and style of the clothes. Couture clothes refused to be subordinate to the demands of plot.²³

By the 1950s, when Hepburn began working in Hollywood, the costume designer rather than the couture house was well-established. The costume designer was entrusted with the task of providing clothes that did not draw attention to themselves, but rather served the purposes of the narrative. However, when she won the part in *Sabrina Fair*, still at this time an unknown, Hepburn persuaded the director Billy Wilder to let her approach a French couture designer for clothes for the post-Paris transformation scenes. The costume designer at Paramount studios at the time was the redoubtable Edith Head, who had it written into her contract that she was the only designer who could get credit on any Paramount picture. Head demanded, and was given, full credit for *Sabrina Fair*, but the dress designs were widely acknowledged to be by Givenchy. The link between Givenchy and Hepburn was also made in the popular imagination: 'Depuis 1953, date de sa rencontre avec le couturier, l'actrice est devenue le symbole de la maison de la couture. D'ailleurs, comme le rappelait le *Vogue* français en mars 1989, on ne saurait

²² Molly Haskell, 'Our Fair Lady Audrey Hepburn', *Film Comment* (March/ April 1991), 9-12.

²³ Stella Bruzzi, p. 34.

penser à l'une sans immédiatement évoquer l'autre.'²⁴ Such a symbiotic relationship between a Hollywood film star and a French couture designer, with its emphasis on clothes as beautiful objects to be looked at, as well as narrative props, allows alternative discourse strategies to enter into play. The relationship between the woman, the image, and her ideal are disrupted by a discourse that places emphasises on clothes as much as the woman who is wearing them, and the uncertainty over what is being looked at; the dress, or the woman wearing it. At the same time, the beautiful clothes offered an idealised vision of femininity: Hepburn is a model woman in both senses of the word.

From voyeur to object of desire, the best transformation of them all?

In the two films that especially figure Hepburn's transformation through a combination of fashion and French chic, *Sabrina Fair* and *Funny Face*, we see Hepburn becoming a star, becoming a figure of spectacle, and thoroughly enjoying her new found ability to attract the gaze. At the start of the fashion shoot in *Funny Face*, the male photographer Dick Avery/Fred Astaire carefully coaches her. In the first scene, where she runs with balloons outside the Louvre, she nervously protests that she doesn't know which way to run. In a deliciously comic moment at the train station, Avery tells her she is a woman of tragedy: her utterly serious rejoinder is 'Shall I throw myself under the train?' However, by the fifth scene, when she is clothed in a sparkling white ball gown, Jo is able to create her own narrative, causing Avery to mutter 'You've outgrown me.' At the fashion shoot's climax, in the Louvre, she throws her arms in the air, smiling hugely, walking confidently towards the photographer and crying 'take the picture! Take the picture!' in an ecstasy of the pleasure of being looked at. The Givenchy clothes allow her to become spectacle: they reveal a beautiful femininity that had been hidden before. 'In the series of metonymic melodramas that comprise the Quality photo shoot, Jo is continuously transformed into varying images of idealised femininity.'²⁵ Jo is coated with layers of meaning about what womanliness constitutes that serve to fix and hold her for the gaze. She is turned into a show, a spectacle, a masquerade; this is the apotheosis of femininity itself, which in its ideal form prefers being looked at to looking, being the object of desire rather than the subject.

²⁴ Anon, *Givenchy: 40 ans de création* (Paris: Paris Musées/ Galliera, 1991), p. 85.

²⁵ Susan Sellars, 'How Long Has This Been Going On? Harper's Bazaar, *Funny Face* and the Construction of the Modernist Woman', *Visible Language* 29:1 (1993), 13-34 (p. 26).

The pleasures of the gaze for women are thus transformed in this film. Paris is located as a space for sight (rather than work or intellect that is identified with New York). The possibilities Paris offers to revel in the act of seeing are introduced when the three main protagonists fly to the city. From an establishing shot of the aeroplane, the film then dissolves to an aerial view of Paris and then cuts between each of the major characters, their face framed in the round aeroplane window, and a major Paris landmark, so Maggie Prescott is followed by the Eiffel Tower, then Dick Avery is followed by Notre Dame, and Jo Stockton by the Champs Elysées. The idea of Paris as city laid out for the tourist gaze, regardless of its gender, is thus set up. However, upon their arrival at Orly, the three are still in New York mode of relentless work – they resent the suggestions that they might want to be ‘tourists’, i.e. people who are dedicated to wandering the city and site-seeing. When they are offered the chance to take a site-seeing tour, Jo’s response is, ‘do we look like those people who run away gaping all day?’ The lure of Paris soon thrills them into becoming tourists, however, a relation of seeing in Paris based not on gender but on nationality as they admit that they want to become ‘the Great American tourist’ in the song ‘Bonjour Patee.’ The song also allows the spectator of the film to become lost in the pleasures of viewing Paris, as it features Les Invalides, La Madeleine, the banks of the Seine, Montmartre, Place de la Concorde, Place Vendome, Versailles’ gardens, Pont Alexandre, often in triple split screen, finally finishing at the Eiffel Tower, all in the space of five minutes. The three characters all join each other on the viewing platform of the Eiffel Tower, and the city is laid out underneath them, ready for their penetrating gaze. The city is feminised by this tourist gaze, but the model, the editor, and the photographer can all possess this gaze regardless of their own gender. Looking is primary activity that the American should devote themselves to in Paris as they float above the city rather than becoming involved within it. Paris is an unreal celestial space for the American tourist: ‘all good Americans should come here to die.’ Through her nationality, Jo/ Hepburn can transcend her relentlessly feminised body.

This is a gaze that is still strictly regulated: parts of the city are delineated as suitable for the tourist gaze. Jo wants to go beyond this tourist gaze and participate in French culture through her enthusiasm for empathicalism. She is lured to Paris with the promise of authenticity – European, masculine, intellectual culture. She accepts the constraint and artifice of both the tourist gaze and the formulaic image of womanhood in order to access ‘real’ culture. Tellingly, when she slips off to the dingy smoky

empathicalist hangout, she is talked of as beyond the gaze. Exasperated by her absence, Maggie snaps, 'If she's here, she's invisible.' When she sends Dick to locate Jo, Maggie comments 'Keep an eye on her.' As she is taken from the philosophical Paris of the empathicalists or of the privileged viewing position of the American tourist, Jo/ Hepburn is made into just one more of Paris' profitable sites/ sights, whether for *Quality* magazine or Paramount studios. By the end of the film, Jo has learned to keep an eye on herself, so she internalises the positions of surveyor and surveyed. The model panopticon captures for Foucault the essence of a disciplinary society, as the controlled and contained subject ultimately internalises the surveillance gaze through this disciplining technique. Sandra Bartky argues that fashion uses the disciplining techniques of the internalised gaze to produce a docile feminine body. There are three different aims: to produce a body of a certain size or general configuration (e.g. dieting); to bring forth from the body a specific repertoire of gestures, postures and movements (e.g. sitting with legs crossed); to display the body as ornamental/ed surface (e.g. the use of makeup).²⁶ The genderless American tourist and the unconventional beatnik are transformed through the operation of an internalised gaze into the bride Jo, the beautiful object of cinematic, fashion, social and sexual gazes. The cinema star, the bride and the model are all perfect examples of controlled female bodies. Jo is produced through fashion as a model, an appropriately feminine woman who if she thinks at all will only 'think pink.' It is her desire for Dick that allows Jo to reconcile her intellectual ambitions with her new found docile femininity. This femininity is posited within the narrative of the film as the discovery of Jo's true essence, yet she is in fact involved in a complex acting out of ideals of femininity, as I will discuss in my next section.

Caught in a masquerade: - Audrey Hepburn and the performance of femininity.

So the combination of French fashion and American magazine expertise produces a conventional romantic heroine, a profitable commodity within society's narrative structures. The combination of French fashion and American film expertise work to produce Hepburn as a star, an equally profitable commodity. This is transformation that is demonstrated again and again in her films themselves. From searching for authenticity, Jo accepts the

²⁶ Sandra Bartky, 'Foucault, Femininity and the Modernization of Patriarchal Power', in *Feminism & Foucault: Reflections on Resistance* ed. by Irene Diamond and Lee Quinby (Boston, MA: Northeastern University Press, 1988), pp. 61-86.

romanticised idyll of a country church, a white bridal gown, and floating away on a raft followed by swans. Equally, Hepburn herself welcomes her transformation into a star through fashion and a romanticised *mise en scène*. Morin conceptualises this transformation through artifice as a mask. Morin argues that the mask does not replace the self, but is one of the ways in which the self represents itself, an argument that anticipates later feminist writings on film. Hepburn's films often place her into situations that are a masquerade, but where this dissimulation allows what the film marks as her 'true self' to shine. More accurately, there is no difference between the masquerade and the self, or the self itself is fashioned from masquerade. In contrast to Brigitte Bardot, marketed as 'natural' and 'earthy', created by God; Hepburn is a creation of intellectualised artifice – of for example, couture design (*Sabrina Fair, Funny Face*), French philosophical thinking, (*Funny Face*), carefully studied speech patterns, (*Breakfast at Tiffany's, My Fair Lady*) and royal protocol (*Roman Holiday*).

This contrast echoes in the two stars' performance styles as well – whereas Bardot delivered her lines in a flat, petulant, accented French, Hepburn's biographers stress how hard she worked on improving her performances, with her singing, dancing, and acting lessons featuring prominently in accounts of the production of her films. This, for example, is a description of Hepburn's preparation during the filming of *Funny Face*:

Une comédie musicale est une épreuve de longue haleine et Audrey en acquiert la discipline. Chaque matin, elle arrive au bureau de Roger Edens pour répéter sa chanson au piano. Puis, elle se rend au studio où Stanley Donen dirige la musique et l'arrange pour le caméra. Après cela, elle termine en salle de répétitions pour travailler le pas de danse.²⁷

Hepburn is always performing, rather than just being. Yet as Morin argues, this carefully contrived masquerade is what allows access to what is judged to be the 'true' Audrey Hepburn. At the end of her films, she is revealed to be a perfect lady, despite the confusions that may have been in place at the start. The revelation, which occurs through a controlled, performed artifice of clothes, speech, thought and behaviour, develops a tautology between stardom; perfect idealised femininity; and controlled performance. As she becomes a star, so Hepburn becomes an 'essential' feminine ideal. Yet her

²⁷ Bertrand Meyer- Stabley, *La véritable Audrey Hepburn* (Paris: Pygmalion/ Gérard Watelet, 2000), p. 143.

'true' 'ideal' feminine self can only be revealed/performed through a carefully constructed and rehearsed masquerade.

Developed in psychoanalysis, the concept of the masquerade brings into question the relation between femininity and revelation/performance. The concept was first developed by the psychoanalyst Joan Riviere to describe the behaviour of a female analysand who was a highly successful female academic. Following her display of intellect, this woman then felt compelled to behave in a feminine, flirtatious way in a compensatory move. Riviere's now classic account of this is as follows:

Womanliness therefore could be assumed and worn as a mask, both to hide the possession of masculinity and to avert the reprisals expected if she was found to possess it – much as a thief will turn out his pockets and ask to be searched to prove that he has not the stolen goods. The reader may ask how I define womanliness or where I draw the line between genuine womanliness and the 'masquerade.' My suggestion is not, however, that there is any such difference; whether radical or superficial, they are the same thing.²⁸

Paradoxically, masquerade is described as a way of representing the unrepresentable – there cannot be an entity designated 'femininity' but rather a series of possibilities (or, indeed, impossibilities, the masquerade being a primarily defensive gesture) that engender certain modalities of female performance. The terrain is slippery, and masquerade can come to function precisely as an illustration of the feminine – as is the case with Hepburn. An impulse to characterise the feminine as unrepresentable, outside of the symbolic order, finds itself in a literal minded discourse that is resolutely in and of representation. Mary Ann Doane discusses the masquerade as simulating a gap or distance between the woman and her image: i.e. in her formulation, the masquerade is what, ironically, *allows* representation to take place. 'The masquerade doubles representation; it is constituted by a hyperbolization of the accoutrements of femininity [...] we are watching a woman demonstrate the representation of a woman's body.'²⁹ It removes femininity from the realm of the indecipherable and the other to the knowable, yet the knowable is itself a mask. Whilst flaunting its own performance,

²⁸ Joan Riviere, quoted in Mary Ann Doane, *Femmes Fatales: Feminism, Film Theory and Psychoanalysis* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991), p. 25.

²⁹ Mary Ann Doane, p. 26.

femininity remains opaque, the site of discursive unease (hence the epistemological drive of many narratives to unmask the woman).

The importance of masks as the paradoxical representation of 'feminine' identity is especially prevalent in *Breakfast at Tiffany's*. Holly Golightly indulges in a series of mask-like disguises, such as the dark sunglasses, the decorative eye mask she wears to sleep in, and indeed her whole persona is a pretence. In the words of her Hollywood mentor, she's a phoney, but a real one. Her masks are there, but they are also her. The mask is the truth; femininity is a series of masks. There is nothing behind the mask. 'Hollow in itself, without substance, femininity can only be sustained by its accoutrements, decorative veils, and inessential gestures.'³⁰ The careful construction of Holly's femininity is represented as she dresses in front of Paul Varjek/George Peppard, gathering together a hat and a scarf and scattered shoes. Her accessories are legendary, especially the extra long cigarette holder that sets fire to a hat at her party. Holly's femininity is entirely sustained through her glamorous appearance and gestures. We learn that she was being groomed for stardom, the zenith of seductive, representable femininity, through French lessons and access to fashion. Here there is a kind of osmosis between stardom, fashion and femininity, which is based on a notion of performance, image, and the fetishistic importance of the minor detail. So Morin's sacred mask, which allows a privileged access to a 'real' self, is here shown, in the case of the feminine, to allow access only to another series of performances, which Doane is careful to stress are not playful acting out but anxiety-ridden compensatory gestures.

However, in its mode of fantasy, *Breakfast at Tiffany's* does make ludic use of the motif of the mask. The most playful scene involving masks is when Holly and Paul steal a couple of children's masks from Woolworth's. It is at they leave the store, running, their faces covered in the grotesquely comic masks that it becomes clear a couple has formed: '[the] scene[...] is handled with such lyrical closeness, and the New York backgrounds are photographed so prettily and with such affection, that there can be no doubt the two have fallen in love.'³¹

These literal masks thus reveal a truth about the nature of his situation to Paul. He happily basks in a material security provided by his middle-aged *patronne* (Patricia Neal), at leisure to develop an at first innocent fascination with Holly. They interact as if they are two children – Holly even names Paul

³⁰ Mary Ann Doane, p. 34.

³¹ James Breen, 'In brief: Breakfast at Tiffany's', *Sight and Sound* Winter 1961-2, 38.

after her brother, Fred. The masks, draped over a statue, allow him to reassess the situation as he looks at them from his bed.

The dog and cat masks add a Dickensian touch as carnivalesque mirrors – more authentic than reality itself in their caricaturing of real beings [...] As an antique, the statue symbolizes the long-standing, immutable establishment. The indisputably male dog mask in the place of the head exemplifies how it is man's duty to guard and protect the established order while it is his potential for selfless love and faithfulness that will ultimately tame the wild, independent and lovable cat.³²

If there is something disturbing in Hepburn's charming and sophisticated screen image it is this sense that her transformation is not entirely autonomous, but rather is dependent upon a father figure. When this became extremely clear to viewers of Wilder's *Love in the Afternoon*, starring Hepburn and a raddled Gary Cooper, [he is more than twice her age] the box office suffered. It also caught the satirical attention of *Le Canard Enchaîné*:

Les trois grandes vedettes qui nous font l'oeil sur les affiches sucent cette sucrierie avec gourmandise mais, entre Maurice Chevalier père et Gary Cooper amoureux, Audrey Hepburn a l'air d'être aux prises avec deux papas. Qu'elle réussisse à choisir entre ces deux patriarches permet aux vieillards d'envisager l'avenir avec confiance.³³

Marilyn Throne argues that *Love in the Afternoon* functions to problematise one of the great cinematic myths of the 1950s, that of the girl virgin as the seductress of the worldly and successful American male. Hepburn's heroines, from Sabrina to Eliza Doolittle to Holly Golightly, all retain an aura of virtue despite their new accents and seductive wardrobes. The difference with *Love in the Afternoon*, with the glaring disparity of Audrey Hepburn and Gary Cooper, is that not only does Ariane retain her air of innocence underneath the veneer of sophistication, but the film constructs that innocence as both deified and threatened by the patriarchal society in which she lives. Around her men plot and deceive and make a world – both her father and her lover wish to save her (her father has checks carried out on her boyfriend's background, and

³² Chantal Cornut-Gentille D'Arcy, 'Who's Afraid of the Femme Fatale in *Breakfast at Tiffany's*? Exposure and Implications of a Myth', in *Gender, Ideology: Essays on Theory, Fiction and Film* ed. by Chantal Cornut-Gentille D'Arcy and José García Landa, (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1996), pp. 371-385 (p.374).

³³ Anon, 'Ariane et les Vieillards', *Le Canard Enchaîné* (5 juin 1957).

begs Flanagan not to 'take advantage' of his little girl). The feminine 'ideal' of naivety and innocence remains preserved.

Hepburn's wardrobe functions in this film to underline her unshakeable innocence. Her hairstyles, always bare-headed, often in bunches, serve to underline her youth in contrast to the hats and veils of Flanagan's older female lovers. The only two items of clothing the film spectators see Hepburn remove in her afternoon trysts are a glove and a shoe. Ariane may borrow the fur coat that her father is keeping for his client, but she certainly does not become involved in any of the sexual shenanigans its presence implies. The coat is being kept by Chevasse as his client decides whether or not to give it to his secretary or his wife. Furthermore, fur, according to Sacher-Masoch, empowers the Venus in Furs with its erotic properties. It is the sex goddess's privileged domain. As the primary condition between the masochist Severin and his mistress Wanda, the fur coat becomes an object of adoration and devotion that the dominatrix uses to tame the beast, promising infinite pleasures for the dominated. Sensual and fascinating, fur evokes the coldness and eroticism of the mistress.³⁴ Ariane, Flanagan's mistress, however, remains primarily her father's daughter. He easily challenges her possession of the fur coat and returns it to the wardrobe. For once, she does not have the right clothes to perform the masquerade, here that of the sexually experienced woman. Hepburn's wardrobe, in contrast to her other films, works in this film to show how difficult it is for her to effect transformation, sheltered as she is from any chance of creating an authentic public self whilst her father and lover act in unison to hide her from the world. She is 'deified as well as created by the male Pygmalion society. This is not a shrewish Kate, full bodied and passionate, who needs to be tamed; this is Miranda, taught and guided by a father, Prospero – not a mother – and isolated from any contact with the real world of men and women.'³⁵ While her father investigates 'illicit love' and the playboy Flanagan seduces women in every city, Ariane remains unremittingly pure and adolescent. Her romantic love remains unshattered by experience and she enters marriage with her illusions intact. As Throne argues this leaves a comic dilemma and a perhaps far truer reflection than most 1950s films of the paradox at the heart of the marriage of the virgin and the playboy. As Flanagan scoops Ariane into his arms, her father's voice over tells us that the couple married and is now serving a 'life sentence' in New York. This

³⁴ Leopold von Sacher-Masoch, *La Vénus à la fourrure* trans. Aude Willm (Paris: Minuit, 1967), pp. 119-248.

³⁵ Marilyn Throne, 'Love In the Afternoon: A Cinematic Exposure of a 1950s myth' *Literature- Film Quarterly* 16:1 (1988), 65-73.

typical Wilder joke says more than it realises. The difference between them in terms of experience and life expectations is vast. 'Le papa, le censeur et le public sont ravis; Audrey, gingalette, menue et adorable, oublie instantément son amoureux, étudiant au Conservatoire, et part sur la Côte d'Azur, avec le beau milliardaire usé qui la rendra certainement très malheureuse – mais bien après la fin du film.'³⁶

Ariane is entirely formed by a male world. Holly Golightly is also forced to act within strictly demarcated boundaries, dependent upon men for her existence. As Chantal Cornut-Gentille D'Arcy explains, the cat mask typifies Holly as a member of the feline species. By a law of nature, cats hunt rodents for food. Likewise, Holly pursues 'rats' and 'super rats' as she is forced to live off this type of worthless man. Her supposed liberty or autonomy depends entirely on men and the virility of men. Holly's autonomous femininity, illustrated in her glamorous clothes, glittering paste jewels while she saves for the real thing, and her refusal to name her cat, her alter-ego, symbolises a refusal to be bought, caged or named. Yet this autonomous femininity was always an illusion, and she melts into the male embrace alongside her animal counterpart.

