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# The Politics of Representation in *Breakfast at Tiffany's*

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## 1 Introduction

The image of Audrey Hepburn in a little black dress with a cigarette holder in her hand has become almost synonymous with Holly Golightly, her iconic character in Blake Edwards' film adaptation of Truman Capote's celebrated novella, *Breakfast at Tiffany's* (1961). Conflated with Hepburn's immaculate public image as the epitome of class and poise, Holly too has become an instantly recognizable symbol of elegance and chic. This Holly is, however, only one facet of the gem of a character created by Capote in 1958 and immortalized by Hepburn in Edwards' film three years later.

Despite Capote's status as a literary celebrity, the fame of the cinematic Holly eclipses that of her literary counterpart. *Tiffany's* is neither Capote's most read or most discussed work, those are arguably his first novel *Other Voices, Other Rooms* (1948), which launched him in public consciousness, as well as the lauded *In Cold Blood* (1966), a groundbreaking work in the true-crime genre. However, *Tiffany's*, too, garnered favorable reviews upon its publication and spent 10 weeks in the New York Times bestseller list (Krämer 61). The publication of the novella in Esquire magazine and in book form simultaneously was far from unproblematic; despite Capote's celebrity status the manuscript was turned down by his previous publisher Harper Collins due to its controversial subject matter (Wasson 63-4). It is precisely this aspect of the work which made me want to write my thesis on this topic; its controversial story world – and the world of difference between it and that of Edwards' classic romantic comedy.

The changes in Holly's characterization in the adaptation process were calculated and defined by various factors: namely a shift in genre, commercial reasons, and the film industry's concern with morality. Capote's novella, featuring what has been generally interpreted as an autobiographical gay male narrator, a platonic friendship between the narrator and the protagonist and an anti-climactic, unhappy ending were deemed unsuitable, uninteresting and unadaptable for cinematic audiences and were abandoned in order to transform the story from a character study into a romantic comedy (Krämer 61-3). Since Paramount Pictures, the studio which produced the film, was set on making it a major release starring a household name, they could not risk ruffling too many feathers with a scandalous storyline – this is something that the director Edwards has openly discussed in interviews (Wasson 144). In terms of the reception of the film it seems that Edwards' and the screenwriter

George Axelrod's combination of a traditional love story with hints of controversial, adult themes was a smart move, for the film did very well both commercially and critically: it was a hit at the box office and won several awards, including two Academy Awards.<sup>1</sup>

The novella and the film offer two very different representations of the character of Holly and how she navigates within a world that is organized around gender difference. Whereas the novella presents her as an unconventional, eccentric young woman who subverts the matrix of power that regulates female sexuality and whose identity is performative, fluid and in a constant state of flux, lending her easily to a post-modern interpretation, the film settles on a modern portrayal by fixing her identity on a stable center – that of a man. The Holly of the novella, despite her goal of becoming a rich man's wife, defies many notions of traditional femininity, whereas the Holly in the film, while sharing some of the characteristics of her literary predecessor succumbs to a representation of conventional, acceptable, socially licensed womanhood and the idea that her place in the world – the one that makes her feel like at Tiffany's – is next to a man.

Reviewing these two works side by side, while keeping in mind the adaptation process, which was conditioned by the authorial decisions of individual actors (the screenwriter, the director, the producers) as well as official, regulatory forces, allows us to make interpretations of the ideological messages that the works offer to the reader and to the viewer.

While both works present Holly via a male character, it is only in the film where the male gaze comes to eventually define and limit her. In the novella Holly is viewed through the consciousness of the gay male first-person narrator, who seeks ways to define and contain her plurality, whereas in the film she is represented mainly from the viewpoint of the straight male lead character (a transposition of the narrator), whom the viewer is invited to identify with. However, whereas the Holly of Capote's novella resists the definition of the male and remains an independent agent who defies the norms of traditional femininity and womanhood, the Holly in the film, while initially suggestive of the idea that she, too, might be a new kind of a popular culture character altogether, a woman fully in charge of her agency, succumbs to a

<sup>1</sup> The film made 8 million USD in 1961. (Approximately 62.5 million USD, adjusted to inflation.) The film was nominated for five Academy Awards, including the awards for best adapted screenplay and best actress in a leading role. It won two awards, for best score and best original song for “Moon River” (Internet Movie Database and Dollar Times)

representation of the woman as secondary and inferior to the man. Through representing Holly as an object of the male gaze and within the narrative confines of the classic, hetero-normative romantic comedy, Holly's eventual acceptance of the hegemony of the patriarchal gender hierarchy gains narrational plausibility. Thus I argue that while both works recognize the patriarchal need to “make sense” of the woman as a means of control, only the film succeeds in this since the ambiguous ending of the novella leaves room for other interpretations. Holly's departure from New York and from the life of the narrator, only to reappear years later in the form of memories awakened by a photograph, may thus be seen as her final act of defiance against patriarchy's inability to reconcile her complexity.

### 1.1 Previous Criticism

While Capote's novels have garnered interest in literary criticism, not much has been written about *Breakfast at Tiffany's*. While the film adaptation has etched itself into our cultural consciousness, only a small portion of the number of texts produced on it has been academic. This relative lack of scholarship on the two works is a major motivation behind my analysis, a wish to fill a void in academic discourse by offering my own, comparative reading of the novella and the film, focusing on how the shift from literature to film, as well as from a character study to a romantic comedy resulted in a significant departure from the ideological interpretations the original work may be considered to implicitly convey.

In one of the few academic essays published on Capote's novella, Bede Scott suggests the text's assumed lack of depth and its fascination with the superficial and the transparent as the reasoning for its exclusion from academic discourse. These thematic elements, Capote's use of “style over substance”, Scott suggests, are a stylistic strategy, one aimed towards “the attenuation of meaning”, an aesthetic impulse best captured in traditional Japanese art and poetry, an area of interest of Capote's (129-30). According to Scott, the lack of appreciation for *Tiffany's* may be explained by the traditional value judgment which expects great literary works to use “substantial” language and to deal with “the great basic things in life” in order to be able to produce any real meaning. Scott argues that the impulse towards “lightness” and “insubstantiality”, which are illustrated in the novella's use of metaphors so

obvious that they become diluted of all symbolic meaning<sup>2</sup>, as well as in its resistance towards adhering to a hermeneutic code,<sup>3</sup> and in the characterization of Holly as a vacuous character, fixated on the superficial, is recognized as an aesthetic motivation, but it is often found inferior to weightier themes (129-30).

Scott argues that Holly's "semiotic emptiness" (139-40), the result of her plurality, makes her a "floating signifier", "a sign of the text's guilelessness, a sign whose purpose ... is to assure the reader that there are no hidden reserves of meaning" (133). Because her fixation on the surface of things guides her towards constantly transforming herself, she is "capable of representing (almost) anything" (140-1). It is this plurality that the narrator seeks to contain and define by finding a stable center in Holly, thus creating the main narrative tension of the novella. While Scott views this attempt at finding a "definite reading of Holly's character" (142) as representative of the "monocentric" tendency of Western thinking to define everything in clear terms, I believe it may also be seen in terms of patriarchy; the determination of the male to define the female in his terms, denying her the subject position he grants himself.

In another recent essay Dina Smith concentrates on another aspect of *Breakfast at Tiffany's* (both novella and film), the narrative of Holly's transformation. Smith views Holly's metamorphosis from a poor orphan in rural Texas into a Manhattan socialite as a Cinderella metaphor, a transformation narrative of female social mobility. This process, Smith argues, may be viewed allegorically as a portrayal of the elusive American dream and the sanctification of the capitalist ideology, which in light of the postwar economic boom gained particular significance in popular culture.

In her essay Smith finds entry points in the symbolism of the two *Tiffany's* narratives and analyzes the stories thematically, by drawing comparisons with the symbolic dimension of the folk tale. Her analysis constructs the *Tiffany's* narratives as commentaries on the 1950s mentalities on female sexuality and feminine domesticity and considers the free and liberated Holly of the novella as "a projection of [the

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2 Among the empty metaphors referred to by Scott are Holly's aversion to zoos as a sign of her desire to live by her own rules, as well as her frequent use of dark sunglasses as her need to hide her true self from others (130).

3 Introduced by Roland Barthes in *S/Z*, the hermeneutic code is to be understood as the narration's way of setting up mysteries or enigmas which the reader has to figure out the answers to; "articulate in various ways a question, its response ... an enigma and ... its solution" (*S/Z* 17). This interplay of question and answer, mystery and revelation drives the story. According to Scott the hermeneutic code is all but discarded in *Tiffany's* because all the mysteries are revealed after very little delay (135).

narrator's] ... desire for a viable subaltern fifties culture”; an impulse which was stifled by the post-war societal pressures towards economic growth and wholesome domesticity. Smith argues that Holly may thus be seen as containing echoes of the feminists of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, making her dislocated from the domesticity of the 1950s.

Smith interprets Capote's Holly via “the logic of the fetish”, as a vessel that simultaneously proposes and denies the desire it holds. Through her, she argues, the narrator reflects on and navigates through the dual narratives of sexuality, “freedom and containment”. According to Smith the narrator tries to find a suitable discourse to place Holly within. However, he struggles with this, because the process forces him to articulate things which he simultaneously tries to repress in himself. Whereas Scott, as discussed above, considers the narrator's need to make sense of Holly as representative of his cultural ideologies, Smith views it in relation to his own, repressed sexuality.

In her essay Chantal Cornut-Gentille D'Arcy analyzes the film version of *Tiffany's* as a commentary on the femme fatale character, a classic female stock character and archetype in film, literature, and visual arts. She discusses the popular myths in Western culture about woman's duality – the myth of Eve, the one at fault for the fall of man, and the cult of the Virgin Mary, the innocent and chaste woman, “free from sexuality” (376). Her analysis constructs the filmic Holly as an embodiment of this duality; on one hand she acts as the traditional femme fatale, using her charm and beauty to seduce men, while on the other hand, emphasized by the casting of Hepburn, her youthfulness, frailty and thinness bestow on her an adolescence, an innocence, a girliness, which the male protagonist comes to protect.<sup>4</sup>

The ideological message of the film, argues Cornut-Gentille D'Arcy, is the “reinforcing [of] an economic conception of woman's place in society” (382). As women were restricted from the workforce when men returned from the war, the post-war economic growth came to rely on the “veritable cult of feminine domesticity”. Thus Holly's misfortunes in leading an independent life, free from the dominant sensibilities requiring her containment, should be seen as representative of “the dangers inherent in female emancipation” (380) and thus “fraudulent” towards and

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4 The physical appearance of Hepburn is noteworthy here since it differs from that of all the other mid-century female film icons (eg. Rita Hayworth, Marilyn Monroe, Elizabeth Taylor etc.) According to industry legend, when Hepburn broke into cinema, director Billy Wilder remarked “This girl ... might make bosoms a thing of the past.” (Wasson 46)

incompatible with feminist ideas.

In this essay I will develop Scott's analysis of the narrator's attempt to make sense of Holly by constructing a narrative that she fits in, by arguing that the attempt may be seen in terms of the patriarchal need to place the woman within its hegemonic gender paradigm. The narrator's failure in figuring Holly out illustrates the problematic of the attempt; successfully containing her within such narrow, clearly-defined categories requires the reduction of her complexities, which she continuously resists. As for Scott's take on the transparency and the superficiality of the novella, my analysis recognizes them as features of the thematic landscape, but finds arguments for the story's simplicity to be just that, too simplistic. This, I hope, will become apparent to the reader in due course.

When contrasting the two works I will draw on Smith's analysis of the *Tiffany's* narratives as a Cinderella metaphor and illustrate how the sense of transformation in the novella ties in with Holly's plurality and ever-changing sense of identity, whereas in the film that transformation finds a clear conclusion as Holly is recuperated within the patriarchal matrix; she changes from a morally dubious character to a proper, "good" woman by falling in love with a good man.

The notion of Holly as a fetish object, which Smith uses to analyze the narrator's need to make sense of both her and his own sexualities, allows me to transition to the analysis of the film adaptation. In the film Holly is constructed as a fetish object via the gaze of the male protagonist and the film viewer, who both come to assume the position of the voyeur via the use of various cinematographic techniques. As the object of the gaze, the fulfillment of the narrative promise – whether she and Paul end up together – comes to rely on Holly. By constructing her as a fetish object the film strips her of the complexity found in her literary counterpart, characterized by her array of conflicting and changing identifications and her reflections on gender and sexuality. Her inner turmoil, which in the novella is presented as never-ending, is resolved through her finding a man. Her plurality, which in the novella drives the whole narrative, the narrator's need to understand it, is all but eradicated in the film, reduced to the point of non-existence, by the male protagonist's "help" in defining her in clear terms. Her sexuality, which Capote's novella presents without sparing any details, is erased during the adaptation process, leaving only the faintest of traces.