Thus it would appear that this model femininity, revealed through the process of the masquerade, is in fact effected not as an autonomous transformation, but in the hands of a male agent who acts as a father figure. The performance of femininity is carried out for a male audience whose approval must be constantly sort. Riviere's masquerading patient was after all eager to convince *male* colleagues of her unimpeachable femininity. The father figure also seems to operate as potential love interest – mothers are invariably dead or absent. It is fathers who provide the emotional springboard for Hepburn's transformation. In *Sabrina Fair* it is her father who sends her to the Cordon Bleu cookery school in Paris. The elderly Baron she meets there, 'very sweet and very wise' (the phrase suggesting a benign link between the two older men) instructs her in how to overcome her unrequited love for David Larrabee. In *Funny Face*, it is the photographer thirty years her senior who discovers her beauty. In *My Fair Lady*, Professor Higgins adapts and then adopts Eliza Doolittle as a wife come servant to make him his cups of tea and find his slippers, in place of both her alcoholic father and her bumbling suitor. Echoing this confusion around the role these men really play, in *Breakfast at Tiffany's*, her ex-husband Doc Golightly is mistaken for her father.

³⁶ Anon, 'Don Juan et la Pucelle', *Combat* (3 juin 1957).

It is perhaps the role of male agency that makes Audrey Hepburn so unthreatening a figure. Cornut-Gentile D'Arcy labels Holly Golightly a femme fatale, but this seems a mis-reading of her. The film itself operates in a mode of high fantasy, with fantastical characters. Part of what makes the Patricia Neal character so unattractive in the film's discourse is that she comes from a 'real' world, of financial exchange and hard bargains, something sordid and out of place in Holly's naïve searching for love and money. James Breen concludes:

[T]he film doesn't stand up to detailed psychological examination; it can be faulted as narrative and it doesn't take a serious moral view. But the people who querulously insist on such points have clearly not surrendered to Miss Hepburn's magic spell – and the good thing about fairy princesses is that you can take them or leave them.³⁷

Here we come to the heart of Hepburn's vulnerability. The success of her transformation depends on her pleasing the male agent who has provided the means for it. Her ideal femininity can only be measured against a masculine Other, the prince who will confirm her fairy princess status. She only becomes that feminine masquerade or show if she succeeds in attracting a constantly approving male gaze; she can be left at any moment. The film *My Fair Lady* allows Hepburn to voice these fears in her anguished cry when she returns from her triumphant transformation into a Hungarian princess at the ball. Ignored by Higgins and Pickering, she cries out 'What is to become of me? What am I fit for?'

It is here that fashion comes to Hepburn's aid. In its constant novelty, its love of the new, it provides for a new look for each season, and each occasion. The spectacle of idealised femininity can be constantly recreated, transformations on-going. The masquerade will not come to a stand still, the revelation will never be complete. It is the novelty of modernity that will rescue the fairy princess from obscurity, an attempt that failed in *Roman Holiday* (as she resumes her role as princess, so the photographs – the proof of her spectacular nature – are returned to her, to be destroyed). When she is at the chateau, dancing with Dick Avery in *Funny Face*, at the end of the fashion shoot, Jo has a similar pang to that experienced by Eliza – 'And then what happens?' Avery's solution is for her to remain a model – remain an ever-changing spectacle of controlled, ideal, up to date femininity. Hepburn is necessarily modern: it is what allows her to retain her position as ideal.

³⁷ James Breen, 38.

Constructing modern femininity: - the role of fashion and the women's magazine.

Cecil Beaton wrote in US *Vogue* in 1954 that Audrey Hepburn was a post- Second-World-War ideal. He argued that appearance embodied 'the spirit of today', the proof being 'that thousands of imitations have appeared. The woods are full of emaciated young ladies with rat-nibbled hair and moon-pale faces'.³⁸ Beaton pinpoints the source of Hepburn's appeal, her modernity and thus her ability to inspire identification. She is perceived not only as a feminine ideal, but an ideal that speaks for the present moment. Hepburn is a model of idealised femininity that is offered as a figure for identification and emulation. This syncretic mix of advice and aspiration is the mainstay of the high fashion magazines of the 1950s and 1960s in both France and America, such as *Vogue*, *Harper's Bazaar* and *Elle*. The magazines themselves function on a mixture of sharing advice and providing models for behaviour and dress. In the film *Funny Face* Jo Stockton/Hepburn is removed from her dull, dark library setting and turned into the 'Quality' woman; the chic, ideal, modern woman. Like the many female readers of the magazine, she is dressed by it (an early section of the film has the editor declare: 'The American woman waits naked for me to dress her'), seduced by it, and in the process is transformed by it (represented by a male photographer and a distinctly masculinised editor) into a suitable bride.

The women imagined as the reader by these magazines is necessarily up-to- date and ready to follow advice. Lefebvre comments that these magazines furnish myths about such things as heterosexual love, technology, and the eternal feminine itself. 'On trouve à chaque page la mythologie moderne, dans toute sa splendeur.'³⁹ These magazines explain to women how they can be prettier, more fashionable, better homemakers – i.e. how they can be closer to the feminine ideal, an ideal that is dependent on its representation of itself for meaning.

C'est un monde que crée et qu'offre la presse dite
féminine: un monde féminin. Provisoires et durables, les
traits spécifiques et complémentaires d'une féminité s'y

³⁸ Quoted by Barry Paris, p. 75.

³⁹ Henri Lefebvre, 'Les mythes de la vie quotidienne', *Cahiers Internationaux de sociologie* 33 (juillet/ décembre 1962), 67-74 (p. 69).

mondifie littéralement [...] ce monde féminin ne se clôt pas. Il s'ouvre aux regards et aux sens.⁴⁰

In this account by Lefebvre, the women's magazine brings femininity into the world, that is to say the realm of the representable. It opens the concept of femininity to the gaze, giving it very specific traits that can be both changeable (such as this month's fashionable handbag) and eternal (such as a desire for children). Morin argues that this representation of the world of 'feminine values' as he terms it, promotes both an ideology of well-being and one of seduction. He then goes on to analyse the role of this seduction and its relation both to couture fashion and mass culture in a passage worth quoting at length.

L'art de la séduction prend une importance accrue dans le nouveau savoir-vivre. Nous sommes à ce point habitués à voir les femmes fardées, attentives à leur ligne, expertes en toilette et en mode, que nous oublions ce que signifie ce appareil. La prostituée ne fait qu'exagérer l'appel séducteur de la femme normale. Celle-ci se fait belle comme pour susciter un 'désire-moi' permanent. Cette femme normale des grandes villes occidentales semble une putain aux yeux des femmes de Moscou ou de Gorki. Celles-ci ne sont pas entrées (pas encore) dans le circuit de l'érotisme quotidien que la culture de masse a introduit dans nos moeurs.

La femme modèle que développe la culture de masse a l'apparence de la poupée d'amour. Les publicités, les conseils, sont très précisément orientés sur les caractères sexuels secondaires (chevelure, poitrine, bouche, yeux), sur les attributs érogènes (sous-vêtements, vêtements, parures), sur un idéal de beauté mince, svelte, la hanche, la croupe, les jambes. La bouche perpétuellement saignante, le visage rituellement fardé sont une invite permanente à ce délire sacré de l'amour qu'érousse évidemment la multiplicité quotidienne du stimulus.

D'où du reste une perpétuelle relance vers le nouveau [...] qui correspond à un double besoin: celui effectivement de la restimulation séductrice, celui de l'affirmation individuelle [...] C'est ce qui explique que la mode entre dans le cycle de masse. La mode descend des cimes de la haute couture pour envelopper rapidement tous les attributs de la séduction [...] La mode descend des élites vers les masses féminines [...] Et la culture de masse, sur le plan de la mode féminine, révèle sa fonction propre: elle donne accès aux grand archétypes 'olympiens', elle procure les

⁴⁰ Henri Lefebvre, *Critique de la vie quotidienne* vol. 2 (Paris: L'Arche, 1958), pp. 85-6.

prestiges de la haute individualité et de la séduction. Elle permet l'identification mimétique. En même temps, elle entretient une obsession consommatrice [...] dont l'importance comme stimulant économique se fait de plus en plus grande dans les sociétés occidentales.⁴¹

According to Morin, fashion and its representations are privileged sites to illustrate how popular culture constructs femininity through individual aspiration and mimetic identification, both promised through consumption of goods. *Funny Face* offers an affectionately parodic glimpse of how women understand the fashion magazine as a purveyor of fantasy, cultural capital, and a restrictive mass-mediated femininity, a world where women 'Think Pink'. Hepburn's role and star image as developed in *Funny Face*, is thus a crystallisation of the issues Morin and Lefebvre discuss; how an ideal, erotic femininity is mediated and marketed within mass culture. Morin ascribes a specific role to fashion as allowing access to both 'Olympian' archetypes (i.e. aspirational figures) and democratic consumption (mimetic identification). He refers to this as a 'democratisation-aristocratisation.' Couture clothing is disseminated through the mass media, then quickly copied and available at cheap prices to all, and that couture houses themselves play on their brand names to sell perfume, stockings, and so on, so the couture brand and look is readily, democratically available. Yet at the same time couture resists this easy access to its products through such things as the huge secrecy surrounding the collection.

In her close collaboration with Givenchy Hepburn acts as a privileged space for the acting out of these issues. Following Morin's argument, her couture clothing makes her a figure of both mimetic identification and aspiration. The use of her image to sell Givenchy's perfume, *L'Interdit*, 'dedicated to' (i.e. marketed by) her from 1957 onwards is particularly instructive here. Givenchy was the first designer to recruit a film star to sell a perfume.⁴² The advertisement featuring Hepburn and the name of the perfume clearly plays on notions on exclusivity. Yet this is an exclusivity that can be bought by anyone rich enough to buy a bottle of the perfume.

Hepburn has a complex relation herself to seduction and marketing, both part of the marketplace yet placed in a discourse that denies her part in it (the perfume is represented as a gift to her from Givenchy, rather than a shrewd marketing opportunity for both individuals). Hepburn's roles are often that of the women who should logically be a prostitute yet isn't, just as Morin

⁴¹ Edgar Morin, *L'Esprit du temps* (Paris: Grasset, 1962), pp. 192-4.

⁴² Françoise Mohrt, *The Givenchy Style* (Paris: Assouline, 1998), p. 87.

argues that the way women are expected to clothe themselves suggests the image of a prostitute, whilst they are not themselves prostitutes. In *Breakfast at Tiffany's*, 'in principle she should obviously go to bed with the beaux from whom she habitually claims fifty dollars for the powder room (although equally obviously she doesn't.)'⁴³ In *My Fair Lady*, Eliza continuously protests that she is a good girl, despite living in Henry Higgins' house. In *Sabrina Fair*, she is mistaken for a gold digger, but refuses to be bought off: she is 'the last of the romantics'. Gregory Peck initially mistakes Hepburn for a prostitute as she sleeps off her medicine on a bench in Rome but he soon realises she is in fact a princess. Hepburn's star image denies the role of the marketplace in the construction of her femininity, while as a star she represents the apotheosis of the commodification of the feminine image.

This is not so much to do with her very slender figure, as how this figure was presented as an alternative, more intellectual, less sexual, less 'biological' ideal than that of the bustier Marilyn Monroe or Elizabeth Taylor. This is obviously itself a construct concerning the cultural signification of different body types rather than a literal truth. Hepburn's slenderness does however lead to her being perceived as different, fresh, a break from the more voluptuous past.⁴⁴ The director Billy Wilder did after all famously comment that she might make bosoms a thing of the past, and her slim-line figure is certainly now far less unusual.

Her looks – so perfect for the ballerina she trained to be – must have fed the anorexic imagination, which takes to lethal extremes the twentieth century fashion dictum that 'one can never be too thin' [...]. Audrey does partake – is perhaps even the apotheosis – of this feminine syndrome that denies appetite and elevates dangerous slenderness above all the other physical attributes. Yet the sense of her being too thin, with consequent exaggeration of her eyes and mouth, suggested at least as much that she was gorgeous despite being so skinny. Her imperfections, not least her skin and bone appearance, are transmuted into perfection.⁴⁵

It is this perfection in imperfection that is played on in *Funny Face*. The title does after all specifically refer to Jo's perceived awkwardness, an awkwardness that will be transformed by the magazine and its photographer

⁴³ James Breen, 38.

⁴⁴ Molly Haskell, 'Our Fair Lady, Audrey Hepburn', *Film Comment* 27(2) (March-April 1991), 20-23.

⁴⁵ Richard Dyer, 'Never too Thin', *Sight and Sound* (December 1993), 59.

into feminine perfection as a highly romanticised bride. It thus mirrors the aspirations of many female fashion magazines to help their readers transform themselves through a blend of fantasy and practical advice. Like the photographer Dick Avery (Fred Astaire) in the film, these magazines have a bifurcated structure in which they both court and construct their audience. While Hepburn is being literally developed into a model in the dark room scene by Dick Avery, he sings, 'You're much too much if you can cook the way you look.' Her beauty is already ideal; if her housewifely talents were to be as perfect, the result would be near miraculous.

This assertion of the feminine role does not signify a complete return to an older tradition, however: far from it. Both Susan Sellars and Peter Krämer emphasise how *Funny Face* works to construct Hepburn as a modern woman of the 1950s.⁴⁶ Krämer writes that:

Funny Face worked towards an adjustment of Hepburn's star image [with...] the insistent claim that despite her apparent otherworldliness and detachment from the everyday concerns of modern life, [...] Hepburn was very much a woman of the moment: an independently minded and multi-talented working woman and internationalist tuned to the latest developments in Western art, literature and thought.⁴⁷

Sellars discusses how the film's use of still photomontages deliberately suggests the design of fashion magazine layouts. These layouts reflect the American graphic designers' fascination with the mechanical techniques of the avant-garde, such as montage and the stylistic applications of surrealism and modernism. The film addresses the ways in which femininity is constructed through the modernist design of fashion magazines such as *Harper's Bazaar* and *Vogue* (the editor, Maggie Prescott, is claimed variously to be based on Carmel Snow, editor of *Harper's Bazaar*, and Diane Vreeland, editor of *Vogue*).⁴⁸ Snow hired Alexey Brodovitch as art director for *Harper's Bazaar* in 1934 in order to advance the ideals of the European based modernist movement within the design concept of the magazine: 'the canvas for his formalist vision of the world as a montage of rhythms, sequences, light

⁴⁶ Susan Sellars, 13-34 and Peter Krämer, 'You're a Cutie With More than Beauty', in *Musicals: Hollywood and Beyond* ed. by Bill Marshall and Robynn Stilwell (Exeter: Intellect, 2000), pp. 62-69.

⁴⁷ Peter Krämer, p.63.

⁴⁸ Krämer claims she was based on Snow (p. 66); Elizabeth Wilson that she was based on Vreeland, in Elizabeth Wilson, 'Gamine Against the Grain', *Sight and Sound* (March 1993), 30-32.

and color.’⁴⁹ The magazine thus showcased the language and style of modernism for a female audience denied access to it in the corporate boardroom and museum. Richard Avedon was one of Brodovitch’s favourite photographers as he captured his vision, wrapping an almost caricatured femininity and material excess in a new form of photography that emphasised colour, movement and carefree, incidental gestures in blurred or out-of-focus images. Avedon worked as the visual advisor on *Funny Face* and the film clearly evokes his photographic style and Brodovitch’s design techniques.

In *Sabrina Fair*, Hepburn also acts as the woman who manages to bridge the divide between the modernist corporate office and the feminine domestic space. Katherine Shonfield argues that in the 1950s and 1960s, as women became increasingly important in the work force, the territory of the office became overtly eroticised, with the wife at home and the ‘pretty secretary/mistress’ in the office. Hepburn as Sabrina manages to reconcile these two roles. When she leaves Long Island to visit the workaholic Linus/Bogart in his boardroom in downtown Manhattan, ‘[t]he magical properties of the unused boardroom sideboard come into their own as a little bit of home. [...] Shedding her outdoor wear, Audrey reinvents herself as a housewife donning an apron and the cabinet is magically metamorphosed into the domestic kitchen.’⁵⁰ Or, to reverse the proposition, Hepburn as housewife operates not in the cosy domestic sphere, but in the stream-lined modernist world of the boardroom. In her ability to create a kitchen in even the most barren of milieux, Hepburn heals the rift between home and work, private and public spheres. Rather than being emmeshed in the feminine interior, she can take those skills into the masculine sphere of high capitalism. Her frilly apron recalls both the domesticity of the wife and the frills and ruffles of the sweetheart line, but here it is twined with an austere, linear outfit of slim black trousers and black polo neck. Hepburn floats over the rifts between modernity and tradition, feminine and masculine, work and home, that define modern capitalism and its design equivalent, modernism.

In this account then, Hepburn is a modernist woman, connotative of elegance and cultural sophistication, able to escape the messy realities of everyday life. Her Givenchy clothing reinforces this idea of Hepburn as free of traditional feminine concerns. Givenchy claims,

⁴⁹ Susan Sellars, 48.

⁵⁰ Katherine Shonfield, *Walls Have Feelings: Architecture, Film and the City* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), pp. 95-100.

I've dreamt of a liberated woman, who will no longer be swathed in fabric, armour-plated. All my lines are styled for quick and fluid movement. My dresses are real dresses, ultra-light, free of padding and corseting, garments that will float on a body delivered from bondage.⁵¹

The hourglass silhouette recalled and reinforced by the sweetheart line, which in fact emphasises the difference between male and female bodies, and suggests a 'messy' reproductive role for women, is neglected in favour of an abstract linearity. When Duval and his technicians emerge from their atelier in order to present the 'new' Jo lights dim, the curtains part, and the spotlight falls on Jo as she proceeds down the runway. While it is beautiful and clearly chic, the pink and ivory satin gown she wears is so novel it is almost unrecognisable as a dress. Along with the gloves, the ensemble covers Jo's entire body from the neck down, and bears no relation to a stereotypically sexualised female body: there is no bust, and only the free falling hem of the jacket at the mid-section identifies a waistline. The emphasis on line is so extreme that the dress's effect is paradoxically almost two-dimensional. The garment that signals Jo's transformation is not thus the traditional sweetheart neckline bridal garment (which will come later) but a blend of luxury (the expanse of silk) and minimalism in a case which encloses the body in an entirely new, unfussy, unadorned and thus 'masculine' way. 'Au dix-neuvième siècle la réalité désignée par le terme de "mode" change de contenu. Les hommes ont endossé une manière d'uniforme [...] En France, c'est aux femmes seulement que désormais s'adressent les fantaisies.'⁵²

Givenchy's style, while obviously identified as Parisian, also suggests American simplicity. In the 1950s, *Life* magazine vigorously promoted an ideal of American fashion as wearable, simple and suitable to modern, active lifestyles. During the 1960 Presidential campaign, Mrs. Nixon's and Mrs. Kennedy's clothes were compared. Jackie Kennedy, clothed by Givenchy, was paradoxically more 'American' in style than the tweed-suited Mrs. Nixon.

Any faithful reader of *Life* who had been looking at the styling cues would have identified Mrs. Nixon's cheaper suit as appearing more foreign and more expensive. Mrs Kennedy's suit, albeit by Givenchy, would

⁵¹ Françoise Mohrt, *The Givenchy Style* (Paris: Assouline, 1998), p. 73.

⁵² Marylène Delbourg-Delphis, *Le Chic et le look – histoire de la mode féminine et des mœurs de 1850 à nos jours* (Paris: Hachette, 1981), p. 13.

have seemed more modest with its fewer buttons, smaller collar and easier fit: it looked like the kind of streamlined American sportswear for which *Life* had long been an ardent advocate.⁵³

Furthermore, seventy percent of Givenchy's clientele were American, featuring not only Hepburn and Jackie Kennedy but also Lauren Bacall and Jean Seberg. 'Heureusement qu'il y a les Américaines [...], les Françaises sont beaucoup plus classiques.'⁵⁴

Hepburn's moment of transformation in *Funny Face* would thus have contradictory connotations of masculinity and Americanness for a French viewer. Hepburn is also obviously a figure of identification as she wanders the streets of Paris. This paradoxical combination of difference and identity, which Morin locates as essential to star appeal, is clearly articulated by this review in *Elle*.