I will now move on to introduce the theories which have helped me in



illustrating my arguments in theoretical terms. After this I will offer a brief look at the adaptation background that enabled the transposition of Capote's novella into film. From there on I shall continue with my analysis of the two works, beginning with a close reading of the novella, followed by that of the film. I have divided the chapter on the novella into sections concentrating on the narrator and his characterization of Holly, and Holly, as she is presented through her own dialogue.

After exploring Capote's story world, I move on to the story world of the film. I will begin with an analysis of the hegemonic role of the film industry as a producer of idealized narratives, which in the adaptation process consciously strove towards simplifying Holly's character and reconstructing Capote's narrative as reflective of dominant social ideals. I will then discuss the sexual politics in the film and the construction of Holly as the object of the male gaze held by Paul, and, through merging his point of view with that of the film narration, the viewer. In order to illustrate the dominant ideology which the adaptation process used to saturate the narrative with, I will discuss how Holly and Paul's relationship is presented metaphorically. My analysis will hopefully elucidate how these techniques, the construction of the relationship between the object of the gaze and the voyeur as well as the portrayal of the central relationship via metaphors, actively seek to diminish Holly's complexity by presenting it as fear of love and commitment.

## **1.2 Theoretical Background**

The theoretical and ideological basis of my essay lies in a combination of adaptation studies and feminist criticism. I have found Linda Hutcheon's *A Theory of Adaptation* (2013) particularly useful due to its non-normative approach and for its focus on the adaptive process on a structural level, whereas the works of Judith Butler, Teresa De Lauretis, E. Ann Kaplan and Annette Kuhn have proven incredibly enlightening in allowing me to articulate my interpretations of the notions of gender, sexuality, femininity, subjectivity and representation that permeate both of my primary sources.

I am also indebted to the works of Stuart Hall, particularly for introducing the extremely useful blanket term, the politics of representation, which I have included in my essay title. Although Hall uses this term in his discussion on race and ethnicity in cinema, I believe it to be extremely fitting to cover the concepts I wish to discuss in this essay, namely how the dialectic of the two works and the adaptation

process connecting them may be used to address questions regarding the hegemonic cultural practices which normalize processes of fetishization, and the subversion of said processes. In the remaining of this chapter I will introduce the main terminology and theoretical concepts which I will use in my analysis, beginning with a discussion on adaptations and moving on to feminist criticism and feminist film criticism.

**Adaptation Theory.** Hutcheon connects the study of adaptations to that of intertextuality and notes that adaptations, particularly those of canonical works, are often viewed with a much more critical eye than “original” works. In a discussion on different media, Hutcheon calls to question the antiquated notion of the hierarchy of cultural products awarding superiority to literature over film, and instead advocates reading adaptations as texts in the Barthesian, inherently intertextual sense, characterized by a dynamic interplay of repetition and variation. This view of seeing a text as “a tissue of quotations” (Barthes), “a compound” (Eliot), “a palimpsest” (Genette), “an intersection of textual surfaces rather than a point ... a dialogue among several meanings” (Kristeva qtd. in Alfaro 268) is particularly useful when analyzing a work which has sometimes been viewed as a re-fashioning of an earlier text; Capote's novella has at times been considered an adaptation, namely of Christopher Isherwood's short story *Sally Bowles* (1939), which has since been adapted and re-adapted into the famous musical *Cabaret* (first produced in 1966) and the film of the same title (1972, dir. Bob Fosse). The story, whose eponymous character shares several characteristics with Capote's Holly, as well as a similar friendship with a(n allegedly autobiographical) gay male narrator, has been suggested as the inspiration for *Tiffany's*. Although a thorough exploration of the similarities between the two stories lies outside the scope of this paper, it is worth noting that adapting Capote's novella into film was considered risky due to these similarities with Isherwood's work and its initial film adaptation, *I am a Camera* (1955, dir. Henry Cornelius) (Wasson 71).

Hutcheon suggests approaching the theorizing of adaptations from three perspectives. Firstly, the status of adaptations as independent works of cultural production should not be denied and they should, like their sources, be considered as the results of unique, creative processes. Secondly, those creative processes should be viewed as cycles of “(re-)interpretation and ... (re-)creation” (7) and not simply as straightforward processes of adding, removing and replacing. Finally, in terms of the reception of adaptations, the major role played by the recipient's degree of familiarity

of the intertextuality should not be ignored.

In contrast with the age-old notion of judging adaptations based on how they capture the “spirit” of the adapted work, Hutcheon theorizes the various aspects of the original work which may be adapted. The ones that I have found most useful in my own analysis are adaptations of themes, characters, story lines, as well as points of conclusion (12), because when reviewing the two works side by side it becomes clear that the interpretations of the first three aspects have resulted in a completely different ending, allowing for the huge difference in the inferred ideological messages. The transposition of the platonic friendship between the narrator and Holly into the love story of Holly and Paul is not without its implications and when we take into consideration the impact of the regulations and practices embedded within the industry at the time, we come to grasp at the significance of filmic representations within our culture.

The focus on the shift of medium and genre is also central to my study. The shift from literature to film here means a change of modes of engagement from “telling” to “showing”, by changing from engaging the reader's imagination to immersing her in a ready-made visual and aural story world (24). These changes signify “transpositions from one sign system . . . to another” (16), each with its own limitations and freedoms. For example, the question of portraying interiority and exteriority in different media has traditionally been answered by resolving that literature works better in portraying the former, whereas film has been considered better suited for the latter (53). However, many filmic conventions have come to be used to illustrate the inner states of the characters, such as close ups and music, which in the film *Tiffany's* are used to mark significant moments of emotional turmoil and inner reflection.

As Hutcheon notes, film adaptations of long novels normally have to undergo a process of some level of reduction in order to be dramatized, which is often used as an argument for film adaptations' inferiority to the literary works they reinterpret (36-7). Short stories thus are often considered better suited for adaptation for dramatic purposes: it is usually easier to fit 50 pages into 2 hours of dramatic action than it is to fit 500 pages. Adapting short stories into film also offers opportunities to further develop the themes introduced in the source text and deepen the characterization of the characters. However, as I will illustrate in my analysis of the film, the deepening of themes or characterizations is not given – sometimes the

opposite might happen and the themes and characters introduced in the short source text are actually reduced in complexity.

Since filmmaking is a collaborative process the question of who the adapter is requires some discussion. As discussed earlier, while recent trends in cultural criticism have decried discussion on authorial motivations as the main or major basis of analysis, authorship cannot be completely ignored, particularly when the various motivations of the parties involved in the production of the adaptation are clearly documented and relevant to the interpretation, such as the influence of the financial factors or that of the PCA (discussed in Krämer, Wasson). The main creative input in the adaptation process I shall discuss was that of the screenwriter George Axelrod and the director Blake Edwards. There were certainly other creative forces involved, such as the producers (Martin Jurow and Richard Shepherd), the cinematographer (Franz Planer), who together with the composer (Henry Mancini) was in charge of the creation of the visual and aural *mise-en-scène*, as well as the actors, who also had the occasional input on their lines. However, for reasons of clarity and brevity, when referring to the authorship of the film I will refer to Axelrod and Edwards.

Due to the shift in the modes of engagement from literature to film (and due to the changes made to the storyline), the notion of the point of view gains particular importance. Some of the questions I shall attempt to answer in my analysis are: whose point of view does the film really represent? Who does the film invite the viewer to identify with? By what means? And to what effect? How does it affect the characterization of Holly? As I will illustrate in my analysis, the point of view becomes quickly fixed on that of Paul, the main voyeur, whom the viewer is encouraged to identify with.

**Feminist Criticism and Feminist Film Theory.** My ideological point of departure into the analysis of the two works lies in feminist criticism. As the works revolve around central female characters, who in a number of ways differ – one more than the other – from the majority of mainstream representations of women produced by mid-century American popular culture, I have found this approach not only relevant but extremely productive since it has allowed me to pose vital questions about the ideological messages that the adaptation – the process and the product – can be deduced to convey about gender roles and about the status of the film industry as

an incubator of representations of those roles.

The gender paradigm, intersecting the discourse on sexuality, in Western society is traditionally presented in terms of a binary opposition of the male and the female, which the hegemony of patriarchal values constructs as a hierarchy. In post-modern cultural criticism we should not think of the developments in the discourse on sexuality in the 20<sup>th</sup> century as a relaxation of rules, morals or taboos but a proliferation of discourses (which I am inclined to agree since despite the many cultural and legislative changes brought about by the “sexual revolution” of the 1960s there are still various aspects of sexuality which are strictly regulated by official institutions even in the most liberal of Western societies, such as gay rights and women's reproductive rights).<sup>5</sup> Despite changing attitudes and expanding discourses this gender paradigm, which has for centuries constructed women as loci of male, heterosexual desire, denying them a subject position, is still alive in many of the cultural products created by Western society, although alternatives are available for those who seek them.

Butler, drawing on this line of thinking, asserts that the “restrictive discourse on gender” which is based on the strict binary of the male and female and their respective, normative, heterosexual desires “naturalizes” the hegemonic gender order and rules out any alternative discourses (*Undoing Gender* 43). Via this act of naturalization and foreclosure, an imaginary line is drawn between the normal and the abnormal. The normal, when applied to men, comes to signify certain behaviors and acts and when applied to women comes to, respectively, signify certain other behaviors and acts; what is considered normal for men is not the same as for women. Capote's novella presents Holly as someone who does not fit within the position this restrictive discourse demands of her and neither does the narrator. The film, however, presents this dilemma, but eventually fixes both Holly and Paul to their respective positions the patriarchal hegemony and its gender paradigm require of them. In terms of the narrative, this happens at the end of the film, but the filmic conventions and visuals suggest this from the very beginning.

Due to the plural, changing nature of Capote's Holly, and the thematic of the mystery surrounding her origin (discussed in detail in the next chapter) I believe her to lend herself easily to an analysis based on post-modern notions of identity. This line of criticism, which Butler's views on gender rely on, question earlier, essentialist

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<sup>5</sup> For further discussion see Foucault.

notions of the stability and universality of identity and consider it discursive, constantly changing and without a coherent center. The postmodern subject thus becomes seen as the product of historical development, constructed of various, often contradictory processes of identifications accumulated over time and projected against each other (*Identiteetti* 23). With this anti-essentialist and historical, as opposed to a biological point of view in mind, Butler discusses the concept of identity in relation to gender and sexuality and argues that gender should be seen as “the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts” (*Gender Trouble* 45) which produces the illusion of its naturalness and stability. However, the performativity of gender should not be confused with theatricality or deliberateness, but instead as the subconscious repetition of the often “repressive and painful gender norms” that we have come to take for granted (Butler, 1992, 84). These gender norms are to be seen as “symbolic positions”, meaning that they are “uninhabitable” (85). In agreement with de Beauvoir's argument that woman (as a category) is not something one is but instead something one *becomes* (or rather, tries to become), Butler suggests that woman is “an ongoing discursive practice”, “a term in process, a becoming, a constructing that cannot rightfully be said to originate or end” and is thus open to reinterpretation and re-signification (*Gender Trouble* 45). To put this simply: there is no right way of “doing womanhood” even though our culture would have us believe otherwise. This is something Capote's novella seems to recognize without making any value judgments and something the film seems to condemn.

A popular approach in feminist film criticism combines semiotics with Lacanian psychoanalysis, allowing for the study of the production of meaning in film. Scholars such as De Lauretis, Kaplan, Kuhn and Mulvey all base their theories on these approaches, allowing them to pose questions about the way women are represented and viewed in cinema. In her collection of essays *Alice Doesn't – Feminism, Semiotics, Cinema* (1985), De Lauretis remarks on cinema's role as “an apparatus of social representation”, and the dependence of film-making on socioeconomic factors. Due to this societal aspect, the way films handle gender, sexuality and subjectivity is at their very core. In her analysis of the nature of cinema as a producer of images De Lauretis argues for understanding cinema as a “signifying practice” which “produces effects of meaning and perception, self-images and subject positions for all those involved, makers and viewers”. It is through these processes that the makers and the viewers are “continually engaged, represented, and inscribed

in ideology” (37).