Si Cannes est divertit, Paris s'amusera de ce charmant film qui plaira en particulier aux lectrices de *Elle*. L'héroïne: une cover-girl (ce pourrait être Bettina). Le héros: un photographe de mode (ce pourrait être tel ou tel qui signe nos photos). Un centre important de l'action: le café des 3 puces (ce pourrait être le café des Deux Magots).⁵⁵

In this article, the difference of nationality between Hepburn and the French cover girl is simultaneously erased and acknowledged – it could be her – but it's not. Hepburn is thus set up as a figure of identification – she could be us – but also as one of difference – she is not us, and the use of the conditional tense underlies that the fact that identification exists in an imaginary space. The change in mode of identification is signalled by the use of the present in the following extract, which then immediately moves back into the space of the conditional imaginary.

Reste que le Paris de *Funny Face* est bien Paris; que les photographes de mode, comme dans le film, épousent quelquefois leur mannequin favori; et que Audrey Hepburn a réellement passé, avant qu'elle soit célèbre, quelques temps à St-Germain-des-Prés. Cet épisode peu connu de sa vie ne l'a menée nulle part. Mais si, par hasard, un photographe d'*Elle* avait, à l'époque,

⁵³ Richard Martin, 55.

⁵⁴ Anon., *Givenchy: 40 ans de création* (Paris: Paris Musées/ Galliera, 1991), p. 86.

⁵⁵ *Elle* (20 mai 1957).

remarqué cette drôle de frimousse, peut être le film *Funny Face* aurait-il été une copie de la réalité.⁵⁶

So *Funny Face* is offered up to the reader of *Elle* as a mirror for her visual and textual experience when reading the magazine. Its dislocation of the main female character from a European to an American nationality and the main male contributor to her image from a French couturier to an American photographer sets the film up as a skewed vision. It could have been the copy of reality, but it's not. Its use of the conditional allows readerly substitution; she *could* be anyone, she *could* be you. Yet the change of nationality, which as identified earlier allows Hepburn to float above Paris in the role of the genderless American tourist, and the modern, 'masculine' body created by the Givenchy clothes, also cuts Hepburn free. She is inflected with difference, which gives her a superiority to the female reader of the magazine. As an American, androgynous film star, Hepburn is not entirely tied to the silent texts of femininity that the model Jo performs, a fact acknowledged at the end of the article. 'Mais nous n'aurions connu ni *Vacances Romaines*, ni *Sabrina*. Ce qui aurait été vraiment dommage.'⁵⁷

Jo Stockton, Holly Golightly and Eliza Doolittle are all essentially modern heroines whose rural or working-class origins are submerged beneath poised, polished and well-dressed feminine personae, transformed by advertising and consumer culture. Fashion has taken their faulty raw material and transformed them into beautiful objects. Hepburn's beatnik intellectuality, airborne femininity, and androgynous body are controlled and contained. Fashion means she is held in frozen photographs. The discovery of her as an attractive woman entraps her in domesticity and relations with older men at the end of her film's narratives. The fashion transformation thus appears ultimately hollow and disempowering.

Hepburn both reveals and resolves the conundrum of fashion for women. Her Holly Golightly simultaneously emblematises women's commodification and yet re-mystifies it through an idealised re-consumption. Holly is a figure of freedom and wandering, yet at the same time, transfixed before the shop window, she is the very picture of constraint. In marked contrast to Truman Capote's novella, the film highlights the commodification of both its male and female protagonist; both are forced to prostitute themselves. However, whilst the man is involved in sexual-financial exchange in order to produce (he is a writer), Holly's only aim is to consume. Haute

⁵⁶ *Elle* (20 mai 1957).

⁵⁷ *Elle* (20 mai 1957).

couture frees Hepburn from the messiness of everyday life and even from the conventional 1950s female body, yet it also holds her as a very specific ideal and engages her in a re-enactment of texts of femininity.

Hepburn's border crossings enacted in her film roles and through her choice of European couture and locale in her private life mean that she comes to embody the very paradox haute couture depends upon for its survival. It offers the illusion of democracy, promoting itself through ubiquitous advertising. Hepburn's performance also place her into this close position vis a vis France as she is dressed by a French designer and walks the streets of Paris. Yet as Morin argues, couture also functions in a world of aristocratic mystique. Equally Hepburn's simple, elegant style has connotations of America and remoteness as she seems to float above everyday concerns. She reveals the essential hollowness of femininity as she constructs herself through its traditional accoutrements. Yet at the same time, there is a delight in this performance of the feminine, both for herself and for the spectator.

Hepburn's star image does not reconcile these contradictions but rather slips free of them in a French context. In *Roman Holiday* she is the princess of a European country. The voice over informs us that she has 'toured many European capitals' on a goodwill tour to promote trade relations between her unnamed European kingdom and other European countries. Hepburn is firmly located within Europe, to the extent that her film is filmed on location. This is a Europe that is illustrated in Hollywood terms as a site of authentic culture and unchanging history, as witnessed by landmarks that are firmly established as signifiers of national identity throughout time and space. Yet whilst Hepburn is part of this Europe, she also floats above it, as befits an emergent Hollywood star. Not only is she given royal status, already marking her as special and different, she also exists in a strange place in this film. She is marked as European, but given no specific place of origin. She travels between and around markers of European culture without belonging to any of them. The very title of the film, '*Roman Holiday*', reinforces the contradictions of the image Hepburn is projecting towards a European screen identity. Rome is a specific site named in the title, a clearly demarcated European space. Yet she is on holiday here, not truly part of the city, but existing here temporarily, in a time snatched from everyday duty and obligation. The Roman experience, we learn from the outset, is but a brief hiatus in a life lived elsewhere, an elsewhere that is never identified. Europe, functioning as a guarantor of historical longevity, authenticity, civilisation and culture, as witnessed by the emphasis on its architectural landmarks, is also

characterised through the Hepburn figure as a contingent, temporary, fleeting and transitory. Thus Hepburn is both figured into the organic European landscape, yet also demonstrated to occupy a space beyond it, a space of change, possibility and transience. Hepburn occupies a unique space, a Hollywood star clothed by Givenchy and located in Europe; a European star who is not tied to one nation-state. Rather than being tied into the organic notions of European stardom, Hepburn escapes them. Krämer argues that institutional pressures on Hollywood studios urged them to make films that would appeal to a pan-European identity rather than taking account of national differences as they addressed Europe as an integrated market. He argues that *Roman Holiday* works as a typical example of and metaphor for this attempt to address a European market and that Hepburn's identity as a modern princess, i.e. a Hollywood star, reinforced the notion of Hollywood film itself usurping the traditional roles of royalty.

The film declared that from now on it was Hollywood's role to [...] carry out the largely symbolic duties that the old royalty had: transcending national boundaries, circulating as common cultural currency, [...] merging love, cultural consumption and European politics into one.⁵⁸

As the quintessential Hollywood European star, Hepburn floats above issues of national difference. Hepburn's haute couture wardrobe serves to underline the ways in which she was different from the conventional woman or film star, with its need for a high income and a slender figure. In its mystification of consumption and the construction of the feminine figure, Hepburn's wardrobe frees her from the messy reality of constructions of femininity. The image of her standing in a red Givenchy sheath, arms outstretched, running down the stairs in the Louvre, the Victory of Samothrace behind her, is an image which sums up her star persona. Her dress functions to present her body as an abstract aesthetic ideal like that of a statue, freed from the claims of biology. She is poised, ready for flight, the origins of her dress, the statue, and her star image as items requiring intensive, expensive labour forgotten in her moment of transcendence. She presents a visual figure of escape from

⁵⁸ Peter Krämer, ' "Faith in relations between people": Audrey Hepburn, *Roman Holiday* and European Integration', *100 Years of European Cinema: Entertainment or Ideology*, ed. by Diana Holmes and Alison Smith (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2000), pp. 195-205 (p. 204).

contained femininity even while the text of fashion operates to reclaim her as its fetish object.

The real body: - Brigitte Bardot

Vous ne savez pas faire du cinéma parce que vous ne savez plus ce que c'est. [...] Nous ne pouvons pas vous pardonner de n'avoir jamais filmé des filles comme nous les aimons, les garçons comme nous les croisons, [...] bref, les choses telles qu'elles sont.⁵⁹

In the above quote, Godard is making an impassioned plea for a new cinematic realism. For André Bazin, guide and mentor to Godard and the other young critics who worked on *Cahiers du cinéma* and *Arts*, realism was an inherently ethical problem for cinema. This is because the meaning of an object does not come from its life-like reproduction, a given of cinema, but from its place within montage and mise en scène. In other words, it is how the director is using the realistic representation of the object rather than the realistic representation of the object itself that gives 'meaning' to the film. As it so closely mimics reality, a film can be understood by anyone who can understand reality. However, and this is a crucial point for Godard, a film is not reality. Indeed, it needs explication all the more because it appears to be so seductively 'real.'⁶⁰

The problem also hinges on what one means by the term realism, a notion that is notoriously slippery to define. Here Godard is fond of quoting Brecht's maxim, that 'realism does not consist in reproducing reality, but in showing how things really are'. Realism then is less concerned with showing things as real in substance, then, than as real in political and economic terms. This involves an engagement not just with aesthetics but the political underpinnings of representation by the director of the film. This became especially important in Godard's film making in the mid to late 1960s when he formed part of the Dziga Vertov group, but this idea is already informing his 1959 criticism reproduced above. Godard's polemic is not as overtly political as his later work would become, but already he is declaring that it is not enough to simply reproduce realistic looking objects and people. These people must behave on the screen as they would in everyday life. 'Things as

⁵⁹ Jean-Luc Godard, quoted in Antoine de Baecque, *La Nouvelle Vague: portrait d'une jeunesse* (Paris: Flammarion, 1998), p. 40.

⁶⁰ James Monaco, *The New Wave: Truffaut, Godard, Chabrol, Rohmer, Rivette* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 129.

they are' becomes a rallying cry for the generation of young film makers calling for a realistic representation of contemporary French life, filmed with young people in fashionable costume, behaving in a manner that chimes with the socio-political climate of the times, rather than in period costume in highly literary productions.

Brigitte Bardot became linked to this call for a new realism. Her body was presented to the camera 'as we love her;' young, fresh, the voice of youth contemptuous of or indifferent to middle-aged, middle-class values. When she older critics attacked her, the young cinema critics such as Godard and Truffaut defended her. At a time when French cinema on the whole was still organised around a tradition of good quality studio filmed pieces, *Et Dieu créa la femme*, filmed in a matter of weeks, on a very tight budget, on location in the south of France, was new and different. Its difference can be located in both its technical and aesthetic aspects.

It was filmed in saturated Eastman color with widescope lens. Roger Vadim located the new realism in the technical progress French cinema was making in terms of colour processes and camera equipment.

Le cinéma total que nous verrons demain est l'aboutissement de la tendance fondamentale du cinéma: reproduire de plus en plus fidèlement la vie jusqu'à en donner l'illusion parfaite [...] Le but du cinéma, c'est de se rapprocher le plus possible de la vie. Son génie propre est dans la forme technique.⁶¹

Vadim links new technology, which will be exploited in his film, to a new realism in cinema. Bardot's realism is thus implicitly linked to modern technology. Bardot's alleged frank and open attitude towards sexuality and the body is enhanced by the use of cinemascope as it makes the body into an ever more readable text, 'first, by sculpting her body onto the frieze of the screen, and second, by giving the spectator panoramic vision on her body.'⁶² So the new technical apparatus used to film Bardot feeds into the contradictions of her star image, between exuberant sexual display as female agency and the recuperation of that display by male voyeurism and the fetishising gaze. The new 'different' 'real' cinematic body is a function of new technical as well as aesthetic ideals.

⁶¹ Roger Vadim, 'Le cinéma français livre la bataille de la couleur', *Paris-Match* 209 (14-21 mars 1953).

⁶² Susan Hayward, *French National Cinema* (London and New York, 1993), p. 177.

In aesthetic terms, however, Bardot also had a huge impact. The highly sexual, impulsive, sensual Juliette character played by Bardot enhances what is marketed as the carefree, spontaneous quality of the film. Thus, whilst *Et Dieu créa la femme*'s impact can be analysed as both technical and aesthetic, these two issues co-joined to create a cultural discovery: Bardot as the new 'real' woman. Truffaut, Godard et al considered Bardot as a revelation. In *Arts* and in *Cahiers du cinéma* they began to defend her. De Baecque argues that this was a fundamental moment in the mobilisation of the young critics on these magazines. They defended Bardot in terms that would later define their own cinema making: as a realistic representation of French life in 1956. Bardot's image on the screen was not only a realistic portrayal of a female body, it was also realistic in the wider political sense of the term in that it showed that body behaving in a plausible, modern way.

Ils voient en elle [Brigitte] un signe importante de renouveau, une autre manière de concevoir la vie et le cinéma. En effet, dans *Et Dieu créa la femme*, un corps réel est montré. Il est, d'un coup, visible.⁶³

Despite her status as cinematic icon, Bardot was not figured in terms of performance or glamour. Rather her star appeal was located in realism and visibility (rather than, as is the case with the couture Hepburn, artifice and fetishism). Consider for example this response to Bardot authored by Truffaut. Having lambasted her earlier films as pornographic, on 12 December 1956 he wrote:

[J]e ne puis plus supporter les scènes d'amour mièvres et mensongères du cinéma hollywoodien, crasseurs, grivoises et non moins truquées des films français. C'est pourquoi je remercie Vadim d'avoir dirigé sa jeune femme en lui faisant refaire devant l'objectif les gestes de tous les jours, gestes anodins comme jouer avec sa sandale ou moins anodins comme faire l'amour en plein jour, eh oui!, mais tout aussi réels. Au lieu d'imiter les autres films, Vadim a voulu oublier le cinéma pour 'copier la vie', l'intimité vraie, et à l'exception de deux ou trois fins de scènes un peu complaisantes, il a parfaitement atteint son but.⁶⁴

⁶³ Antoine de Baecque, p. 35.

⁶⁴ François Truffaut, 'Les critiques du cinéma sont misogynes. BB est victime d'une cabale' *Arts* (12 décembre 1956).

Bardot is discussed in terms that stress her reality, her verisimilitude, her imitation of life, and so on. She is presented as the triumph of nature over artifice, reality over art. Her freedom to play with her sandals, having abandoned the usual feminine seductive clothing of stockings and high heels, is equated with a free and easy sexuality. The presentation of Bardot's body, clothed in sandals, tight skirts, blue jeans, polo shirts, plain black tops or skimpy bikinis serves to underline her as natural and free. (Of course, such a wardrobe is as manufactured and determined by considerations of the presentation of the female social self as Hepburn's). The body of a woman is used to support claims to a new cinematic mode.

Hayward argues that the presentation of Bardot's sexuality is the culmination of a trend in 1950s French cinema to represent the female body as addictive and therefore the site of perversion. She goes on to argue that is troubling because it allows the body to have 'legitimately been made the site of narration by and for the male.'⁶⁵ In my account of Bardot's star image as a forerunner of the New Wave movement, her body acts as a site of narration not only within the text but also for many texts beyond it. It is hard to disagree with Hayward when she concludes that 'if Bardot displaying her bodily beauty through baring her legs and curving her body around pillars and men is a sign of her free spirit, then it is a very specified sign, located as it is within her bodily text.'⁶⁶ There is no suggestion that Bardot can escape her body in the ways Hepburn can. Her reality is inscribed into a male cinematic gaze. However, within the context of this bodily constraint, Bardot's image does work to connote freedom, modernity and youth.

Simone de Beauvoir's 1960 essay on Bardot underlines her freedom and modernity. For de Beauvoir, this is predicated on the way Bardot's youthful clothing presents her body that may seem at odds with the traditional feminine ideal. Her natural, untamed appearance (blue jeans, uncombed hair, lack of jewellery) is cited as a way to free the female body from signifiers of social and sexual difference:

Her clothes are not fetishes and, when she strips, she is not unveiling a mystery. She is showing her body, no more no less, and that body rarely settles into a state of immobility [...] in the game of love, she is as much hunter as she is prey. The male is an object to her, just as she is to him. [...] Men cling to the myth of 'women as object', [so] Brigitte Bardot's naturalness seems to them more

⁶⁵ Susan Hayward, *French National Cinema*, p. 176.

⁶⁶ Susan Hayward, *French National Cinema*, p. 177.

perverse than any possible sophistication. To spurn jewels and cosmetics and high heels and girdles is to refuse to transform one's self into a remote idol. It is to assert that one is man's fellow and equal...⁶⁷

Rather than being set up as the feminine ideal, a goddess, de Beauvoir argues that Bardot operates outside of the Eternal Feminine. She refuses the dualistic good/evil oppositions upon which the Eternal Feminine operates and instead moves toward a modernity that emphasises a new iconography of realism and earthiness that develops subjectivity over objectification, action over essence. Barthes writes of this modernisation that Garbo represents the moment of transition from the terror of the image to its charm. He continues:

On sait qu'aujourd'hui, nous sommes à l'autre pôle de cette évolution: le visage d'Audrey Hepburn, par exemple, est individualisé, non seulement pas sa thématique particulière [...] mais aussi par sa personne, par une spécification à peu près unique du visage, qui n'a plus rien d'essentiel, mais est constitué par une complexité infinie des fonctions morphologiques [...]. Le visage de Garbo est Idée, celui de Hepburn est Événement.⁶⁸

For de Beauvoir, Garbo is also the referent, but Bardot represents the evolution:

Garbo was called "The Divine"; Bardot, on the other hand, is of the earth earthy. Garbo's visage had a kind of emptiness into which anything could be projected; nothing can be read into Bardot's face. It is what it is. It has the forthright presence of reality. It is a stumbling-block to lewd fantasies and ethereal dreams alike. [...] With B.B. [men] get nowhere. She corners them and forces them to be honest with themselves. They are obliged to recognise the crudity of their desire, the object of which is very precise – that body, those thighs, that bottom, those breasts.⁶⁹

This collapsing of Bardot onto the 'forthright presence' of her body is reiterated by Godard in the famous opening sequence of *Le Mépris*. Camille/Bardot lies in bed with her lover Paul/Piccoli asking if her loves various named parts of her body – her ankles, her feet, her legs, her thighs and

⁶⁷ Simone de Beauvoir, *Brigitte Bardot and the Lolita Syndrome* (London: André Deutsch/Weidenfield and Nicholson, 1960), pp. 20-21 [originally published in English].

⁶⁸ Roland Barthes, *Mythologies* (Paris: Seuil, 1957), pp. 70-71.

⁶⁹ Simone de Beauvoir, 'Brigitte Bardot and the Lolita Syndrome', pp. 23-4.

so on. As with Truffaut and Godard's early praise of her 'realism', Bardot collapses the distance between the object and the word, between the sign and the signifier. Her face is her face, and that is all. Her breasts are her breasts. There is no translation into metaphor. Bardot's face is her face, rather than operating as metaphor or symbol.

Bardot's realism is of the order of a prelapsarian innocence, then, when objects and the words used to describe them had a Truth relationship. Before the Fall, language was referential: God spoke, and in speaking created: Adam named, and in naming spoke things in their essence. Bardot was launched as Eve, as the Biblical title of her first hit film indicates. Vadim, her director and husband at the time of the film's release, renders this explicit in his biography of her: 'Brigitte did not consider sex synonymous with sin. She had no psychological traumas about making love, no mystical or religious anxieties [...] She was Eve before God lost his temper in the Garden.'⁷⁰ This notion of Bardot as Eve was heavily promoted in the French press even before the cinematic release of *Et Dieu créa la femme*.

L'éternel féminin, c'est évident, mais sous une forme que le temps lui-même ne peut saisir. Et voilà pourquoi Brigitte Bardot est la star en vogue, le personnage à la mode. Car en incarnant aujourd'hui, elle garde cependant le reflet d'une Eve qui est de toute éternité.⁷¹

Et Dieu créa la femme plays on this pre-established 'Eve' star image. In the opening scene of the film, Juliette/Bardot is lying naked in the garden, when Eric Carradine/ Curt Jurgens approaches and offers to tempt her with the 1950s equivalent of an apple, a red toy car. However, this is not a temptation to Juliette who is presented as unworldly, naive about money and, unlike the other 'corrupted' women, not tempted by trappings such as jewellery and fur. At the Tardieu family home, whilst Antoine counts the money from the business deal with Carradine, she asks, 'L'argent, qu'est-ce que c'est?' Her transgression of sexual taboos (sleeping with her husband's brother) is thus linked in the film to a non-materialistic view of the world. Bardot's cheap fashions, (when she goes on to Carradine's boat, she tells one of the smart

⁷⁰ Roger Vadim, *The Memoirs of Roger Vadim: Bardot, Deneuve and Fonda* trans. by Melinda Porter (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1986), p. 24.