Similarly, in *Women's Pictures – Feminism and Cinema* Kuhn calls for the “de-naturalisation” of the viewing of films by exposing the ideologies that lie underlie them (82). The verisimilitude of the art form makes cinema particularly interesting for ideological analysis, because it allows us to question the relation between cinema and reality we live in; how do the illusions of society that films offer reflect (on) reality? The critics mentioned above all agree that there is a tendency in classic Hollywood cinema<sup>6</sup> to represent, recreate and validate the patriarchal societal order inherent to Western society. The degree of realism required of these films, which also audiences have come to expect, operates under the guise of objectivity and impersonality (Kaplan 49). As Bordwell and Thompson note, the setting and the actions of the characters are expected to convey plausibility within the narrative confines; viewers often become annoyed when watching a film because “real people don't act that way” (119). Realism may thus be seen as a premise or a requirement for identification and engagement.

As a visual art form, the notion of spectatorship is integral to analyzing cinema. De Lauretis argues that “spectators are not ... either in the film text *or* simply outside the film text ... they intersect the film as they are intersected by cinema” (44). They are “constructed as the [points] of intelligibility and origin” (53) of filmic images and meanings. Feminist film critics argue that the rhetoric of classic films generally addresses the male, who is understood as the universal, unmarked category of subjects (Kuhn 62), or “the active principle of culture” (De Lauretis 119), whereas the female becomes associated through lack and passivity. In her analysis of narrative constructions De Lauretis argues that the mechanics of narration are constructed on sexual difference, of boundary and passing. The male is established as the one who “creates the action” (139), whereas the female is merely “an element of plot-space, a topos, a resistance” (119). The teleological narrative of our culture instructs the male to cross the boundary, conquer the “personified obstacle” of the female, a chain of events in which the female is made to fill the promise made to the male, “to his social

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6 Classic Hollywood cinema is here to be understood as films produced during the Golden Age of Hollywood (roughly between early 1930's and early 1960s). It is also understood as the dominant narrative style, in which action is put in motion by the clearly defined psychological motivations or desires of individual characters. The individual characters encounter counterforces, which require them to seek change. Finally, closure is achieved through change. The narration tends to be unrestricted in that it is not limited to only showing the viewers what the characters know (Bordwell & Thompson 98-9). Both definitions apply to the discussion in this essay.

contract, *his* biological and affective destiny ... his desire” (133). This narrative premise, argues De Lauretis, subjugates the fulfillment of the female “journey” to that of the male.

Quoting Mulvey's famous words, De Lauretis, too, argues that the “story demands sadism” in its insistence on resolving narrative tensions by “forcing a change in another person” (132-3). These resolutions, she proposes, tend to happen regardless of women's consent since it is the man who creates the action. The restoration of the correct state of things, “recuperating” (Kuhn 34) the woman within the hegemonic patriarchal matrix, is what conditions the narrative process.

Drawing from Mulvey, De Lauretis proposes that cinematic narration, simultaneously with the production of images of women also “tends to reproduce woman *as* image” (38), which Kuhn describes in terms of the fetish (60). The female position in the narrative thus becomes fixed to a portion of the “plot-space”, which the male “crosses or crosses to” via the “converging of looks on the female figure”. The female therefore comes to occupy the position of the “object of the gaze[,] an image made to be looked at” by the male character, who the spectator is invited to identify with. By merging the film spectator with the position of the active male in the film narrative, the film gaze is masculinized (hence the term “the male gaze”). As De Lauretis explains, the female may inhibit the plot-space of the obstacle rather literally, evidenced by the abundance of stories where helpless women are rescued from all kinds of dangers by heroic men, but the female may also resist the position of confinement by “disturbing it, perverting it, making trouble, seeking to exceed the boundary” (139). This is what both the literary and filmic Hollies do with different results – make trouble within the position they are placed in by rebelling against the social norms.

The male gaze is scopophilic in nature in that it derives pleasure from the act of looking. Kaplan divides the gaze into three aspects; the diegetic gaze within the film narrative (when the male characters look at the female characters), the gaze of the spectator who is invited to identify with the male character (through creating him as the active one, but also through subtle cinematographic means such as camera angles), and the camera's gaze (14-5). The positioning of the woman-image as the object of the gaze often constructs her as a spectacle, by fetishizing her via “lingering close-ups ... glamorous costumes, make-up, settings and lighting” (Kuhn 60). The woman thus becomes the “narrative image”, “a function of exchange within the film's contract”



(De Lauretis 140), in that the restoration of the equilibrium, the fulfillment of the narrative promise depends on the woman. The narrative image symbolically represents “the image in which the film comes together”, like the film *Tiffany's*, which is best summed up in the iconic image of Audrey Hepburn in a black dress, a cigarette holder in her hand and a cat perched on her shoulder. It is Holly who the fulfillment of the narrative promise depends on, she has to make things right since she has stepped out of line by attempting to disregard social norms and it is Paul who forces that change in her.

### 1.3 Adaptation Background

In order to be able to adequately discuss the implications the adaptation process had in the characterization of Holly and the discourses on gender, sexuality and subjectivity, it is necessary to first take a closer look at what exactly that adaptation process entailed, how Capote's script came to be transformed, by whom, and directed by what kind of ideological motivations. I will also touch upon the casting of Hepburn, since her performance and her status as a film icon have played a major role in how the character of Holly has been interpreted in the public consciousness and how the film has come to be considered a classic.

Due to its “axiomatic superiority” (Hutcheon 4) over film as well as its seniority as an art form, literature has been given license to depict themes considered taboo in film, particularly sexuality. Because a picture speaks louder than a thousand words, film has been subjected to much stricter regulations in regards to content than literature, although book publishing, too, has a history of censorship and control when dealing with particularly controversial topics, evidenced by Capote's aforementioned difficulties in finding a publisher for *Tiffany's*.

The change of genre from a character study to a romantic comedy naturally “constrained and enabled” (Hutcheon 35) the modes of representation available. By placing the narrative within the pre-existing structure of the romantic comedy the adapters made it conform to the traditional, socially licensed, heterosexual storyline of “boy-meets-girl-loses-girl-wins-back-girl-in-the-end” (Krämer 62). As the director Edwards said, “Axelrod ... added a plot, a love story, for commercial reasons – I don't mean money, but for audience approval” (Wasson 144). Although certainly financial reasons were at play – the film was to be produced by a major studio, it was

to feature one of its most prominent stars and it was due to be heavily marketed – it was important that it appeal to the audience tastes and applying the tried-and-tested formula of a romantic comedy was a safe bet.

However, prior to hiring Axelrod, the producers Jurow and Shepherd commissioned playwright Sumner Locke Elliott to write a screenplay. Although his script included the love story between Holly and the male lead the producers were after, they considered his version of the narrator-turned-protagonist too “effeminate”, which they “detest[ed]” (Krämer 62). Krämer and Wasson suggest the failure of Elliott’s script as a major reason for the film’s eventual handling of the sexuality of the male lead; there was pressure to make sure he was a “red-blood heterosexual” (Wasson 95).

In addition to the genre requirements and commercial motivations, the adaptation process of *Tiffany's* was characterized by the intervention of the Production Code Administration (hereafter referred to as the PCA), the morality watchdog of the trade union Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA), of which all major studios were members.<sup>7</sup> Established in the early 1930s, the impetus of the PCA was to promote “the basic values of society” by controlling the depiction of potentially controversial and morally harmful material in films with the help of a list of “Don’ts and Be Carefuls” (Starr 318), and through a process of script pre-approval. Although the influence of the PCA decreased considerably after its strictest era of adherence in the 1930s and 1940s when PCA’s disapproval could halt production and distribution completely, it remained functional until 1968, when it was finally replaced by a film rating system still in use today<sup>8</sup>.

In his account of the production of the film Wasson chronicles the process of adaptation and re-adaptation the story underwent in the hands of Axelrod the screenwriter, and under the watchful eye of the censors of the PCA. Among the changes that took place during the refashioning of Capote's novella into a motion picture, the pre-approval process of the PCA forced Axelrod to abandon any direct mentions of premarital sex because they were believed to present immoral behavior in a positive light which was an obvious red flag for the censors. Gone too were Holly's frequent use of profanities, swear words and racist terms – Mickey Rooney's caricature of Holly's Japanese neighbor Mr. Yunioshi notwithstanding – as well as the

<sup>7</sup> Established in 1922 as Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America (MPPDA), the trade union was renamed in 1945 (Starr 318, MPAA).

<sup>8</sup> The influence of the PCA is discussed at length in Black (99-119).

novella's mentions of nudity and homosexuality.

Since the film adaptation of *Tiffany's* is perhaps best known for the unforgettable performance of Audrey Hepburn, her casting, which was by no means straight-forward, warrants some discussion. It is worth noting that Capote was not happy with Hepburn's casting and told an interviewer in 1975 that he felt Paramount had "doublecrossed" him because his first choice for the role had been his close friend Marilyn Monroe, who he felt had the "touching" and "unfinished" quality required of the character (*Truman Capote: Conversations* 317). Although he later admitted he thought Hepburn had done a good job, it goes without saying the casting of Monroe would have resulted in a very different film.

Although in regards to her appearance it would seem that Hepburn was the perfect choice to play Holly<sup>9</sup>, she was cast against the type. Famous for playing innocent, virginal types<sup>10</sup>, not women of the world, Hepburn as Holly was able to lend the film an air of respectability, sophistication and propriety its storyline needed in order to appeal to conservative tastes (discussed in Smith, Wasson). As for all film icons, the Star System, the realized efforts of the studios' public relations machines which had turned no-name performers into stars by inventing them a name, a past and a personality, had played a part in the cultivation and promotion of Hepburn's public persona. As Smith mentions in her essay, Hepburn was presented as almost regal. Demure and elegant, in interviews she often spoke about her happiness in motherhood and marriage (at the time of the filming of *Tiffany's* she had an infant son with husband Mel Ferrer). One might say she was the opposite of Capote's Holly and because she was so "good", she was able to portray a character who, despite her dubious morals, is so charming, and most importantly, at the end of the day – good, just like her.

## 2 Capote's Novella

After having explicated the background information my analysis of the two *Tiffany's* texts is built upon, I will move on to discussing the portrayal of Holly in Capote's

9 Photos of Hepburn, placed next to passages from the novella where the narrator describes Holly were used to convince Paramount to cast her: "For all her chic thinness, she had almost breakfast-cereal air of health, a soap and lemon cleanness ... Her mouth was large, her nose upturned. ... she was always well groomed, there was a consequential good taste in the plainness of her clothes ... One might have thought of her a photographer's model, perhaps a young actress." (Capote 17-19)

10 For example, in her breakthrough role in *Roman Holiday* (1953) she plays a princess, in *Sabrina* (1954) the poor but intelligent daughter of a chauffeur to a rich family, and in *A Nun's Story* (1959) a nun.

novella as an independent spirit, who resists the narrator's attempt to define her as an analogy for the male need to define the female in his terms.

The story chronicles the friendship of the closeted, gay writer and his young high class escort neighbor in New York in the mid-1940s. The story, despite its fascination with superficiality (as discussed in Scott) revolves around the theme of identity – finding oneself, knowing who you are. The problematic of self-discovery is presented via the contradictory nature of Holly and the mystery surrounding her origin. It is saturated with the thematics of sexuality, gender, femininity and subjectivity, and how they deviate and collide with the expectations, values and moral codes of a patriarchal society. The ambiguous ending may be interpreted as indicative of how challenging those expectations can be in the construction of female subjectivity within a society which ideological foundation is based on denying that very notion. The allowances that a patriarchal society and the hegemonic, hierarchical gender paradigm it supports are willing to make towards female subjectivity and identity are best illustrated by theories which present identity as fixed, stable and clearly defined. As Kuhn notes, the female, in relation to the male becomes defined through her Difference and Lack (61-2).

Capote's story, however, presents a female character whose sense of identity is everything but easily defined through simple terminology structured around a binary opposition. Holly thus lends herself better to postmodern theories on the instability of identity. She is a late adolescent (at the beginning of the novella she is "shy two months of her nineteenth birthday", 17) who goes through different notions of womanhood, tries them on, reinterprets them, as if trying to find the one that fits without ever really achieving that. The characterization of Holly is built on this sense of flux; it is a continuous, ever-changing process of becoming whose origin and end are shrouded in mystery. While the momentum of the narration is kept up by the variation between encountering a mystery about her identity and finding some kind of an answer, the answers that are offered do not get even close to the big question of who she really is.