⁷¹ Jean Vietti, 'Brigitte Bardot vous confie tous ses secrets intimes', *Cinéma* 1148 (jeudi 9 août 1956).

women on board she bought her dress at the market), bare feet, lack of jewels and furs, which act to showcase her often nearly nude body, reinforce the discursive link made in the film between lack of possessions, sexual and bodily freedom, and youthful fashion.

Bardot's star image is thus not one of innocence per se, but a kind of innocence no longer allowed to mortals: that of innocence *alongside* sexual knowledge. This combination of seemingly contradictory characteristics (child-like innocence, sexual fulfilment) places Bardot into what has been identified by Morin as the typical mode of being of the 1950s star, the good-bad girl (discussed in chapter 2). Indeed, so powerful was this image, that she did not even seem to need films to make her a star: the image itself was enough.

La gloire de Brigitte Bardot est d'autant plus prodigieuse qu'elle précède presque la sortie de ses films. Présentée au festival de Cannes en 1954, elle fut aussitôt happée par la machine à starifier parce qu'elle présentait un dosage admirable d'extrême innocence et d'extrême érotisme: c'était en puissance, 'la plus sexy des vedettes bébé, le plus bébé des vedettes sexy'.⁷²

So Bardot's realism functions on two contradictory levels, which the rest of this chapter will now explore. On the one hand, it makes her representative of French youth and modern concerns. These are summarised by her youthful dress, her cheap fashion choices, and her rejection of the middle-class, middle-aged symbolised by twin sets, pearls, gloves, shoes and matching handbags. *Et Dieu créa la femme* has Juliette defying two middle-aged women, her boss and her mother-in-law. In *La Vérité* (Clouzot, 1960), her barrister deliberately prevents her being tried by middle-aged women, who instead sit on judgement of her in the public gallery. On the other hand, her star image links Bardot to one of the oldest archetypes of femininity, Eve. She is woman made flesh, unashamed and unembarrassed by her sexuality, not needing even a fig leaf to cover her nudity (she famously became the first woman to be naked at Pinewood studios when she removed the plastic from her nipples and pubic area, placed there for modesty's sake, when filming a shower scene).⁷³ Bardot is woman before the Fall. As such, she does not construct her femininity around accoutrements and accessories but offers an unveiled, unfetishised view of her body. This image of Bardot as the unveiled

⁷² Edgar Morin, *Les Stars* (Paris: Seuil, 1957), p. 29.

⁷³ Tony Crawley, *The Films of Brigitte Bardot* (New York: Citadel, 1975), p. 28.

woman is crucial to understanding the contradictions and controversies of her image in 1950s France. Bardot's strip teases became central to her star image. This chapter will conclude by arguing that not only did these add to her image of sexual availability but that also played into French anxieties about race and difference in the context of Algerian decolonisation. Bardot's myth and her modernity entwine around the figure of the colonised unveiled woman as symbolic of 'betweenness.' Bardot's flagrant sexuality links her to images of the colonised woman and thus her body acts as a site for fears of both Algerian independence and Americanisation.

Liberty, equality and modernity: - Bardot as a 'natural star.'

Bardot was absolutely identified with youth and modernity in France. Her career was launched when a friend of her mother's, Madame de la Villehuchet, organised for Bardot to model clothes for *Jardin des Modes junior*, re-assuring Bardot's bourgeois family that she would not be paid and that her name wouldn't be cited. Hélène Lazareff, the editor of *Elle* magazine saw the photographs, and through the same friend requested that Bardot model for *Elle* magazine.⁷⁴ *Elle* magazine at this time connoted modernity, Americanisation, glamour and youth. Furthermore, Bardot's image was exploited in *Elle* magazine to emphasise her own youthful nature, in contrast to a more mature woman also featured in the fashion shoot, a trope that was also to become common in Bardot's films.

En couverture de *Elle*, notre Brigitte, toujours mannequin junior, est photographiée au second plan, à demi dissimulée par une dame à l'air sévère et au nez pointu. Fille de devoir, Brigitte, derrière celle qui figure la mère, est prise dans une pose jumelle [...] Par contraste avec la coiffure austère et laide de la dame, Brigitte porte ses cheveux relevés en une sorte de petit chignon forte sage mais orné d'un large noeud de velours redressé en deux ailes, comme prêt à s'envoler. Le noeud de velours, lui aussi, est un accessoire de la mode jeune fille, mais il accentue l'éclat malicieux du regard, et, avec le nez qui se plisse, donne au modèle un air coquin.⁷⁵

Bardot's modelling in *Elle* magazine established her as a figure of identification for French youth through her fashion choices and her image.

⁷⁴ Brigitte Bardot, *Initiales B.B.* (Paris: Grasset, 1996), p. 67.

⁷⁵ Catherine Rihoit, *Brigitte Bardot : Un mythe français* (Paris: Olivier Orban, 1986), pp. 37-8.

Whereas her husband, Roger Vadim, was identified with the ability to manipulate text, Bardot, his wife, was firmly located in the feminine sphere of presentation of the self through clothing and the manipulation of images.

Dans la page précédente, Vadim, écrivain, a montré les mouvements de coeur tels qu'ils peuvent agiter la jeune fille de 1953. C'est maintenant au tour de BB de donner son point de vue. Brigitte, vedette de cinéma, va s'exprimer en images. 'Pour nous,' a t-elle dit, 'il n'y a pas le coeur qui soit redevenu romantique, il y a aussi la toilette' [...] Brigitte ouvre sa porte. Elle va vous montrer 'sa' mode, qui est aussi la vôtre, jeunes filles!⁷⁶

Bardot soon featured on covers, but with this same combination of demure schoolgirl style and the hint of a possible rebellious streak. Bardot could transform the most innocuous outfits into sexually coded invitations, as with the grey work overall in *Et Dieu créa la femme*. She was also credited with writing for *Elle* and her columns are (relatively) frank discussions of her housewifely shortcomings and her sexual desires. Consider the following extract:

J'ai eu plus de mal à devenir maîtresse de maison. Quand je me suis mariée, je ne savais pas faire cuire de pâtes. Vadim [...] a essayé de m'apprendre [...] Ce n'est pas probablement la méthode qu'employait nos grandmères. Mais il faut savoir être moderne et j'ai décidé de l'être jusqu'au bout: j'ai appris à conduire.⁷⁷

Bardot links her culinary lacunae to her modernity and a declaration of autonomy, her decision to learn to drive. Earlier in the same article, she discussed Vadim's love of ski-ing ('sa plus grande joie après moi') and their resolution of the problem of sexual jealousy in their relationship. Such writing confirms Bardot as part of a youthful, vibrant couple: sporty, active, sexy, modern, unconcerned by tradition and modesty. Thus, before she even became a major cinema star, Bardot's image functioned as one of fashionable youth and modernity combined with frank, fun loving sexuality. This image was increased by the publicity surrounding the filming of and release of *Et Dieu créa la femme*. Before its cinematic release the popular film magazine *Cinéma* discussed Bardot's life story, including her recent separation from her husband, Vadim, in its summer editions. These articles emphasised

⁷⁶ Anon, 'Jeunes filles 53: cette mode est la votre', *Elle* (29 décembre 1952).

⁷⁷ Brigitte Bardot, 'Bilan d'une année de mariage', *Elle* (18 janvier 1954).

Bardot's modernity and youth appeal and implicitly linked this to her 'non-styled' style. Her body is 'natural', free from the 'artifice' of girdles, bras, hats and scarves. Even her bikinis emphasise Bardot as both modern and free, being made of a new synthetic, stretchy elasticised fabric rather than with wire and bones.⁷⁸ This freeing of the body from restraint includes Bardot flouting the traditional restrictions or demands that stardom places on the body. The interviewer asks what diets or exercise programmes Bardot has used 'pour être belle', the question itself naturalising the idea that beauty and stardom automatically involves hard work, effort and artifice. Bardot retorts 'zéro pour la question! J'ai toujours vécu à l'état sauvage, et, en tout cas, ma seule discipline est la nature. Sincèrement, je n'ai aucun secret – et surtout aucun servitude: je ne fais ni culture physique, ni régime particulier.'⁷⁹ A typical photograph from the series has Bardot naked apart from her bikini bottoms, her hands alone covering her breasts. She is 'coiffée à la diable, sans une once de maquillage,'⁸⁰ in direct contrast to the typical 'maxfactorisée'⁸¹ female stars of the period. Bardot is quoted as saying:

Je vais vous dire une chose terrible, mais je n'aime pas ce qu'on appelle "la mode" en générale! Je trouve ça toujours un peu trop compliqué, un peu trop 'attendu' lorsque on le porte...je suis de loin les modes successives et je prends...ce qui me va! J'adapte ce qui me plaît à ce que je peux porter! Même chose pour les coiffures...Et enfin, ce qui m'énerve surtout, ce sont les chapeaux: on dirait toujours les déguisements. La plupart des femmes se rendent ridicules avec leurs chapeaux!⁸²

This emphasises how Bardot's 'anti-style' fashion was a deliberate choice, a conscious statement in favour of 'simplicity', 'nature', 'truth' and 'reality' in contrast to the 'déguisement' she associates with hats and complex artifice. So, in fact, the uncombed hair and unstructured dresses required as much thought as Hepburn's groomed look. Bardot's comment also emphasises how

⁷⁸ Sarah Leahy, 'Bardot and Dance: Representing the Real', *French Cultural Studies*, 8:1 (February 2002), 49-64, (p. 52).

⁷⁹ Jean Vietti, 'Brigitte Bardot vous confie tous ses secrets intimes', *Cinémonde* 1149 (jeudi 16 août 1956).

⁸⁰ Jean Vietti, 'Brigitte Bardot vous confie tous ses secrets intimes', *Cinémonde* 1148 (jeudi 9 août 1956).

⁸¹ Edgar Morin, *Les Stars*, p. 42. Morin writes on the same page that 'le cinéma rechigne toujours à nous révéler un visage de star dans sa vérité nue.' This statement shows the connections imagined between nudity and truth exploited in Bardot's star image, and why it was so unusual for its time.

⁸² Jean Vietti, 'Brigitte Bardot vous confie tous ses secrets intimes', *Cinémonde* 1147 (jeudi 2 août 1956).

fashion functions, especially for women, as the expression of the self. Bardot argues that she picks from fashion that which suits her – i.e. that which reinforces her image. ‘Bardot’s clothes were carefully designed to connote naturalness.’⁸³

Vadim exploited all these aspects of the Bardot persona in his film *Et Dieu*. Everything that is presented as part of Juliette’s ‘natural’ behaviour is a carefully crafted image. ‘I would mess her hair before each scene and forbid her to add make-up between shots.’⁸⁴ Juliette is presented within the film as part of nature, however. Her nude sunbathing, an activity she indulges in both before and after marriage, connects her offered body to the natural landscape surrounding it. Her sexual relations with Antoine’s brother take place, after an accident at sea, in a forest. Juliette’s nude, unkempt, sexually available body is attached to the primeval, untamed sites of the sea and the forest. Her sunbathing echoes ancient rituals of sun worship. She follows her instincts rather than social convention, as illustrated by the infamous scene where Juliette comes down from the bedroom to help herself to the lobster and chicken from the wedding banquet and returns to eat it in bed rather than staying with the guests. ‘She eats when she is hungry and makes love with the same unceremonious simplicity. Desire and pleasure seem to her more convincing than precepts and conventions.’⁸⁵ Her bridal dress, the nearest Juliette comes to embodying traditional femininity, has been swapped as soon as possible for a dressing gown, a item symbolising idleness, sexual indulgence and bodily display. This idea of the instinctual, the primeval and the feverish resurfacing in Juliette’s indulgence in the ‘natural’, especially in the extended ‘mambo’ dancing sequence, comes to have racist connotations I will discuss below. What is certain is that within the film Juliette’s body and the landscape are collapsed on to one another.

Furthermore, Juliette was but a flimsy disguise for Bardot herself, a fact Bardot readily acknowledged in interviews. ‘“Never have I been so much at ease,” she declared to *Cahiers du cinéma*. “Vadim knows me so well. All the lines were so natural.”’⁸⁶ This was a role that was created entirely for Bardot, which gave the impression that it was not so much a cinematic performance that Bardot was delivering, but rather that she was just being filmed as herself, existing or being rather than acting. ‘Ce n’est pas une actrice,

⁸³ Ginette Vincendeau, p. 100.

⁸⁴ Roger Vadim, p. 74.

⁸⁵ Simone de Beauvoir, p. 16.

⁸⁶ Mandy Merck, *Perversions* (London: Virago, 1993), p. 80.

elle ne joue pas, elle existe.'⁸⁷ *Cahiers du cinéma* linked this 'natural' mode of performance back to other aspects of Bardot's screen image, her modernity and her realism. It argued that the emergence of this non-actress onto the cinema screen would force more realism into scripts, as writers would have to write lines Brigitte Bardot would say in 'everyday life', as she was playing herself.

Comme beaucoup d'actrices américaines, et très peu d'actrices françaises, B.B. est une actrice à tics. Elle ne compose pas mais récite un rôle fait sur mesure; elle contraint les scénaristes à renouveler leurs ficelles et à tenir compte de la réalité de son personnage. B.B., produit de notre époque, permet à notre époque d'envahir les écrans.⁸⁸

This remark echoed the process through which *Et Dieu créa la femme* had come to be made. It played on a combination of realism and youth that were key to Bardot's emerging star image and its reliance on a notion of 'non-performance.' Two young men, Michel Boisrond and Roger Vadim wrote the film for the twenty-year-old Bardot. In this alone, the film can be seen as a precursor to the New Wave with its emphasises on young directors and stars. Roger Vadim, Bardot's husband, was working as an assistant to Allégret and was keen to make his first film. He wrote the screenplay based on a real life reported in an Italian newspaper in which a young girl had been the mistress of three brothers. He also wrote *Et Dieu créa la femme* with the intention that the film would promote his wife from her starlet ranking into a star of international renown (and presumably, that his career too would benefit from the resulting notoriety). Key to the realism and novelty in the work, however, was Vadim's decision to write a screenplay that he thought would play on his wife's sex appeal and that would 'provide[...] her with a role that was a perfect marriage between a fictional character and the person she was in real life.'⁸⁹ Vadim wrote the role specifically for Bardot, and no-one else could have played it.

Fait pour Brigitte, *Et Dieu créa la femme* ne tient que par elle. N'importe quelle autre actrice, si douée soit-elle, et le film aurait été médiocre. Car une autre actrice aurait joué. Brigitte s'est contentée d'être. Ce qui pour elle

⁸⁷ Jacques Siclier, *La Femme dans le cinéma français* (Paris: Cerf, 1957), p. 178.

⁸⁸ Claude de Givray, 'Nouveau traité de Bardot', *Cahiers du cinéma* 71 (mai 1957), 42-46 (p.47).

se confond avec exister, et qui est, après tout, donné à extrêmement peu de gens.⁹⁰

The identification between the actress and the role is total, to the extent that Juliette is seen as 'the same as' Bardot. De Beauvoir's comment that, 'when Brigitte Bardot dances her famous mambo, no-one believes in Juliette. It is BB alone who is exhibiting herself,'⁹¹ is supported by *Cinéma*'s assertion that 'BB danse le mambo le plus sensuel de l'année' or the *Cahiers du cinéma* review where the confusion between Bardot and Juliette is total. 'Brigitte Bardot, abruti par l'alcool et la fièvre, mime son narcissisme accompagnée par un orchestre typique; de plus, en plusieurs scènes du film, Brigitte Bardot esquisse des pas de cha-cha-cha.'⁹² The confusion between the actress and the role adds to the sense one has that Bardot is frank, real, and exists 'beyond metaphor': even when she is acting, she is still herself. The mambo dance does not reveal the character, Juliette's, legs to the audience: rather, the audience knows they are looking at Bardot's legs. The legs could not belong to anyone else. The notion of performance so intrinsic to Hepburn's star image is here inverted. Bardot's success in the performance of the mambo is located in the exposure of her 'true' self. This occurs literally through the device of the split skirt, the camera focussing repeatedly in close-up on Bardot's legs, and metaphorically in that in the films we are privileged viewers into Bardot's life, rather than seeing her act out a fictional character.

Cinéma defines the success of Vadim in 'creating' his wife's cinematic success as a 'natural' result of 'le soutien d'un grand amour,'⁹³ whereas *Cahiers du cinéma* places his actions into a general cinematic history of male producers, directors, and screen writers being inspired by a feminine muse, which itself is drawn from traditions of painting, literature and so on. 'Jadis les amants pour transfigurer leurs désirs en réalité, avaient la peinture ou le théâtre, aujourd'hui, ils ont le cinéma.'⁹⁴ Bardot is configured in this argument not as the modernist 'real woman' being shown on screen but as the latest incarnation of the passive feminine ideal used to enhance active male creative forces.

Godard's *Le Mépris* acutely critiques the way in which Bardot's body is used as a creative and commercial launching pad for male success. Camille,

⁸⁹ Roger Vadim, p. 56.

⁹⁰ Catherine Rihoit, *Brigitte Bardot: Un mythe français* (Paris: Olivier Orban, 1986), p. 142.

⁹¹ Simone de Beauvoir, p. 30.

⁹² Claude de Givray, 'Perdicion', *Cahiers du cinéma* 67 (janvier 1957), 43-44.

⁹³ Jean Vietti, 9 août 1956.

⁹⁴ Claude de Givray, 'Nouveau traité de Bardot', 42.

(Bardot), Paul's (Michel Piccolli) wife, comes to despise him when he pawns her body for his career advancement. She reads Paul's behaviour as encouraging her to sleep with the producer Jeremy Prokovich (Jack Parlance) so that Paul will be employed to write the new screenplay. This is a producer who insists on as much naked female flesh in his films as possible, to enhance their commercial appeal (allegedly a spoof of Godard's own producer, Joseph Levine, who insisted that he put more 'sexy' shots of Bardot into the film).⁹⁵ With its use of Greek myths, the reading of a book about erotic Greek art by Paul, and the presence of ancient statues of women, alongside more contemporary cinematic references, Godard's film suggests that this (ab)use of the offered naked female body for male commercial and creative success is historically determined. Bardot's 'modern' nude image cannot so easily discount or erase the ways in which the female body is generally used in western cultural production. This is one of the difficulties that a feminist reading of Bardot has to negotiate with her star image. What is troubling in the presentation of Bardot's body in the cinema is precisely that in the context of the time, it was liberating, a liberation typified by sexual display and unrestrictive clothing. Yet this kind of sexual liberation carries the seeds of its own oppression, as is typified by the following comments made by André Bazin.

For André Bazin, Bardot's nudity served to underline her freedom from the cinematic constraints symbolised by the Hays code. Considering his praise of the 'repressed' sexuality of Monroe discussed in chapter two, it is hardly surprising that Bazin sees Bardot's nude body as too 'obvious.' He rejects the claims that this nudity is more straight forwardly realistic as he says that censorship has more psychological realism as it imitates in a judicial and legal manner the processes undertaken by the brain's unconscious.

En tout état de cause, *Et Dieu créa la femme* est un film qui vous réconcilierait, s'il était possible, avec la censure. Non qu'il y ait, certes, du déplaisir à contempler Bardot Bardot de pied en cap, mais parce que l'on se prend à songer avec nostalgie à toute l'invention dont les cinéastes américains sont obligés de faire preuve pour nous en suggérer bien davantage avec ce que leur autorise un code pudibond. En vérité, le critique cinématographique céderait encore ce que la censure lui a

⁹⁵ Jacques Aumont, 'The Fall of the Gods: Jean-Luc Godard's *Le Mépris*' *French Film: Texts and Contexts* ed. by Susan Hayward and Ginette Vincendeau, (London and New York: Routledge, 2nd edition 2000), pp. 174-188 (p.176).

laissé contre le souffle du métro sous les jupes de Marilyn.⁹⁶

So the critic ends by debating a general point about cultural production (i.e. how much censorship there should be) in terms of how much female flesh he would like to see. He is keen for us to understand that the ability to see the totality of Bardot's flesh does allow him viewing pleasure (well, thank goodness for that) but that his own sexual thrill would come from the suggestion rather than the revealing of flesh. Without debating how much flesh is actually really revealed in *Et Dieu* (Vadim recounts an anecdote whereby an over excited censor had imagined Bardot got out of bed naked when in fact she was wearing a jumper)⁹⁷ the point is that Bazin discusses the meanings of censorship of the female body without taking any account of the narcissistic or liberating pleasures that may have been available to Bardot. The revealed female flesh is the ground for debate between male cultural commentators. Bardot's naked body is only liberating with a very certain context, then. It also continues to operate as an object within competing discourses about female sexuality and cultural representation.