I have divided my discussion of the novella into sections concentrating on how Holly is represented on the one hand by the narrator, and on the other hand, via her own dialogue. My discussion on the narrator's point of view aims at exposing how he is constructed as the point of focalization, whereas my analysis on Holly in her own words illustrates how she is presented in dialogue. Both discussions on the

narrator and Holly aim at approaching her character via the thematics of the plurality of her identity, and her sexuality, before coming together in a discussion on the novella's ambiguous ending.

## 2.1 The Narrator

Since Capote's novella is a first-person narrative, narrated by an unnamed male (often assumed to be an autobiographical representation of Capote himself), the depiction of Holly offered to the reader is largely filtered through his consciousness, constructing him as the "transparent" lens through which Holly is viewed. This way, Scott argues, the narrator's lack of substance enables the reader to understand the rest of the story in terms of deliberate symbolic tenuousness (138). Although dialogue, including other characters' descriptions of her presented as quoted speech, is also used to paint a picture of Holly, it is important to include the narrator in the analysis as making sense of his point of view may assist in understanding the complexities of the story and the portrayal of Holly. The reader does not, after all, have access into Holly's mind, contributing on one hand to the constant tension of intimacy and distance between her and the narrator, and on the other hand towards a sense of authority he has over relaying her story.

As the main vehicle in charge of communicating Holly's story to the reader, the narrator places himself somewhat on the fringes of his own narrative. His narration constantly constructs him as an outsider who observes others – Holly especially – without fully engaging in the events himself. Although his friendship with Holly deepens over the course of the novella, and he shares moments of (platonic) intimacy with her, it often seems as if the closeness is partly imagined or not required.

The narrator's sense of outsidership may also be seen in the interpretation of him as a closeted gay man, which warrants discussion since its alteration is one of the major transpositions that were made when the story was adapted into film. Krämer sees the narrator's homosexuality partially as a result of the various autobiographical elements in the story (such as him sharing his birthday with the author) and the fact that Capote, a public figure, was openly gay, which was not common in the conservative social climate of 1950s America. But perhaps more importantly, while the story does not openly present the narrator as gay, it contains many veiled textual references that point towards this direction. For example, Holly refers to him as

“Maude”, which, as Pugh points out in his short review of the homosexual elements in the novella, in contemporary slang meant gay (52). She also calls him “cookie” (Capote 77), which in a similar vein to Maude carries the previously typical way of viewing and referring to male homosexuality in terms of femininity. Pugh goes on to discuss a passage in the novella, where the narrator reminisces of a long, difficult walk to a fictional location called “Nancy's Landing, Mississippi” (96) which, since “nancy” was a derogatory slang term for gay, he sees as “Capote's code for a gay resort, a ... southern Fire Island” (52). However, I believe the difficult journey to the make-believe location could also be viewed as a metaphor for the difficult upbringing a gay man in the rural south would have no doubt had in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. “Landing” could also be taken to convey a sense of arrival or acceptance, coming to terms with oneself, or even, coming out.

Unnamed, apart from the nickname “Fred” Holly uses to refer to him because he reminds her of her somewhat mentally challenged brother,<sup>11</sup> her only positive connection to her childhood, the narrator is presented as somewhat of an ambiguous character. While the narration of the plot or the relaying of the dialogue do not make the reader question his reliability, the way the narrator refers to his own emotional landscape reveals the voyeuristic and obsessive tendencies which characterize how he views his relationship with Holly. After he moves into her building, he goes through a whole summer observing her from afar, becoming “rather an authority on [her]” (20). For example, in trying to get to know Holly the narrator goes through her garbage and takes scraps of love letters she has received and torn up to use as bookmarks (20). On various occasions he describes being consumed by thoughts of her: when he does not hear from her for a week after their initial meeting he begins to feel resentment towards her “as if [he was] being neglected by [his] closest friend” and his thoughts of her become “so constant that [he cannot work]” (30-31).

Holly's presence very quickly becomes central to the narrator's existence and as their relationship deepens over time, he becomes increasingly jealous of her romantic conquests. Later in the story when Holly's boyfriend, a rich and handsome Brazilian diplomat called José Ybarra-Jaeger, moves in with her, the narrator describes the difficulty he has in accepting the changed circumstances by using the metaphor of chewing: “That gave me something to chew on: by Sunday my jaws were quite tired”

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11 Fred is described by Holly as “terribly slow” (23).

(47). The sense of the continuity of the thoughts is conveyed in the progression of the action and his reference to his jaws getting tired could be seen as indicative of him thinking of her so much that it starts to cause him physical discomfort. As Holly and José's relationship progresses, the narrator's descriptions of his feelings towards the affair become more explicit as he narrates "I'd developed hostile attitudes towards *him*, and seldom used his name." (78)

The most dramatic and the most revealing indication of the narrator's feelings towards Holly is given two-thirds into the novella, right before a major plot shift. In the passage the narrator reads a tabloid headline about the rich, eccentric playboy Rusty Trawler having gotten married and assumes Holly to be the bride as she had expressed interest in him. His reaction, rife with hyperbole, is as follows:

I more than half meant it when I wished I were under the wheels of the train. If Holly could marry that 'absurd foetus', then the army of wrongness rampant in the world might as well march over me. Or, and the question is apparent, was my outrage a little the result of being in love with Holly myself? A little. For I *was* in love with her. Just as I'd once been in love with my mother's elderly colored cook. ... That kind of love generates jealousy too. (70-71)

After he is able to tone down his exaggeration, he defines his feelings towards Holly very clearly, as love and jealousy, awakened by the thought that he might lose her to marriage.

The narrator's voyeurism and transparency are presented as two sides of the same coin: whereas he is able to observe others, they do not see him, or only see *through* him, ignoring him completely. Before he meets Holly he describes how they "often [come] face-to-face; but she [seems] not quite to see [him]" (19). Later in the story he overhears her say: "He wants awfully to be on the inside staring out: anybody with their nose pressed against a glass is liable to look stupid" (47). Her definition of him constructs him as the odd one out, who is very much aware of his position; he is cut off from everyone else and while he can see them, he cannot join them. The fact that he is eavesdropping on Holly when she says this only serves to highlight his voyeurism.