Rather ironically, given Bazin's comments, Bardot was conceived as a knowing reference to Monroe. Vadim had noticed the huge impact Monroe had both in America and France, and decided to make Bardot into the French Monroe, but not as just 'une sosie de plus',⁹⁸ rather as a star with her own defining characteristics. Vadim was keen above all to exploit the eroticism and sexual charge associated with Monroe. Unlike Monroe who was an oxymoronic mix of the natural and the artificial (see chapter two) Bardot was constructed as purely natural. The irony of this is overwhelming – her highly sexualised, 'natural' image is fabrication, the result of a shrewd commercial decision on Vadim's part, yet she is presented as if she really did appear from the waves like a modern day Venus.

When interviewed by François Truffaut in *Cahiers du cinéma*, Robert Aldrich commented: 'Je l'aime beaucoup. C'est une vedette authentique. Jayne Mansfield, par exemple, est une vedette fabriquée par le studio et imposée au public, tandis que Brigitte Bardot est devenue une vedette malgré les gens du cinéma, c'est le public qui l'a imposée et a fait d'elle une vedette.'⁹⁹ In this account then, the popularity of Bardot's star image is located as her authenticity, the idea she just arrived rather than being

⁹⁶ Quoted in Catherine Rihoit, p. 161.

⁹⁷ Roger Vadim, p. 56.

⁹⁸ Catherine Rihoit, p. 140.

⁹⁹ François Truffaut, 'Entretien avec Robert Aldrich', *Cahiers du cinéma* no 82.

created through commercial concerns. In contrast to another Monroe lookalike, Jayne Mansfield, her appeal is entirely natural. Yet the director of the film, Vadim, has demonstrated the character that made her a star, Juliette Hardy, to be a series of commercial choices. As Vincendeau argues, Bardot's natural, casual clothing is in fact carefully chosen for sex appeal rather than convenience. 'Bardot's clothes in her films were often rather impractical (e.g. the tight skirt she wears to ride a bicycle in *Et Dieu créa la femme*), as too was her rejection of accessories such as shoes and handbags – for instance, driving barefoot in *Une Parisienne*.'¹⁰⁰

Descriptions of Bardot as star have a further contradictory quality. On the one hand, her organic authenticity and earthiness are emphasised. On the other, she appears to have arrived from nowhere, to be a nymphet who simply strolled out of the sea and onto the beach at Cannes.

Brigitte Bardot se présente comme un défi à toute forme de séduction féminine. Elle participe de l'eau, de la terre, du feu. L'air lui fait défaut et cette auréole poétique qui transcende la chair. Elle possède le mystère ambigu des Sphinx de Léonor Fini et une réalité qui n'ont jamais eue les adolscents des films français.¹⁰¹

It is through her clothing that Bardot acts out these ambiguities. Her 'innocent' nudity based on pleasure locates her in discourses of naturalness and simplicity. Her rejection of accessories, heavily constructed garments and cosmetics further adds to the image of Bardot as authentic and earthy. This is a particularly French myth of femininity drawing on discourses of martyrdom (Joan of Arc) and identification with the peasant, the earth, and its products such as red wine and steak, as discussed in chapter two. Bardot's naturism collapses her body into the landscape. She rejects consumerism: she is not a commodified star in the same way as Hepburn, indeed her star image is based on an explicit rejection of the idea she was created or constructed. Her beauty is considered as a result of untainted nature, in contrast to the expensive, elegant femininity that relies on cosmetics, accessories and clothing. Her performance of femininity thus works to deny all idea of performance, and is thus considered superior. '...L'une, dans le yacht de Carradine, où l'on pourra voir qu'elle a la vraie beauté, celle du corps et de l'âme, par opposition avec l'élégance frelatée des gens riches.'¹⁰² In this way, she belongs to discourses

¹⁰⁰ Ginette Vincendeau, *Stars and stardom*, p. 101.

¹⁰¹ Jacques Siclier, *La Femme dans le cinéma français* (Paris: Cerf, 1957).

¹⁰² Catherine Rihoit, p. 147.

not only of fashion and modernity but also of eternal French myths of femininity, simplicity, and authenticity.

Yet this clothing also sets Bardot up as an icon of youth culture, a model of identification for young girls, as in the *Elle* magazine article discussed above. Bardot is an emblem of youth rebellion, refusing to settle down into typical sweetheart line dresses with matching hats and shoes. In *La Vérité* (Clouzot, 1960) she hangs out in the Latin Quarter clothed in black trousers, sweater, flat shoes and a duffel coat, compared to her violin-playing sister who wears dresses. She also wore jeans, as for example on French television on New Year's Eve 1958, an example of her look analysed by de Beauvoir. Bardot, like her American equivalent, James Dean, was a star through whom a burgeoning youth culture could affirm itself.

Morin souligne également le rôle de l'identité vestimentaire dans l'affirmation de la nouvelle jeunesse: 'La nouvelle classe d'âge se constitue une panoplie à partir d'un détournement des tenues plus adultes, costumes portées de façon négligée, introduction du polo, cravates plus colorées, pantalons plus décontractés...C'est un mode de vie qui gagne peu à peu la jeunesse et transforme les habitudes.'¹⁰³

The way in which this new look was exploited by French adolescents to create an image of difference from their parents and their ideals is underlined in anecdotes recounted to Aebischer and Herzbrun.

Le conflit avec la mère ou avec les normes prévalentes au moment de leur adolescence se symbolisait autour d'une identification à B.B. 'Heu, par exemple, ma mère au moment où j'étais adolscente, si je m'habillais un peu osée à son regard, elle me disait (c'était une injure) "tu te prends pour B.B.."'¹⁰⁴

Furthermore, Bardot's clothes may have required as much planning as Hepburn's wardrobe, but they certainly did not require the same income. 'Ordinary' girls could easily copy Bardot. Reminiscing about their adolescence in 1950s France in Aebischer and Herzbrun's enquiry, women mentioned Bardot without being prompted.

¹⁰³ Antoine de Baecque, p. 52.

¹⁰⁴ Verena Aebischer and Sonya Dayan-Herzbrun, 'Cinéma et destins de femmes' *Cahiers internationaux de sociologie* 30 (juillet-décembre 1986), 147-160 (p.153).

B.B est présent dans la plupart des interviews réalisés, et surtout dans ceux des femmes issues de milieux moyens ou populaires. On évoque sa coiffure, la fameuse choucroute, ses robes en vichy, ses ballerines, sa bouche rond. Chacune se souvient avoir imité (ou avoir vu imité) Bardot.¹⁰⁵

Marylène Delbourg-Delphis discusses how much of Bardot's appeal was that her image of youthful rebellion was in fact reassuring to bourgeois parents. Despite her 'aventures scabreuses' Bardot remains the middle-class girl in her films, her casual clothes in contrast to the debauched, decadent fur coat and high heels of a star such as Anouk Aimée in *La Dolce Vita*.

Brigitte Bardot en symbolisant le risque sans risqué peut s'attirer les faveurs d'une public gigantesque. On imite sa coiffure, de la queue de cheval à la choucroute, et, en 1959, c'est d'elle qu'on tient la tenue de parachutiste dans le style de Babette s'en va-t-en guerre, les robes-boules, la robe bavaroise en vichy bleu et blanc [...] Bref, s'habillent en B.B., aussi bien la mère qui danse encore la valse, que la fille aînée de la famille qui a découvert le cha cha cha en 1955, et les cadettes plus délurées.¹⁰⁶

In other words, Bardot's appeal was wide spread. The 'youth' look was less a matter of the chronological age of those wearing it than of attitude, a fact highlighted in the film *La Vérité*. Here, Bardot plays a young rebel Dominique Marchand who has the same lover as her sister. They are nearly the same age, but Bardot represents a lively, modern, youth culture, dancing naked under the sheets to jazz, and drinking in cafés in the Latin Quarter, whereas her sister plays the violin at the Conservatoire. Bardot's success as a model for imitation is that she is the figure head for a less stifling, more open minded attitude towards morality, an attitude identified with her youthful clothing but that had wider appeal than to a certain age group.

Her youth look had an international appeal. *Et Dieu créa la femme* opened in the United States in October 1957. It was shown in the Paris theatre, with 568 seats, and in one week had earned over twenty four thousand dollars. It eventually earned over eight million dollars, the equivalent to a year's sales of the Renault Dauphine, a frequently quoted statistic. The comparison of a woman and a car gives testament to Bardot's mobility. Not

¹⁰⁵ Verena Aebischer and Sonya Dayan-Herzbrun, 153.

¹⁰⁶ Marylène Delbourg-Delphis, p. 207.

only did her films stress her mobility – dancing, running, walking, cycling, driving, sailing – but her exportability made her the most mobile of all the female French stars of the 1950s, without exception. Bardot's style was marketed as simple, provincial, sexy and French to an eager American audience, a source of French pride that led to the confirmation of Bardot as a particularly important member of the national community.

Un style est né: celui que Brigitte adopte chaque été à Saint-Tropez et qui court le monde dès la première photographie parue. Aux USA, l'hebdomadaire *Life* vient de présenter la mode 'petite fille' d'après BB. Le magazine *17* a fait paraître une trentaine de robes 'Bardot' inspirées des robes de Vichy que notre Brigitte mettait l'année dernière. Mme Vachon, la petite grand couturière de St Tropez, confie cette année à Brigitte la destinée de sa dernière passion. Avec Brigitte, la broderie anglaise ira loin.¹⁰⁷

This quote from *Elle* makes explicit how Bardot's identification with a simple, chic French fashion also creates her as a mobile international star.

Bardot's peculiar combination of French earthiness and international youth appeal is summed up in Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber's comment to *Time* magazine that, 'we should be proud of her, of Roquefort cheese and of Bordeaux wine. They are the products that bring us the most profit.'¹⁰⁸ Bardot's body is linked here both to international exportability and French earthiness and peasant traditions symbolised by wine and cheese (and products that furthermore come from specific regions of France). Bardot's 'natural' look works in two contradictory ways, both to confirm her *francité* and to create her as a mobile commodity with international appeal.

Bardot as colonised star

Bardot's image as the woman who reconciles traditional values with modern behaviour, whose body is deemed capable of maintaining national specificity whilst embracing and exporting an international look for economic and political power and prestige finds an unexpected resonance in the discourses preoccupying 1950s France. Bardot functions as the colonial woman made French. Her star image presents Bardot as the 'unveiled woman', the woman freed from restrictive clothing. Bardot's stripteases

¹⁰⁷ Anon, 'A Saint-Tropez, Brigitte lance la broderie anglaise', *Elle* (22 avril 1960).

¹⁰⁸ Tony Crawley, *The Films of Brigitte Bardot*, p. 85.

became legendary. She dances naked under the streets in bed in *La Vérité*; she raises her skirts to pay her bill in *En cas de malheur*; in *En effeuillant la marguerite* and *Viva Maria* her stage striptease is part of the story; and one of her early roles had her playing *Manina, La Fille sans voiles*. In *Et Dieu créa la femme*, her naked body is filmed in silhouette behind a sheet, with just her feet popping out. The design of her clothes itself partakes in this aesthetics with drop shoulder T-shirts, bare midriffs, lazily tied dressing gowns, missing bikini tops, slit skirts and undone buttons. Bardot's lack of make-up added to her image as woman in the raw. Perhaps her ultimate appearance as the unveiled woman was when she married Jacques Charrier in June 1959, a service reported by *Elle* magazine. In contrast to traditional bridal wear, Bardot appeared in a pink gingham dress, with her hair long and loose, and no bridal veil. This casual image is the antithesis to the bridal dress she modelled for *Elle* magazine as Vadim's bride nearly a decade earlier. This featured a heavy veil and a 'traine de princesse.' Thus Bardot's choice of bridal wear reflects the evolution of her star image and persona, from a young, fashionable girl, to the naked essence of femininity, stripped of all artifice, even that of tradition.¹⁰⁹ Bardot is woman laid bare, stripped of veils of 'decency' and 'modesty' yet also 'oppression' and 'tradition'. In an interview with women who were teenagers when Bardot rose to fame, Aebischer and Herzbrun report that one claimed Bardot was 'l'explosion de ce qu'il ne fallait pas.'¹¹⁰ The reference was undoubtedly to the image of liberated female sexuality associated with Bardot, however problematic that freedom later scholarship has revealed it to be. It is my contention that this unsettling, disturbing effect Bardot has was because she also connoted on some level primitive (read colonised) woman. Whilst the public concern was for Algerian women to unveil, at the same time the colonial regime also depended upon the constant restatement of the difference between the colonised and the coloniser. In the ambiguous figure of Bardot, difference is threatened.

At the same time as Bardot was presenting France with barefaced femininity, campaigns were underway in Algeria to persuade women to unveil themselves. The most restrictive clothing of all, it was held at this time, was the veil worn by Algerian women. In a process described by Fanon in his essay *Algeria Unveiled*, the dominant administration in Algeria took to defend this woman, presenting her as dominated, sequestered, transformed by the Algerian man into a dehumanised object. Mutual aid societies and societies to

¹⁰⁹ Anon, 'Le Mariage de Bardot', *Elle*, (29 juin 1959) and Anon, 'Jeunes filles 53: cette mode est la votre', *Elle*, (29 décembre 1952).

¹¹⁰ Verna Aebischer and Sonia Dayan-Herzbrun.

promote solidarity with Algerian women were formed. Hungry women had bags of semolina delivered with exhortations against the veil printed on them. Algerian women were urged to throw off their subjugation alongside their veils, presented by Fanon as an act of colonial destruction that was ultimately interested in violent assimilation rather than freedom.

For Fanon, the unveiled face of the Algerian woman allows her to become an object of (sexual) possession for the European man. He argues that the rending of the veil is part of a European desire to appropriate Algerian women. Thus, it is a kind of symbolic rape, part of the male European psychic make-up which sees the 'barbaric' woman as part of a sexual economy based on possession and brutal violence rather than mutual revelation or even gradual conquest. In this kind of climate, the veil becomes highly politicised. What was once a neutral given in Algerian culture acquires a taboo character, and the attitude of the Algerian woman towards her veil is constantly related to her attitude with respect to foreign occupation. The veil becomes a key point of resistance and inertia in the face of the exhortations of the coloniser. From 1955 onwards, women became actively involved in the armed struggle against French colonisation of Algeria, exactly the time when Bardot was rising to fame in France. Fanon argues that these women had to re-learn their bodies as they cast off their veils in order to fool French soldiers into believing they are assimilated rather than working against them as they carry money, messages or arms to the revolutionary soldiers. The veil was now abandoned as part of the liberation struggle. However, under torture, some women had revealed these tactics to the French. Thus, from 1957 onwards, the veil was once again adapted, but now as a means of camouflage. The body was once again re-learned, from a slim, svelte European model, to a swollen, almost ridiculous one in which bombs were strapped under flowing robes. It was at this time that French forces again began their campaign to westernise the Algerian woman, and the veil came again to be worn universally by women. Fanon concludes that this symbolic use of the veil illustrates that the values of the occupier must be rejected in the liberation struggle, even if these values seem objectively to be correct. The woman's body and the veil that covers it became dynamic elements in the colonised population's response to the colonised forces.¹¹¹

Fanon's consideration of the role of women and the veil casts them as the symbolic and epistemological ground rather than as historical subject of

¹¹¹ Frantz Fanon, 'Algeria Unveiled' in *A Dying Colonialism*, trans. by Haakon Chevalier (New York: Grove Press, 1965), pp. 35-67.

the Algerian nation. In his eagerness to see independence, he projects an image of woman and her body as the sign of unified national identity rather than allowing the splintering of identities around issues such as gender difference. Dubey argues that this has been argued to be typical of masculine theorists of decolonising nationalism, who posit the national woman as the guardian of cultural tradition (e.g. the veil) and the national man as the one who can modernise the nation (e.g. taking up arms). However, she then goes on to argue that that Fanon's conception of women can be seen as far more dynamic than this paradigm allows for. She suggests that Algerian nationalist discourses aligned women not with the purified realm of precolonial tradition but with the colonised nation's 'betweenness' *vis à vis* modernity and tradition.

As the embodiment of conflicting forces that simultaneously compose and disrupt the nation, women are both guarantors of national identity – no longer simply as guardians of traditional values, but as symbols that successfully contain the conflicts of the new historical situation – and the supreme threat to that identity, insofar as its endemic instability can be assigned to them.¹¹²

The Algerian woman's body is understood to be literally altered in appearance and shape by the demands placed upon it by the liberation struggle. It is in the elasticity and dynamism of the body that the awakening national consciousness is guaranteed survival (the woman's body is being changed in order to be able to fight in the most effective way possible) and yet this very mutability holds the seeds of a nation's destruction, for no body can offer stability and purity, the usual role of the feminine icon of the nation.

This concept of a national 'betweenness' being expressed through a woman's body is particularly helpful in relation to Bardot's screen image. It is my contention that this paradox is translated from the colonial situation into metropolitan France through the body of Bardot. Her body acts as an icon of unchanging French femininity (earthy, authentic, Eve) yet she also symbolises modernity and youth. She is frozen in fetishistic poses for the male voyeuristic gaze yet she is also the most mobile of stars, groomed for export. So, in her own 'betweenness' Bardot illustrates the extent to which France itself can be seen as a nation colonised by American values. Her modernity hints at a threatening assimilation whilst she also acts to protect French

¹¹² Madhu Dubey, 'The "True Lie" of the Nation: Fanon and Feminism', *Differences* 10:2 (Summer 1998), 3-38.

singularity and specificity. Her unveiling reveals difficult political realities surrounding rapid changes in French society. Bardot is a colonised star, a French woman colonised by America, as the Algerian woman is colonised by France.

Bardot is also a specifically racialised star. Like her alter ego Monroe, she was originally a brunette who bleached her hair blonde, with all the connotations of a racially pure image that implies. Unlike Monroe, she is not a platinum blonde, however; her hair remains a dark, 'dirty' blonde. Furthermore, Bardot is presented in contexts that make her the object of desire for a specifically black male gaze. In *Viva Maria*, it is Bardot rather than Moreau who attracts the gaze of the four black men sipping tea as they cross a border check point. This concept of Bardot as the racialised white woman is reinforced by a star image which emphasises her primitive temperament, her abandoning of 'civilisation' in favour of instinct and nature. 'Elle, si bien élevée, a gardé ce que l'homme a perdu au contact de la civilisation, de la vie moderne: un sens évident de sa place sur cette terre, Brigitte semble appartenir au monde comme les fleurs et les animaux qu'elle aime tant.'¹¹³

Rihoit goes onto argue that:

une négresse blonde: c'est `a cela que pense Jurgens lorsqu'il regarde Brigitte. Les lèvres épaisses, le nez large, les pommettes hautes. C'est la femme primitive, la femmes des îles ou des continents endormis. [...] Toute blonde qu'elle est, toute blanche de peau, Curd Jurgens ne peut s'empêcher de la comparer à une des femmes de Gauguin.¹¹⁴

The belief that Bardot's primitive, perverse sexuality is expressed as a corporeal negritude, incorporated into her features and even the 'dirty' shade of her hair, is in fact typical of nineteenth and twentieth century visions of the sexualised female.

In his stunning and provocative description of racial iconography in Western Art, Sander Gilman argues that the black servant was an ubiquitous figure in eighteenth and nineteenth century artistic production. He argues that the black servant, appearing in the eighteenth century in such works as Hogarth's *The's Rake's Progress* and *The Harlot's Progress* or Franz von Bayros's *The Servant*, marks illicit sexual activity. In eighteenth century iconography of this type, the black was usually paired with a white figure of

¹¹³ Catherine Rihoit, p. 143.

¹¹⁴ Catherine Rihoit, pp. 143-4.

the opposite sex. For example, in *The Servant*, he argues that the hypersexuality of the black boy child signals the hidden sexuality of the white woman. By the nineteenth century, as in Manet's *Olympia*, the central white female figure is associated with a black female in such a way as to imply a similarity between the sexuality of the two. In *Olympia*, where the white model Victorine Meurent is offered flowers by her female servant, modelled by Laura, Victorine's female sexuality flaunted in her direct gaze to the (male) viewer is seen as automatically 'perverse.' The sexualised white woman and the black woman are linked together as equally perverse as they both express 'excessive' female sexuality. The female white prostitute and the female black servant are equated on an iconographic level, a logical development, Gilman argues, of the scientific discourse concerning black female sexuality.

The labelling of the black female as more primitive, and therefore more sexually intensive, was dismissed as 'unscientific' by eighteenth and nineteenth century rational empiricists, who conducted case-studies in order to create paradigms of racial difference. The paradigm had to be rooted in some type of unique and observable physical difference. J J Viney's standard early nineteenth century study of race, culminating in a major essay in the widely cited *Dictionary of Medical Sciences* (1819), summarised his and many of his contemporaries' views on the sexual nature of black females in terms of accepted medical discourse. He argued that their 'voluptuousness' was highly developed due to sexual organs that were much more developed than those of whites, his central proof being a discussion of the 'unique structure' of the sexual parts taken from Cuvier's anatomical studies.

The different looks of the black female genitalia were allegedly confirmed by Cuvier's autopsy of the 'Hottentot Venus', a black female named Saartjie Baartmann (anglicised to Sarah Bartman). She was born in 1789, taken to London by a British navy doctor and exhibited in freak shows until her death in Paris in 1815.¹¹⁵ As part of her autopsy, her labia were analysed. During her lifetime, it had been her allegedly protruding buttocks ('steatopygia') that had been the object of curiosity and speculation. The nineteenth century perceived the black female as possessing not only a 'primitive' sexual appetite but also the external signs of this temperament, 'primitive' genitalia and buttocks. Cuvier's descriptions of the 'the black woman' based on primary and secondary sexual characteristics dominated

¹¹⁵ Her brain and sexual organs were preserved in bottles and displayed alongside a cast of her body in Paris's Musée de l'homme until the mid 1970s. The French National Assembly finally agreed to return her remains to South Africa in February 2002. Jon Henley, 'France sends home freakshow remains', *Guardian*, 20 February 2002, p. 16.

medical discussion of 'the black' in general. The search for difference was part of an attempt to prove plurality of races, with the black as a separate (and needless to say in the views of the time, lower) race. However, in autopsies of black males from the same period no mention is made of genitalia. 'The genitalia and buttocks of the black female attracted much greater interest in part because they were seen as evidence of an anomalous sexuality not only in black women but in all women.'¹¹⁶

So this scientific linkage of 'perverse' (because it existed at all) female sexuality and race is echoed in artistic production of the time. This is well illustrated by Long's *The Babylonian Marriage Market*, which claimed a higher price than any other work of art in contemporary London. Based on a specific text from Herodotus, it illustrates a market in which women are being sold in order of attractiveness. The maidens in a row in the foreground of the painting are ordered according to Victorian aesthetic ideals. On the far left, a girl holds a mirror which emphasises her whiteness by the light reflected from it. At the far end, a dark skinned (but not black) woman with Negroid features is sat. They are all acceptable marriageable women however. The only unacceptable female present is the black slave presenting the women on the auction block, positioned so she is presenting her buttocks to the viewer.

While there are black males in the audience and amongst the bidders, the function of the only black female is to signify the sexual availability of the sexualised white woman. Her position is her sign, and her presence in the painting is analogous to that of the black servant, Laura, in Manet's *Olympia*. In Hogarth, the black servants signify the perversities of human sexuality in a corrupt society; in Long's work of the late nineteenth century, on the other hand, the linkage between the two female figures, one black and one white, represents the internalisation of this perversity in one specific aspect of human society, the sexualised female.¹¹⁷

In late nineteenth century iconography, then, the sexualised white female had thus internalised the perversity of the black female. Manet's *Nana*, painted in 1877, represents a huge iconographic shift from his earlier (1863) *Olympia*, not the least of which is a disappearance of the black female. In a contemporary, dirty setting, Manet's *Nana* does not need a black servant to signal her perverse sexuality to the audience. Just as Cuvier had catalogued

¹¹⁶ Sander Gilman, *Difference and Pathology: Stereotypes of Sexuality, Race and Madness* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1985), p. 89.

¹¹⁷ Sander Gilman, p. 91.

the physical appearance of the black female, so Parent- Duchatelet located the physical 'abnormalities' which indicated that the white woman was a sexualised prostitute. Nana displays the customary voluptuousness associated with the prostitute, alongside an 'atavistic ear' and protruding buttocks, the symbol of 'primitive' female sexuality no longer purely associated with the black woman but with all perverse female sexuality. The contemporary Victorian prostitute displays the 'black' sexuality through her own bodily performance. Sexual perversity has been internalised, so that the black signifiers of difference can now be seen on the body of the white woman, acting as a symbol of her primitive sexuality. So linked is this idea of race and perverse female sexuality in the cultural imaginary that Freud was to say that female sexuality represented the dark continent, a phrase which precisely encompasses the way in which female sexuality is taken to signal a racial component. The sexualised white woman lives in a dark continent, having internalised the features and attitudes of 'the primitive.'¹¹⁸

The racist description of Bardot as the 'blonde negress' works in a similar way to mark her as a sexual and racial other. She is taken to wear the signs of her 'exuberant' i.e. aberrant sexuality upon her body, in a specifically racialised way. Through her energetic sexual display, the blonde Bardot comes to be seen as the black woman, haunting a decolonising French society with the image of the colonised, racialised, sexualised Other. The mambo dance utterly plays into images of Bardot as the primitive blonde negress. Surrounded by black musicians playing tam tam drums, Bardot dances. At the time, black music symbolised 'sexualité débridée et de péché.'¹¹⁹ *Cahiers du cinéma's* review emphasises her brutality, her fever, her sensuality in the dance sequence. *Cinémonde* describes it thus:

le mambo le plus sensuel jamais réalisé à l'écran, Brigitte Bardot l'a dansé une seule soirée, dans un cabaret de St Tropez, le dernier jour des prises de vues de *Et Dieu, écrit et réalisé par Roger Vadim [...]* Et comment ne pas s'éprendre de cette envoûtante créature, ondulent, frémissant, se déhanchant, avec une impudeur volontaire, au rythme de la plus érotique des danses modernes. Ancienne danseuse classique, habituée aux pointes, aux entrechats, aux jetés-battus, Brigitte s'est adaptée au mambo exécutée nu-pieds, avec un art consommé, une virtuosité étonnante. Son partenaire, le spécialiste Mexicain Leopoldo France, en était stupéfait.¹²⁰

¹¹⁸ Sander Gilman, pp. 94-105.

¹¹⁹ Catherine Rihoit, p. 147.

¹²⁰ Anon, 'BB: Le mambo le plus sensuel de l'année', *Cinémonde*, (21 juin 1956).

In this review, the contrast between the 'classical' French Bardot, used to the bodily positions required by an élite white musical culture, and the Bardot who dances the sensual, barefoot, 'ethnic' mambo is emphasised. Bardot dances with several black partners watched by her jealous white husband, playing into the psychosexual drama that Fanon identified as typical of the European conception of the Algerian colonised woman as the harem-dwelling nymphomaniac. Bardot as the colonised woman is emphasised the image taken from the film and used to illustrate the article of Bardot lost in narcissistic admiration in the mirror, next to a large cooling unit with the slogan '*Buvez Coca-Cola*' on it. This image confirms that Bardot not only symbolises the presence of the colonial woman in French society; this image suggests that Bardot is herself a colonised woman, being French at a time of rapid Americanisation. Whilst she may be France's major export item, Coca-Cola is a far more powerful symbol of hegemony, imperial power and international mobility.

The image of Bardot as blonde negress, reinforced in the mambo scene, plays into notions of her betweenness. It acknowledges how her image is a construction of modernity (the use of bleach for her blonde hair) yet still links her to the natural and the primitive. This betweenness itself is encapsulated in the mambo scene at the end of the film, 'when Bardot goes into a frenzy of dancing to the black band's music, propelled by an insistent beat. Bardot is a whirl of bare feet, wild hair, syncopated movements, as if possessed by the music. The *mise en scène*, however, reveals this 'natural' body in very controlled ways: her skirt splits open strategically, the camera isolates her crotch, legs and feet.'¹²¹ As the blonde negress, Bardot represents the return of the primitive that is inscribed onto her body through its 'exotic' performance and its allegedly Negroid features. She is also however a modernising force. She is not a primitive woman; her image is carefully controlled and represented for maximum commercial gain in a modern capitalist marketplace. This reconciling of the two contradictions confirms her as French version of the colonised woman, the woman who symbolises both the possibilities of the nation to be created yet also its reliance on pre colonial tradition for its identity.

Bardot's 'betweenness' thus works on many levels. It works to hold her as a myth of eternal French femininity and a symbol of the modernising Fifth Republic. It functions also to make her body one that expresses the

¹²¹ Ginette Vincendeau, p. 100.

contradictions of a decolonising situation – the woman as guarantor of stability and purity, and the necessity for change and modernisation as a precondition of liberation. It is this, I contend, that makes Bardot's star image such a shocking and awkward or conversely welcome one in French society at that time. As the woman unveiled, Bardot's presence implies the presence of the Algerian woman, a presence constantly denied in French discourses. De Beauvoir identifies Bardot's screen image as one that negates sexual difference. I believe that part of the star's appeal for de Beauvoir is that she also dissolves the differences between coloniser and colonised, between Algerian and French, that is so central to colonialism's project. Sexual and racial difference are problematised in Bardot's screen image.

This is a difference that does not survive, however. Bardot's primitive nature is one that is tamed by the social and sexual mores of the time. At the end of her frenzied mambo dancing, Juliette/Bardot is slapped by her husband, Michel/Trintignant and returns meekly to the marital home. In *Le Mépris*, the producer is implicitly criticised for the exploitation of the female body. Yet Godard reproduces this exploitation and violence upon the star's body. Yosefa Loshitzky argues that Bardot is infantilised as her body is positioned for the camera in the way babies are shot, with her backside up.¹²² She was forced to imitate Godard's muse, Anna Karina, wearing a black wig that echoed Karina's hairstyle. Bardot reports that Godard wanted her to walk in the same way as Karina as well.¹²³

It was her presence in *Le Mépris* that guaranteed its budget. Furthermore, Godard uses her to symbolise the positive cultural achievements of the cinema, teaming her with the wise, venerable Lang against the oafish Paul and the sleazy Jerry. In the audition scene, Camille and Lang sit on one side of the aisle, Paul and Jerry on the other. Camille even takes Lang into the bathtub with her, reading a biography about him as she bathes. Yet she will leave, to her death, with the producer, Jerry, whilst Lang survives to shoot another day. The popular female star is revealed in Godard's film to have neither the longevity, nor the artistic integrity, nor the political conviction of the classical male auteur. Bardot's power and charisma are shown to be contingent.

Thus the primitive woman is tamed in these films. The unveiled Bardot threatens dissolution of difference but this is a threat that recedes as she is held with a male narrative order and voyeuristic gaze. The young,

¹²² Yosefa Loshitzky, *The Radical faces of Godard and Bertolucci* (Detroit, Michigan: Wayne State University Press, 1995), p. 138.

¹²³ Brigitte Bardot, *Initiales B.B.*, p. 327.

modern image is as flimsy as the bikinis Bardot wore to the beach. Her clothing allows her to suggest contradiction and (sexual/colonial) liberation but her image is still one controlled by male producers, directors and commentators. Bardot represents freedom of the body – 'freedom of movement without the restrictions of clothes or notions of decorum.'¹²⁴ Yet this can only ever be a very limited freedom, contained as it is within a bodily text that is still mainly narrated by and for a male gaze.

¹²⁴ Sarah Leahy, p. 53.

Page
Numbering
as
Bound

Conclusion

Contextualising star studies

Le cinéma est l'art de faire faire de jolies choses à de jolies femmes.¹

The above statement formulated in *Cahiers du cinéma* has been a key motif for both auteur criticism and feminist film criticism since they began analysis of the cinematic medium in the 1950s and the 1970s respectively. Auteur criticism stresses the narrative and visual control exerted by the auteur over his (sic) text. It argues that the filmic text should be interpreted as the subjective, indeed autobiographical, expression, of its (presumed male) creator. Feminist film criticism stresses the misogynistic conventions that produce cinematic femininity. Both approaches to the cinematic text thus situate the female star as the object manipulated by the auteur, the beautiful thing upon which beautiful things will be performed.

Laura Mulvey argued in her seminal article in 1975 that woman's image is 'cut to the measure of male desire.' The very agencies of filmic representation, rather than functioning as neutral or universal, reproduce a patriarchal unconsciousness in which woman represents castration or lack. The image of woman consequently must be contained as fetish for the male gaze. That the filmic apparatus fetishises women is congruent with the patriarchal imbalance of power through which looking has been split between active/male and passive/female. Both in films, and in their traditional exhibitionist role, women are simultaneously looked at and displayed. Their appearance is coded through aesthetic conventions for strong visual and erotic impact so the female on display, the female star, could be said to connote 'to-be-looked-at-ness' as her primary signifying meaning.²

While this was a key text for feminist film criticism, illuminating the relations between gender, seeing and power, it provides only a monolithic and transnational, transhistorical perspective. It also sidelines the issue of what then gives female cinema spectators pleasure in the viewing process. Despite coming from a different critical background and generation, it does

¹ Claude de Givray, 'Nouveau traité de Bardot', *Cahiers du cinéma* 71 (mai 1957).

² Laura Mulvey, 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema', *Screen* 16:3 (Autumn 1975), 6-18.

not in some specific respects move the argument on from the auteur perspective of the 1950s, where female stars are envisaged as the object of male narrative and visual control. So, the psychoanalytic paradigm employed by Mulvey neglects both the socio-historical context and the heterogeneity of media practices. This framework is silent on how race, class and historical moment might inflect spectatorship, and also about how these factors impact upon the politics of representation. In other words, the project for star studies and feminist film criticism alike becomes that of uncovering the different ways in which female stars are constructed at different historical moments, in order to see the female star not just as some static victim of patriarchal viewing codes, but to understand why and how her image comes to be so powerful, so financially rewarding for the studio, and so pleasurable for the (female as well as male) spectator. This thesis has argued the need for a theory of female stardom that addresses questions of time and place through appeal to a specific period in time when the image of the female star acted as a privileged site for the acting out of contemporary socio-political issues.

1950s France is a particularly fruitful time and place for this enquiry to take place. It was undergoing rapid social and political change in the wake of Liberation, including its reconstruction through American money and management culture under the aegis of the Marshall Plan. The State-led modernisation effort was disseminated and normalised through popular cultural forms such as magazines and films, many of which promoted 'feminine values' of romantic love and household comfort, analysed as a syncretic, apolitical 'domestic sublime' by Henri Lefebvre and Edgar Morin. Women were more active and visible in the public sphere than ever before, having been granted the right to vote in 1945. The socio-political construction of femininity itself was also being questioned, with the publication of Simone de Beauvoir's *Le Deuxième Sexe* in 1949 and Yvette Roudy's translation of Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* appearing in 1964. This female American star thus occupies a particularly culturally charged position in 1950s France. She reifies the new visibility of women in the public sphere through her presence and also represents the modernising Americanisation of everyday life occurring as French society embraced consumerism. The female American star is thus read as a privileged site for the expression of anxieties about, and indeed, celebration of, the processes of transformation of the French everyday. The identification of the female American star with the modernisation process that France was undergoing provides an excellent opportunity to link the visual politics associated with

the cinema's gaze to a socially and historically specific context. The female star's image is thus read not as cut to the measure of male desire, but as revealing and resolving crucial cultural fantasies concerning femininity, modernity and consumerism.

Molly Haskell's work on female star images undertook a feminist analysis through the concept of the 'positive image', i.e. the notion that the narrative roles undertaken by women in various films could have a negative or positive effect on notions of women's role in society. She argues that the 1930s and 1940s were a more positive period for images of women than the 1950s, as more women played roles such as secretaries, that is to say independent career women, than in the 1950s, where there was a preponderance of show-girls and housewives. Haskell's main thesis, that images of women have become increasingly degrading and problematic, is echoed in the title of her work, *From Reverence to Rape*. Haskell's readings of individual star images are persuasive and powerful. However, the stance that her work takes towards female stardom is problematic. The very notion of a positive image is in itself problematic, as who decides what is positive, and according to what criteria? (For example, Simone de Beauvoir reads Brigitte Bardot's image as a positive indication of sexual liberation, whereas both Ginette Vincendeau and Susan Hayward read it as negatively objectifying. It can be read convincingly either way, according to one's criteria of assessment). If, as Haskell argues, the 1950s was a time of increasingly objectifying images of women, why then are these female star images still sites of pleasure for female spectators? Her work further posits female star images as fixed by their narrative function, rather than seeing representation as a process open to different readings according to spectator positioning. Haskell's argument sees star image as fixed and determined by the narrative techniques and visual control exerted by the auteur, who may or may not grant the woman a positive role in the film, whereas the spectator may equally determine the positive or negative readings of a star image.

Edgar Morin envisaged the meaning of the female star in a very different way from Laura Mulvey. In his analysis of stars, first published in France in 1956, Morin argues that stardom is constructed through a process of identification and projection. Stars have characteristics, promoted in both filmic and non-filmic texts, that allows audiences to both wish to emulate them and yet see them also as mysterious and remote idols. The star is both visible and invisible, close and far, mysterious and knowable. Morin's work thus emphasises the star, including the female star, as a figure through which

the spectator performs psychological work. This work moves the star between different realms of identification and projection. The female star, far from being fixed into a monolithic object position as the signifier of display, also connotes movement and freedom, as conceived by Morin, as she is moved into different political and cultural inflections depending on spectator positioning. The star persona is constructed not just in a top-down manner by the auteur and the patriarchal filmic apparatus at his (sic) disposal but also through active spectator pleasure. This pleasure operates at the cinema and also to link the star to the collection of secondary material, such as fan magazines, autobiographies and buying goods associated with the star.

Female stars especially close the circle of consumer culture, as they represent women constructing themselves through commodities and are themselves profitable commodities. Jackie Stacey argues that female stars act as the objects and subjects of a commodity culture. In this relation, female stars are again constructed as contradiction. They can be viewed as the most commodified of women as their images are sold around the world, yet they are also among the most powerful and visible of female subjects, financially secure and part of the active labour force rather than existing only in the home as a housewife, the feminine ideal of the 1950s. Furthermore, if female stardom as conceived by Stacey acts as both a mirror and a shop window for the female viewer, in the case of the American film star viewed in France, the mirror is distorted by space and the shop window is (relatively) bare. The relationship between the female star, the object(s) she is selling and the spectator/ consumer need to be considered as part of a global capitalist system subject to local socio-economic and political pressures.

Female stars are part of a complex and contradictory symbolic system. In the context of the 1950s, this contradiction could be said to be typical of the construction of femininity itself. Women were constantly interpellated into discourse as consumers, the subjects of a mode of address that brought them into the public sphere even as it constructed them as invisible housewives. These contradictions suggest the incompleteness of the ideological management of femininity at the time. Female American stars had an even greater contradictory quality than their French equivalents. While they were represented as glamorous stars for the fetishising gaze, their images, in the context of 1950s France, necessarily connote movement, freedom and circulation. They articulate the paradox that modern representation attempts to resolve, between the fixing, fetishising process and the fact that even woman-as-objects have to be mobile in order for a market

to exist for their exchange. While her gender implies stasis and immobility, the female American star's nationality connotes border crossing and movement.

By comparing French and American stars, this thesis has illuminated the ways in which female cinema stars are constructed along national as well as gendered lines. Previous studies of stardom in Europe such as Ginette Vincendeau's *Stars and Stardom in French Cinema* have tended to study stars within their national context. However, cinematic stardom is in fact notable for the ways in which it breaks free of the containment of national boundaries, especially in the case of Hollywood stars. The French press, in magazines such as *Cinéma*, *Paris-Match*, *Elle* and *L'Express*, feature female Hollywood stars as well as their French equivalents. The female star thus functions as a seductive and visible presence in the cinema, as the object of an eroticising male gaze for Mulvey, or as the functioning subject/object of commodity culture for Stacey. Mulvey argues in her later work *Fetishism and Curiosity* that the female star neatly negotiates between these two positions; that she functions as a seductive surface both in order to sell cinema (as commodity of the screen) and in order to hide the way cinema functions (her beauty acting as fetish that precisely hides her role as commodity object, and substitutes it for a role of sexual object). In this account, the female cinema star becomes the ultimate fetish of both Marxist and Freudian discourses. This thesis investigates the way in which the female cinema star collapses the economic and sexual fetish through spectacle. However, the reason that her image is so seductive and visible in 1950s France is seen also as a result of more specific political and industrial pressures.

The female Hollywood star as seductive presence

In the immediate post-war years, domestic film production in most of continental Europe was recovering only slowly from the devastation of war, and at the same time a backlog of American films, which had not been released on the continent due to the hostilities, flooded the market. Hollywood's market share was thus initially very high at this period. However, France had a protectionist policy that from 1947 onwards regulated the influx of American films. Furthermore, domestic production recovered and national films did have a definite appeal to the indigenous audience. In 1947 in France, domestic production accounted for only 27

percent of all films in the French market, yet this quarter of films earned 38 percent of all box office revenues. By 1955/6, the French film industry produced thirty percent of all films in the domestic market and earned fifty percent of the receipts. Thus, on average, a French film attracted far more viewers than a foreign film.

So there is a preference among viewers for home-grown products at this period. The divorce of the leading producer-distributors from their American cinema chains after the 1948 Supreme Court anti-trust ruling precipitated the dismantling of the vertical studio systems. Large studios such as Paramount no longer had guaranteed access to the largest cinema chains, which had previously constituted a secure and lucrative market. Foreign markets thus became increasingly important to the studios, and they made deliberate attempts to appeal to European audiences, using mythical stories, European settings and even European stars, such as Deborah Kerr and Audrey Hepburn. Hollywood films were aiming to seduce viewers attached to national cinema, and the promotion of female stars in the press was an important part of their marketing strategy.³

This deliberate attempt to appeal to the European audience was part of a broader cultural offensive to promote the eroticism of American consumer democracy against the silent, hidden, monolithic, productive Communist countries of Eastern Europe. In her discussion of representations of daily life during a period of near continuous war, that is to say 1939-1962, Margaret Attack concludes, 'if there was one thread one could take to pull this broad sheet of themes together, to express in a nutshell the amorphous plane of the everyday, then I would suggest it lies in the theme of the possibility or impossibility of happiness.'⁴ She goes on to discuss such central works exploring these possibilities as Edgar Morin's *Chronique d'un été*, where he employs a market researcher to ask people in the street whether or not they are happy, and Agnes Varda's *Le bonheur*, where a spiritual vacuum is found to lay at the heart of domestic bliss. This was a society in which the mass media posited happiness as coming from comfort and well being through consumption. Commentators such as Morin were asking whether this was the path to true happiness, but happiness as a goal is taken for granted. This is the key orientation of not just French but Western life.

³ Peter Krämer, "'Faith in Relations Between People": Audrey Hepburn, *Roman Holiday* and European Integration', in *100 Years of European Cinema: Entertainment or Ideology?* ed. by Diana Holmes and Alison Smith (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2000), pp. 195-206.

⁴ Margaret Attack, 'War Stories 1939-1963', Unpublished conference paper first delivered at plenary session at Society for French Studies Conference, Dublin, July 2001.

Considering the role of the mass media, Edgar Morin claims that, 'Ils vont dans le sens d'une culture fondée sur les valeurs de la vie privée, essentiellement le bonheur. Ils concourent à former un type d'homme vivant dans le présent quotidien, voué à la recherche de la jouissance consommatrice, cherchant le sens de sa vie dans le loisir et l'amour [...] Ce mouvement est celui-là même de la civilisation occidentale et le cinéma, mêlé aux autres mass-media, donne des figures, des images, de formes et des héros à ce mouvement global.'⁵ This quest for happiness was articulated as a choice between the Soviet model and the American model, between hidden production and conspicuous consumption.⁶

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, changes in the organisation of capitalism positioned women as key subjects in commodity exchange. The home, posited as the women's sphere, increasingly became a place of consumption rather than production. The nineteenth century thus saw a gendered division of labour in relation to consumption, with women being chiefly responsible for the purchase of goods. This assumption still held true in 1950s France. Lefebvre comments, 'Entrées dans la production, les femmes régissent la consommation; elles choisissent, et c'est presque devenu une fonction sociale.'⁷ Women, not men, govern buying. As Jackie Stacey argues, this is not necessarily a liberating event; rather, it sets women up as willing female consumers to be seduced by male producers. While men experience modernity through processes of industrialisation and economic rationalisation, for women shopping is the privileged space of modernity. The emergence of department stores can be seen to mark the beginning of consumer culture, and furthermore the beginning of a particular connection between looking, desiring and buying.

This connection between looking and wanting set up in consumer culture was exploited as interested parties acted to make American or Soviet women increasingly visible (and therefore wanted or desired) in French everyday life in the struggle between consumption or productivity as the location of everyday happiness. The American way of life was visible as never before to the French through its glamorous stars. Laura Mulvey argues that glamorous Hollywood stars such as Marilyn Monroe were used to sell American plenty and implicitly democracy to Europe, in a complex interface

⁵ Edgar Morin, 'Le rôle du cinéma', *Esprit* 28:6 (juin 1960), 1069-1079 (p.1078).

⁶ For a discussion of this, see Jackie Stacey, *Star-gazing: Hollywood Cinema and Female Spectatorship* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994).

⁷ Henri Lefebvre, 'Introduction à la psycho-sociologie de la vie quotidienne', (1960), in *Du rural à l'urbain* (Paris: Anthropos, 1970), pp. 89-107 (p. 104).

of the political and the erotic. Lorelei Lee's trip to Europe in *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* (Hawks, 1953) is a literal rendering of a process by which sex appeal is used to seduce Europeans into a relationship with America.⁸ Glossy, sexy, erotic American female cinema stars showcase and sell consumer capitalism, acting as its products and its spokespeople.

Yet, as this thesis has demonstrated, this seductive star image designed to specifically appeal to the Europeans was not as smooth and unproblematic as its producers may have liked. This image was interpreted by spectators who were reading from their own specific subject position, one that was at least partially determined by the political and social changes taking place in France. The female American star's visible and seductive fetishised body both reveals and hides the issues of modernity and feminisation. This thesis interrogates representation as a process fraught with the attempt to maintain hegemonic discourses, as open to rupture, displacement and disavowal, as well as smooth operation of the powerful male gaze. This rupture is especially apparent in the gap between the American star as fetishised glamour object, her 'accepted' place in feminist film criticism, and the American star as representative of a politically and economically powerful nation, expressed through her own star image of mobility and movement in a French context. Representations can only be fully understood when illuminated by a specific socio-historical contextual reading. As such, female star images can be read against their intended meaning (women as sexual seducer to be contained/stilled by the male gaze) as more empowering, more problematic, and more interesting, than the mere negative image of cinematic masculinity.

The power of the American female star

The power of the American female star is thus that she does not conform the dominant ideology concerning the socio-political construction of femininity in either Hollywood cinema or French society in the historical context of 1950s France. The female star is created and analysed as fetish. This fetishisation is read as immobilising and stilling. Yet these stars are fluid and floating, overcoming boundaries of nationality and language as they are present in French everyday life in a way that was not possible until the media explosion of the 1950s, certainly outside of Paris.

⁸ Laura Mulvey, 'Howard Hawks/ Marilyn Monroe/ Anita Loos' in *Howard Hawks: American Artist*, ed. by Jim Hillier and Peter Wollen (London: BFI, 1996), pp. 202-218.

Richard Dyer argues that star images allow for the management of complex and chaotic experience as they form coherent meanings out of incoherent significations around a flesh and blood individual. Meanings are structured so that some are re-inforced and others are displaced. In Hollywood films, these images work above all to make dominant ideology natural. Stars are part of the way in which everyday life is made to seem normal and unexceptional, rather than a result of certain political choices. Yet as I have suggested above the star suggests also the problematic nature of the management of ideology. The star's surface may hide a tension or a subversion. The female star is a commodity and thus acts out the way in which women in a capitalist patriarchal society are constructed as objects of exchange. The female star's seductive surface femininity reveals as well as conceals the mechanisms of the positioning of women in post-war society.

This is especially the case with the American female star in France, when she so visibly embodies power, movement and modernity against tradition and earthiness. The three Hollywood star images considered in this thesis all, to some extent, escape. In the case of Marilyn Monroe, this escape comes through embodying a Utopian, floating ideal of contradictory childlike innocence and sexual desirability, encapsulated in whiteness. For Jean Seberg, this escape is acted out through the lonely entrance into the public sphere as a motherless individual, presented in a star image of melancholia and nostalgia. For Audrey Hepburn, this escape is due to the ability to reconcile narratives of fashionable transformation and commodification with an image of a free spirit unable to be contained within biological determinism. Susan Weiners considers that the 1950s were a time when the eternal nature of French identity was continually re-asserted in the face of huge global changes in the organisation of power. French female stars come to embody this faith in an eternal French nation. Rather than escaping, French female stars are held still, to act as a bulwark against change. Simone Signoret is taken to be both a product and producer of her time, representing the solidity and eternity of France. Jeanne Moreau, despite a surface appearance of modernity, represents a French tradition of literary and artistic construction of the damaged and deadly *femme fatale*. Brigitte Bardot is the most mobile of the French stars considered, but her star image also emphasises her as a simple peasant girl, clothed in gingham, close to the earth and nature. French stars are earthy and organic.

It can thus be seen that the contradictory nature of post-war femininity, caught in painful conflict between the emancipation and

containment of women, between woman as public sphere subject and woman as private sphere housewife, is mapped out in the cinematic sphere in France according to the nationality of the stars. American stars in a French context connote movement, visibility and subjectivity, whereas their French equivalents still support a contained, objectified notion of femininity. It is nationality rather than gender that dictates the interpretation of the star performance. So, returning to Dyer's notion that star images are a structured polysemy, the way in which certain meanings are emphasised and other downplayed in ideological discourse is dependent on many aspects of star performance, including nationality. The spectator gaze is determined not just then by gender, but other structuring motifs as well. The politics of the gaze has to be investigated by a framework that takes account not just of gender, but also of time, place and performance. My thesis thus accounts for the ways in which female star images are managed in French visual culture in the context of the 1950s. They contain the conflictual ideological arena of post-war 'modern' femininity through mapping certain aspects of star performance onto the nationality of the star performer. While this strategy allowed the containment of the contradictory nature of femininity, the very power and visibility of the female American star can be seen to anticipate later developments in the French public sphere, when notions of femininity and performance were questioned from within as well as outside the French woman's home.

Filmography:

Dédée d'Anvers (Allégret, Fr, 1947)

Manèges (Allégret, Fr, 1949)

La Ronde, (Ophüls, Fr, 1950)

Casque d'Or (Becker, Fr, 1951)

Manina, la fille sans voiles (Rozier, Fr, 1952)

Monkey Business (Hawks, USA, 1952)

Gentlemen Prefer Blondes (Hawks, USA, 1953)

How to Marry a Millionaire (Negulesco, USA, 1953)

Niagara (Hathaway, USA, 1953)

Roman Holiday (W Tyler, USA, 1953)

River of No Return (Preminger, USA, 1954)

Sabrina Fair (Wilder, USA 1954)

There's No Business Like Show Business (Lang, USA, 1954)

Seven Year Itch (Wilder, USA, 1955)

Bus-Stop (Logan, USA, 1956)

En effeuillant la marguerite (Marc Allégret, Fr, 1956)

Et Dieu créa la femme (Vadim, Fr, 1956)

Funny Face (Donen, USA, 1957)

Love in the Afternoon (Wilder, USA, 1957)

The Prince and the Show-girl (Olivier, UK/USA, 1957)

Saint Joan (Preminger, USA, 1957)

Ascenseur pour l'échafaud (Malle, Fr, 1958)

Bonjour Tristesse (Preminger, USA, 1958)

En cas de malheur (Autant-Lara, Fr, 1958)

Les Quatre cents coups (Truffaut, Fr, 1959)

Some Like it Hot (Wilder, USA, 1959)

A bout de souffle (Godard, Fr, 1960)

La Notte (Antonioni, Fr/It, 1960)

La Vérité (Clouzot, Fr, 1960)

Let's Make Love (Cukor, USA, 1960)

Breakfast at Tiffany's (Edwards, USA, 1961)

Chronique d'un été (Rouch/Morin, Fr, 1961)

Jules et Jim (Truffaut, Fr, 1961)

Vie privée (Malle, Fr, 1961)

Cléo de 5 à 7 (Varda, Fr, 1962)

Vivre Sa Vie (Godard, Fr, 1962)

Adieu Philippine (Rosier, Fr, 1963)

Eva (Losey, Fr/It, 1963)

La Baie des anges (Demy, Fr, 1963)

Le Mépris (Godard, Fr, 1963)

My Fair Lady (Cukor, USA, 1964)

Paris — When It Sizzles (Quine, USA, 1964)

Viva Maria (Malle, Fr/It, 1965)

Bibliography:

Primary contemporary magazines and newspapers:

Note: Many references are taken from the BIFI database in Paris. Page numbers are not available.

Anon., 'BB: Le mambo le plus sensuel de l'année', *Cinéma*, (21 juin 1956)

Vietti, Jean, 'Brigitte Bardot vous confie tous ses secrets intimes', *Cinéma* 1147 (jeudi 2 août 1956)

—, 'Brigitte Bardot vous confie tous ses secrets intimes', *Cinéma* 1148 (jeudi 9 août 1956)

—, 'Brigitte Bardot vous confie tous ses secrets intimes', *Cinéma* 1149 (jeudi 16 août 1956)

Anon., 'Jeunes filles 53: cette mode est la votre', *Elle*, (29 décembre 1952)

Bardot, Brigitte, 'Bilan d'une année de mariage', *Elle*, (18 janvier 1954)

Elle, (20 mai 1957)

Anon., 'Le Mariage de Bardot', *Elle* (29 juin 1959)

Anon., 'A Saint-Tropez, Brigitte lance la broderie anglaise', *Elle* (22 avril 1960)

Elle, (12 août 1960)

L'Express, 6 (20 juin 1953)

L'Express, 11 (25 juillet 1953)

L'Express, 14 (22 août 1953)

L'Express, 18 (19 septembre 1953)

L'Express, 460 (7 avril 1960)

Jean Cau, 'L' étonnante aventure américaine de Simone', *L'Express*, 461 (14 avril 1960)

Anon., 'La Vitrine du Boulanger', *L'Express* (25 janvier 1962)

Anon., 'L'homme, la femme et le lampadaire', *L'Express* (8 novembre 1962)

Magnan, Henri, 'Brève rencontre avec Jeanne d'Arc', *Le Monde* (30 janvier 1957)

Vadim, Roger, 'Le cinéma français livre la bataille de la couleur', *Paris-Match*, 209 (14-21 mars 1953)

Lapierre, Dominique, 'La nouvelle ville de Mourenx,' *Paris-Match*, 511 (samedi 24 janvier 1959)

Paris-Match, 563 (samedi 23 janvier 1960)

Paris-Match, 566 (samedi 13 février 1960)

Paris-Match, 567 (samedi 20 février 1960)

Paris-Match, 588 (samedi 16 juillet 1960)

Paris-Match, 589 (samedi 23 juillet 1960)

Variety, (24 August 1960)

Works on individual stars:

Anon., *Uni France Film: Informations* 4 (juin 1950)

Bardot, Brigitte, *Initiales B.B.* (Paris: Grasset, 1996)

de Beauvoir, Simone, 'Brigitte Bardot and the Lolita Syndrome' (London: André Deutsch and Weidenfield and Nicholson, 1960)

Brown, Peter and Patte Barham, *Marilyn: The Last Take* (London: Heinemann, 1992)

Cohen, Lisa, 'The Horizontal Walk: Marilyn Monroe, CinemaScope, and Sexuality', *Yale Journal of Criticism*, 11:1 (Spring 1998), 259-88.

Tony Crawley, *The Films of Brigitte Bardot* (New York: Citadel, 1975)

Dandridge, Dorothy and Earl Conrad, *Everything and Nothing: The Dorothy Dandridge Tragedy* (New York: Abelard Schumann, 1970)

David, Catherine, *Simone Signoret ou la mémoire partagée* (Paris: Robert Laffont, 1990)

Delahaye, Michel, 'Jeanne la sage: Entretien avec Jeanne Moreau', *Cahiers du cinéma*, 161-162 (janvier 1965)

Delmar, Michaël, *Jeanne Moreau: portrait d'une femme*, (Paris: Norma, 1994)

Duffau, Claude, *La Femme poète: un portrait de Marilyn Monroe dans son miroir brisé* (Paris: Jean-Claude Simoën, 1978)

Dyer, Richard, 'Never too Thin', *Sight and Sound* (December 1993), 59

Emmet Ginna, Robert, 'On Screen: Jean Seberg', *Horizon* 4:5 (May 1962), 38

Grzesiak, Nathalie, *Yves Montand-Simone Signoret: Une passion engagée* (Paris, Acropole: 2001)

de Givray, Claude, 'Nouveau traité de Bardot', *Cahiers du cinéma* 71 (mai 1957), 42-46

Haskell, Molly, 'Our Fair Lady Audrey Hepburn', *Film Comment* (March/ April 1991), 9-12

Hayward, Susan, 'Setting the Agenders: Simone Signoret – The Pre-Feminist Star Body', in *Gender and French Cinema* ed. by Alex Hughes and James Williams (Oxford: Berg, 2001), pp. 107-123.

—, 'Simone Signoret 1921-1985: the star as sign – the sign as scar', in *Women and Representation*, ed. by Diana Knight and Judith Still, (Nottingham: WIF Publications – Women Teaching French Occasional Papers 3, 1995), pp. 57-74

Lachenay, Robert [François Truffaut], 'Portrait d'Humphrey Bogart', *Cahiers du cinéma*, 52 (novembre 1955), 30-37

Leahy, Sarah, 'Bardot and Dance: Representing the Real', *French Cultural Studies*, 13:1 (February 2002), 49-64

McCann, Graham, *Marilyn Monroe* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1988)

Martin, Pete, *Marilyn Monroe* (London: Frederick Muller Ltd, 1956)

Meyer-Stabley, Bertrand, *La véritable Audrey Hepburn* (Paris: Pygmalion/ Gérard Watelet, 2000)

Moireau, Jean-Claude, *Jeanne Moreau* (Paris: Ramsay, 1988)

Paris, Barry, *Audrey Hepburn* (London: Orion, 1996)

Phillippe, Claude-Jean, *Simone Signoret* (Paris: Hachette, 1985)

Rémond, Alain, *Yves Montand* (Paris: Henri Veyrier, 1977)

Rihoit, Catherine, *Brigitte Bardot: Un mythe français* (Paris: Olivier Orban, 1986)

Seberg, Jean, 'Lilith et moi', *Cahiers du cinéma* (avril 1966), 42-45

Signoret, Simone, *La nostalgie n'est plus ce qu'elle était* (Paris: Seuil, 1976)

Stanbrook, Alan, 'The Star They Couldn't Photograph', *Films and Filming* (February 1963)

Steinem, Gloria, *Marilyn: Norma Jeane* (London: Vista, 1996)

Taylor, Dabrina Anne, *Fair Lady, Huckleberry Friend: Femininity and Freedom in the Image of Audrey Hepburn 1953-1967* (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Maryland, 1997)

Truffaut, François, 'Les critiques du cinéma sont misogynes. BB est victime d'une cabale' *Arts* (12 décembre 1956)

Toubiana, Serge, 'Simone Signoret: sacré monstre', *Journal du cahiers du cinéma*, 377 (novembre 1985).

Vadim, Roger, *The Memoirs of Roger Vadim: Bardot, Deneuve and Fonda* trans. by Melinda Porter (London: Weidenfield and Nicholson, 1986)

Wilson, Elizabeth, 'Gamine Against the Grain', *Sight and Sound* (March 1993), 30-32

Zolotow, Maurice, *Marilyn Monroe* (London: WH Allen, 1961)

Critical and theoretical material on stardom:

Alexander, Karen, 'Fatal Beauties: Black Women in Hollywood', in *Stardom: Industry of Desire* ed. by Christine Gledhill (London: Routledge, 1995), pp. 45-54.

Dyer, Richard, *Stars* (London: BFI, 1979)

—, *Heavenly Bodies: Film Stars and Society* (London: Macmillan Educational, 1986)

Eckert, Charles, 'The Carole Lombard in Macy's Window', in *Stardom: Industry of Desire*, ed. by Christine Gledhill (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), pp. 30-39

Haskell, Molly, *From Reverence to Rape: the Treatment of Women in the Movies* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2nd edition 1987), pp. 254-5.

Harris, Thomas, 'The Building of Popular Images', in *Stardom: Industry of Desire*, ed. by Christine Gledhill (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), pp. 40-44

Morin, Edgar, *Les Stars* (Paris: Seuil, 1957)

Siclier, Jacques, *La Femme dans le cinéma français* (Paris: Cerf, 1957)

Stacey, Jackie, *Star Gazing: Hollywood Cinema and Female Spectatorship* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994).

Vincendeau, Ginette, *Stars and Stardom in French Cinema* (London: Continuum, 2000)

Critical and theoretical material on individual films and directors:

Andrew, Dudley, 'Casque d'or, casquettes, a cask of ageing wine: Jacques Becker's *Casque d'or*', in *French Film: Texts and Contexts* ed. by Ginette Vincendeau and Susan Hayward (London and New York: Routledge, 1990), pp. 157-172

—, 'Jules, Jim and Walter Benjamin', in *The Image in Dispute: Art and Cinema in the Age of Photography* ed. by Dudley Andrew and Sally Shafto, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1997), pp.33-53

Anon., 'Ariane et les Vieillards', *Le Canard Enchaîné* (5 juin 1957)

Anon., 'Don Juan et la Pucelle', *Combat* (3 juin 1957)

Anon., *Image et Son* 124 (1968)

Aumont, Jacques, 'The Fall of the Gods: Jean-Luc Godard's *Le Mépris*', in *French Film: Texts and Contexts* ed. by Susan Hayward and Ginette Vincendeau, (London and New York: Routledge, 2nd edition 2000), pp. 174-188

Bazin, André, 'How could you Possibly be a Hitchcocko-Hawksian?', trans. by John Moore in *Howard Hawks: American Artist* ed. by Jim Hillier and Peter Wollen (London: BFI, 1996), pp. 32-34.

de Baecque, Antoine and Serge Toubiana, *François Truffaut* (Paris: Gallimard, 1996)

- Becker, Jacques, François Truffaut and Jacques Rivette, 'Entretien avec Howard Hawks', *Cahiers du cinéma* 56 (février 1956), 4-17
- Berthomé, Jean-Pierre, *Jacques Demy: Les Racines du rêve* (Nantes: L'Atalante, 1982)
- Biette, J-C., 'Le minimum de Preminger', *Le Journal de cahiers du cinéma* no. 381 mars 1986, viii.
- Bogdanovich, Peter, *Who the Devil Made it?* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1997)
- Breen, James, 'In brief: Breakfast at Tiffany's', *Sight and Sound* Winter 1961-2, 38
- Chadère, Bernard, 'Les hommes préfèrent les blondes de H. Hawks', *Temps modernes* (janvier/ février 1955)
- Chapier, Henri, *Louis Malle* (Paris: Seghers 1964)
- Collet, Jean, 'L'Ombre blanche', *Cahiers du cinéma* 142 (avril 1963), 48-51
- Conqueteau, Pierre, '7 ans de réflexion de Billy Wilder', *Temps modernes*, (1955-56)
- Cornut-Gentile D'Arcy, Chantal, 'Who's Afraid of the Femme Fatale in *Breakfast at Tiffany's*? Exposure and Implications of a Myth', in *Gender, Ideology: Essays on Theory, Fiction and Film* ed. by Chantal Cornut-Gentile D'Arcy and José García Landa, (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1996), pp. 371-385
- Domarchi, Jean, 'Le Milliardaire ou l'apothéose de Marilyn', *Arts* (12 octobre 1960).
- Flitterman-Lewis, Sandy, 'Fascination, Friendship, and the 'Eternal Feminine': Or, The Discursive Production of (Cinematic) Desire', *The French Review*, 66:6 (May 1993), 941-46
- Greenspun, Roger, 'Elective Affinities: Aspects of *Jules et Jim*', *Sight and Sound*, 32:2 (Spring 1963), 78-83.

- Hayward, Susan, 'Théorie ludique et *Jules et Jim*', *Nottingham French Studies* 32:1 (Spring 1993), 55-64
- Holmes, Diana and Robert Ingram, *François Truffaut* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1998)
- Houston, Penelope, 'Film Review: Saint Joan', *Sight and Sound* (Summer 1957), 38.
- Insdorf, Annette, *François Truffaut, le cinéma est-il magique?*, trans. by Bruno Joliet and Yves Coleman (Paris: Ramsay, 1989)
- Krämer, Peter, ' "Faith in relations between people": Audrey Hepburn, *Roman Holiday* and European Integration', in *100 Years of European Cinema: Entertainment or Ideology*, ed. by Diana Holmes and Alison Smith (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2000), pp. 195-205
- , 'You're a Cutie With More than Beauty: Audrey Hepburn, the Hollywood Musical and Funny Face', in *Musicals: Hollywood and Beyond* ed. by Bill Marshall and Robynn Stilwell (Exeter: Intellect, 2000), pp. 62-69
- Loshitzky, Yosefa, *The Radical Faces of Godard and Bertolucci* (Detroit, Michigan: Wayne State University Press, 1995)
- Mc Cabe, Colin, *Godard: Images, Sounds, Politics*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980)
- Mc Dougal, Stuart Y., 'Adaption of an Auteur: Truffaut's *Jules et Jim*', in *Modern European Filmmakers and the Art of Adaption*, ed. by Andrew Horton and Joan Magretta (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1981), pp. 89-99
- Marie, Michel, 'It really makes you sick! Jean-Luc Godard's *A bout de souffle* (1960)', in *French Film: Texts and Contexts*, ed. by Susan Hayward and Ginette Vincendeau, (London and New York, Routledge, 2nd edition, 2000), pp. 159-173
- Monaco, James, *The New Wave: Truffaut, Godard, Chabrol, Rohmer, Rivette* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976)
- Mourlet, Michel, 'Saint Joan d'Otto Preminger', *La Revue des lettres modernes*, nos 71-73 (1962)

- Mulvey, Laura, 'Howard Hawks/ Marilyn Monroe/ Anita Loos', in *Howard Hawks: American Artist*, ed. by Jim Hillier and Peter Wollen (London: BFI, 1996), pp. 202-218
- Murphy, Kathleen, 'La Belle dame sans merci', *Film Comment* 28:6 (Nov-Dec 1992), 28-30
- Nicholls, David, 'Louis Malle's *L'Ascenseur pour l'échafaud* and the presence of the colonial wars in French cinema', *French Cultural Studies*, 7:3 (21), October 1996, 271-282
- Petrie, Graham, *The Cinema of Truffaut* (London: Barnes and Zwemmer, 1971)
- Rivette, Jacques, 'Sainte Cécile', *Cahiers du cinéma* (avril 1958), 52-4.
- , and François Truffaut, 'Entretien avec Jacques Becker', *Cahiers du cinéma* 32 (février 1954), 3-19
- Rouch, Jean and Edgar Morin, *Chronique d'un été* (Paris: InterSpectacles, 1962)
- Sellars, Susan, 'How Long Has This Been Going On? *Harper's Bazaar*, *Funny Face* and the Construction of the Modernist Woman', *Visible Language* 29:1 (1993), 13-34
- Siedenbaum, Art, 'Audrey Hepburn: The making of *My Fair Lady*', *McCalls* (October 1964), 97
- Smith, Steven, 'Godard and *film noir*: A Reading of *A Bout de souffle*', *Nottingham French Studies*, 32:1 (Spring 1993), 65-73
- Sterritt, David, *The Films of Jean-Luc Godard: Seeing the Invisible* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999)
- Taboulet, Camille, *Le Cinéma enchanté de Jacques Demy* (Paris: Cahiers du cinéma, 1996)
- Throne, Marilyn, 'Love in the Afternoon: A Cinematic Exposure of a 1950s myth' *Literature-Film Quarterly* 16:1 (1988), 65-73

Truffaut, François, 'Entretien avec Robert Aldrich', *Cahiers du cinéma* no 82

Turim, Maureen, 'Gentlemen Consume Blondes', in *Movies and Methods*, ed. by Bill Nicholls volume 2 (Los Angeles and Berkeley: University of California Press), pp. 369-378.

Williams, Tony, 'World War One in Truffaut's *Jules et Jim*', in *Modern War on Stage and Screen/ Der moderne Krieg auf der Bühne* ed. by Wolfgang Gortschacher and Holger Klein (Lewiston, NY: Mellen, 1997), pp. 401-14

Cahiers du cinéma, 106 (avril 1960).

Critical and theoretical material on cinema:

Aebischer, Verena, and Sonya Herzbrun, 'Cinéma et destins de femmes', *Cahiers Internationaux de Sociologie* 30 (1986), 147-160

de Baecque, Antoine, *La Nouvelle Vague: portrait d'une jeunesse* (Paris: Flammarion, 1998)

Bazin, André, *Qu'est-ce que le cinéma? Vol. 3 cinéma et sociologie* (Paris: Editions du cerf, 1961)

Bruzzi, Stella, *Undressing Cinema: Clothing and Identity in the Movies* (London: Routledge, 1997)

Buss, Robin, *French Film Noir* (London: Marion Boyars, 1994)

Doane, Mary Ann, *Femmes Fatales: Feminism, Film Theory, Psychoanalysis* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991)

Dyer, Richard, *The Matter of Images: Essays on Representation* (London and New York, Routledge, 1993)

—, *White* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997)

Goldmann, Annie, *Cinéma et société moderne* (Paris: Denoël/Gonthier, 1974)

- Hayward, Susan, *French National Cinema* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993)
- Haskell, Molly, *Holding My Own in No Man's Land: Women and Men and Film and Feminists* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997)
- Kline, T. Jefferson, *Screening the Text: Intertextuality in New Wave French Cinema* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1992)
- Lagny, Michèle, 'Ecran de fumée à l'écran', in *Anthropologie du tabac*, ed. by Sylvain Bouyer and Alain Gaffet (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1997), pp. 199-214.
- Lucas, Hans [Jean-Luc Godard], 'Défense et Illustration du découpage classique', *Cahiers du cinéma* 47 (septembre 1952), 28-32
- Morin, Edgar, *Le cinéma ou l'homme imaginaire* (Paris: Minuit, 1956)
- , Le role du cinéma, *Esprit* 28:6 (juin 1960), 1069-1079
- Mulvey, Laura, 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema', *Screen* 16:3 (Autumn 1975), 6-18
- , *Fetishism and Curiosity* (London: BFI, 1996)
- Sellier, Geneviève, 'Gender, Modernism and Mass Culture in the New Wave', in *Gender and French Cinema* ed. by Alex Hughes and James S. Williams (Oxford: Berg, 2001) pp.125-137
- Shonfield, Katherine, *Walls Have Feelings: Architecture, Film and the City* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000)
- Historical material on 1950s and 1960s France:**
- Atack, Margaret, 'War Stories 1939-1963', Unpublished paper first delivered at plenary session at Society for French Studies Conference, Dublin, July 2001
- Barthes, Roland, *Mythologies* (Paris: Seuil, 1957)
- Blanchot, Maurice, 'Everyday Speech', trans. by Susan Hanson in 'Everyday Life', ed. by Alice Kaplan and Kristin Ross, *Yale French Studies* 73 (1987), 12-20

- Chaperon, Sylvie, *Les Années Beauvoir 1945-1970* (Paris: Fayard, 2000)
- Duchen, Claire, 'Occupation Housewife: The Domestic Ideal in 1950s France', *French Cultural Studies* 2:1 (February 1991), 1-12
- , *Women's Rights and Women's Lives in France 1944-1986* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994)
- Fanon, Frantz, *Peau noire, masques blancs* (Paris: Seuil, 1952)
- , 'Algeria Unveiled' in *A Dying Colonialism*, trans. by Haakon Chevalier (New York: Grove Press, 1965), pp. 35-67
- Forsdick, Charles, 'Plonger dans un milieu réel: Edgar Morin in the Field', *French Cultural Studies* 8:3 (24) (October 1997), 309-332
- Gildea, Robert, *The Past in French History* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1994)
- Giroud, Françoise, *Si je mens* (Paris: Stock, 1972)
- Judt, Tony, *Past Imperfect: French intellectuals, 1944-56* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press)
- Kelly, Michael, *The Historical Emergence of Everyday Life*, www.lang.soton.ac.uk/students/french/lefebvre/unrestr/lefeb3.html (accessed 1 December 2000)
- Kofman, Myron, *Edgar Morin: From Big Brother to Fraternity* (London and Chicago: Pluto Press, 1996)
- Lefebvre, Henri, *Critique de la vie quotidienne vol. 1: Introduction* (Paris, L'Arche: 1958)
- , *Critique de la vie quotidienne vol. 2: Fondements d'une sociologie de la quotidienneté* (Paris: L'Arche, 1958)

- , 'Introduction à la psycho-sociologie de la vie quotidienne', (1960), in *Du rural à l'urbain* (Paris: Anthropos, 1970), pp. 89-107
- , *Introduction à la modernité: préludes* (Paris: Minuit, 1962)
- , 'Les Mythes de la vie quotidienne', *Cahiers internationaux de sociologie* volume 33 (juillet- décembre 1962), 67-74
- , 'Henri Lefebvre (né en 1905)', in *Les Philosophes Français d'aujourd'hui par eux-mêmes*, ed. by Gérard Deledelle and Denis Huisman (Paris: CDU, 1963)
- , *Sociologie de Marx* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1966)
- , *La Vie quotidienne dans le monde moderne* (Paris: Gallimard, 1968)
- , 'The Everyday and Everydayness', trans. by Christine Levich in 'Everyday Life', ed. by Alice Kaplan and Kristin Ross, *Yale French Studies* 73 (1987), 4-11
- Morin, Edgar, *Autocritique* (Paris: Seuil, 1959)
- , *L'Esprit du temps* (Paris: Grasset, 1962)
- , *Commune en France: la métamorphose de Plodémet* (Paris: Fayard, 1967)
- Navarre, Henri, *Agonie de l'Indochine* (Paris: Plon, 1956)
- Rigby, Brian, 'The Notion of 'the Anthropological' in Morin's Cultural Analysis', *French Cultural Studies*, 8:3 (October 1997), 333-340
- Rioux, Jean-Pierre, *La France de la Quatrième République: l'ardeur et la nécessité 1944-1952* (Paris: Seuil, 1980)
- , *La France de la Quatrième République: l'expansion et l'impuissance 1952-1958* (Paris: Seuil, 1983)
- Ross, Kristen, *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies: Decolonization and the Reordering of French Culture* (Cambridge, MA: October / MIT Press, 1996)

Shields, Rob, *Lefebvre, Love and Struggle: Spatial Dialectics* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999)

Weiner, Susan, 'Editor's Preface: The French Fifties', *Yale French Studies* 98 (2000), 1-4

Wylie, Laurence, *A Village in the Vaucluse* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1957)

Other material:

Anderson, Benedict, *Imagined Communities: Reflection on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 2nd edition 1991)

Angeloglou, Maggie, *A History of Make-up* (London: Studio Vista, 1970)

Anon., *Givenchy: 40 ans de création* (Paris: Paris Musées/ Galliera, 1991)

Ash, Juliet, and Elizabeth Wilson, eds, *Chic Thrills: A Fashion Reader* (London: Pandora, 1992)

Audry, Colette, 'Bonjour Tristesse de Françoise Sagan', *Temps modernes* (juin 1954)

Badinter, Elisabeth, *The Myth of Motherhood: A Historical View of the Maternal Instinct* trans. by Roger de Gans (London: Souvenir Press, 1981)

Bartky, Sandra, 'Foucault, Femininity and the Modernization of Patriarchal Power', in *Feminism & Foucault: Reflections on Resistance* ed. by Irene Diamond and Lee Quinby (Boston, MA: Northeastern University Press, 1988), pp. 61-86

Baudelaire, Charles, *The Painter of Modern Life and other essays* trans. by Jonathon Mayne (New York: De Capa, 1986)

de Beauvoir, Simone, *America Day by Day* (1954) trans. by Carol Cosman (London: Victor Gollancz, 1996)

Benjamin, Walter, *Charles Baudelaire: a Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism*, trans. by Harry Zohn (London: Verso, 1983)

Boltanski, Luc, *Les Cadres: la formation d'un groupe social* (Paris: Minuit, 1982)

Butler, Judith, *Excitable Speech: The Politics of Performativity* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997)

Capello, Eric, 'La publicité et le tabac', in *Anthropologie du tabac* ed. by Sylvain Bouyer and Alain Gaffet (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1997), pp. 215-224.

Capote, Truman, (1958) *Breakfast at Tiffany's* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2000)

Champney Urbano, Cynthia, '50 years of Hair-care Development', *Cosmetics and Toiletries magazine* 110:12 (December 1995)

Chevalier, Louis, *Monmartre du plaisir et du crime* (Paris: Robert Laffont, 1980)

Clark, Timothy J., 'Preliminaries to a Possible Treatment of *Olympia* in 1865', *Art in Modern Culture: an Anthology of Critical Texts*, ed. by Francis Francina and Charles Harris (London: Phaidon Press, 1992), pp. 105-120.

Cornu, Charles, *Les Savons et les Détergents* (Paris: Que-sais je?, 1970)

Delbourg-Delphis, Marylène, *Le Chic et le look – histoire de la mode féminine et des mœurs de 1850 à nos jours* (Paris: Hachette, 1981)

Dubey, Madhu, 'The "True Lie" of the Nation: Fanon and Feminism', *Differences* 10:2 (Summer 1998), 3-38

Forty, Adrian, *Objects of Desire: Design and Society since 1750* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1986)

Foucault, Michel, *History of Sexuality, vol. 1*, trans. by Robert Hurley, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976)

Freud, Sigmund, 'The Uncanny,' in *Art and Literature*, vol. 14, *The Penguin Freud Library* trans. by and under the general editorship of James Strachey (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1990), pp. 70-85

Gilman, Sander, *Difference and Pathology: Stereotypes of Sexuality, Race and Madness* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1985)

Guérin, Daniel, *Kinsey et la sexualité* (Paris: Juilliard, 1955)

Henley, Jon, 'France sends home freakshow remains', *Guardian*, 20 February 2002, p. 16

Kaplan, Louise J., *Female Perversions: The Temptations of Madame Bovary* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1993)

Kosofsky Sedgwick, Eve, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985)

Loos, Anita, (1925) *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1992)

Martin, Richard, 'Style from Paris, Reality from America: Fashion in Life magazine 1947-1963', *Journal of American Culture* 19:4 (1996), 51-5

Merck, Mandy, *Perversions* (London: Virago, 1993)

Michelet, Jules, *La Femme* (Paris: Flammarion, 1981)

Mohrt, Françoise, *The Givenchy Style* (Paris: Assouline, 1998)

Nettelbeck, Colin, ed *War and Identity: The French and the Second World War* (London: Methuen, 1987)

Prendergast, Christopher, *Paris and the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992)

Rabine, Leslie W., 'A Woman's 2 Bodies: Fashion Magazines, Consumerism and Feminism', in *On Fashion* ed. by Shari Benstock and Suzanne Ferriss (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1994), pp. 59-75

- Riley, Glenda, *Inventing the American Woman: A Perspective on Woman's History 1865 to the Present* (Illinois: Harlan Davison, 1986)
- Stoller, Robert, *Observing the Erotic Imagination* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1985)
- von Sacher-Masoch, Leopold, *La Vénus à la fourrure* trans. Aude Willm (Paris: Minuit, 1967)
- Turim, Maureen, 'Designing Women: The Emergence of the New Sweetheart Line', *Wide Angle* 6:2, 1984, 4-11.
- Turner Wilcox, Ruth, *The Mode in Hats and Headdress* (London and New York: Charles Scribner and Sons, 1959)
- Vinikas, Vincent, *Soft Soap: Hard Sell: American Hygiene in an Age of Advertisement* (Ames, IA: Iowa State University Press, 1992)
- Warner, Marina, *From the Beast to the Blonde* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1994)
- , *Joan of Arc: The Image of Female Heroism* (London: Vintage, 1981)
- Wollen, Peter, 'Manet: Modernism and Avant-Garde, Timothy Clark's article on Manet's *Olympia*', *Screen*, 21:3 (Summer 1980), 15-25.
- Wyse, Lois, *Blonde, Beautiful Blonde: How to Look, Live, Work and Think Blonde* (New York: M Evans and Company, 1980)