### 2.1.1 The Narrator on Holly

The themes of Holly's unknowability and plurality are introduced at the very beginning of the story, when the narrator is re-introduced to the thought of her after having lost contact with her several years earlier. The first mentions of Holly set up the main but tenuous hermeneutic code of the novella by presenting the reader with the question of who she is. As she enters the story, this question is re-introduced over and over again through dialogue and through saturating Holly with aloofness, rootlessness and longing for her own place in the world.

The re-entry of the thought of Holly into the narrator's life immediately triggers in him his conflict regarding the lack of a stable center in her. Years have passed since he and Holly have last seen each other when an old acquaintance, Joe Bell, the proprietor of a (gay) bar<sup>12</sup> they used to frequent, shows him a newspaper featuring a photo of an African wood sculpture that bears a striking resemblance to her. When he is asked what he thinks has happened to her, he replies: "Dead. Or in a crazy house. Or married." He goes on to elaborate: "I think she's married and quieted down and maybe right in this very city", (14) which the acquaintance finds very unlikely. The introduction of the three vastly different options pique the reader's interest in the mysterious character and contribute to the creation of her as someone full of contradictions; the very mention of Holly immediately stirs up notions of her plurality in the narrator, as he lists three potential options for her fate. There is no way of knowing which – if any – is the right one.

The order in which the narrator lists all the possible outcomes for Holly is intriguing and perhaps a suggestion of the presumed likelihood. Impulsively, he lists his suggestions in the order of decreasing severity, from death to being married and living "right in this very city", with all but the first option, death, qualified by additional words. The three options for Holly's fate also convey the notion of sexual unavailability which is at odds with the character the reader soon comes to know.

The three options furthermore convey a sense of being claimed by something; the finality of death, institutionalized mental healthcare, or the hegemony of patriarchal gender roles. The narrator's suggestions express his need to be able to define Holly clearly in order to make sense of her; each suggestion places her in a

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12 Pugh points out that the fact that Joe Bell's bar does not have a sign advertising its location and that it has mirror windows were typical of gay bars in early to mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, when they were used to protect the anonymity of their patrons (53).



context where her status may be clearly and easily described. However, while conveying his need to fix Holly's plurality, the options paradoxically convey that very plurality – without a definite answer she is able to exist in all three of them.

**What's In a Name?** Holly's famous name warrants some discussion here, as it is somewhat obviously tied to the image of her as constantly in flux. As the narrator begins to recount the story of his friendship with Holly, he explains that his first encounter with her was seeing her name listed on her mailbox as “*Miss Holiday Golightly ... Travelling*” (16), which is emblematic of her resistance to be pinned down or defined; even at home she is not really there, but constantly on the move, which, as Scott notes, the narrator finds disconcerting (140) as he comments “It *nagged* me like a tune” (Capote 16, italics mine). Her name is equally evocative of her carefree and unbridled attitude with “Holiday” stirring up connotations of leisure, freedom from the confines of the everyday and the mundane, and the “go lightly” of “Golightly” suggestive of the nonchalant attitude with which she navigates through life. This becomes clear when the narrator later asks her about the text in the mailbox and she replies: “After all, how do I know where I'll be living tomorrow?” (42).

“Holly” could also be taken to refer to Hollywood and its mythical and dreamlike status in popular culture as a place where hopeful people from across the world come to, in the hopes of “making it”. However, later in the story it is revealed that when presented with the opportunity of becoming a film star, Holly turned it down because she saw it as “giving up her ego” (39). Ironically, she did not want to spend her life pretending to be someone she is not. In a further ironic twist, later in the story we learn that Holly Golightly is not even her real name.

**Holly's Plurality – Holly as a Mystery.** Before the narrator ends his description of getting to know his new neighbor from afar, he re-introduces the reader to the mystery surrounding her. As he listens to her sing he muses

[T]here were moments when she played songs that made you wonder *where* she learned them, *where indeed she came from*. Harsh-tender wandering tunes with words that smacked of piney-woods or prairie. (21, italics mine)

With the addition of “where indeed she came from” the narrator emphasizes the question regarding Holly's origin and her past. By immediately suggesting a location

(“piney-woods or prairie”), no matter how vague, he demonstrates his need to fix her to a stable center. His suggestion may also be seen as an example of the attenuation of the hermeneutic code Scott refers to – he introduces a question and suggests an answer right away.

Holly's roots are the subject of intrigue also for O. J. Berman, her former Hollywood agent, who the narrator is introduced to during his second meeting with her. When she is out of earshot Berman tells the narrator:

“[E]ven when she opens her mouth and you don't know if she's a hillbilly or an Okie or what. I still don't. My guess, nobody'll ever know where she came from. She's such a goddamn liar, maybe she don't know herself any more.” (33-4)

Holly's “elusive, nameless, placeless, an impressionistic recital” (52) of a past is the subject matter of the novella's central narrative problem and its tenuous hermeneutic code; the fact that she is not really who she is. Her transformation from a poor orphan in rural, Depression-era Texas into a Manhattan society darling is simultaneously a closely guarded secret, the topic of constant gossip and eventually revealed, by her, to the narrator, in its entirety and without sparing any unattractive details. She is regarded by others “a real phony” (32) and “an utter fake” (60). When faced with a visitor from the past, her ex-husband Doc Golightly, whom she married when she was only a teenager, she recognizes the contradictory and historical nature of her identity and states “I'm not fourteen anymore, and I'm not Lulamae. But the terrible part is (and I realized it while we were standing there) I am” (69). By reclaiming the name of her rural childhood Holly acknowledges that part of her identity is still there as a layer, on top of which she has built her later representations of herself. She is not saying that she has remained unchanged, because she is “not fourteen anymore” but acknowledges that she has not been able to completely sever herself from her history, tear her past out by the roots. Contrary to Berman's suggestion, she does know where she came from, but that does nothing in terms of defining her as she simultaneously is and is not Lulamae.

In addition to the peripatetic connotations of her name and the mystery surrounding her past, Holly is throughout the novella coded with terms of aloofness and a concern for everything that is not related to the here and now. The narrator

describes “observing” her garbage and finding out that she reads a lot of “tabloids and travel folders and astrological charts” (20). Her fascination with celebrities, café society, sensationalized events, distant and foreign places and pseudo-science is a clear indication of her desire for an existence that is quite different from the one she inhabits, and one that is light, breezy, and full of leisure. She is interested in an inner life and what the future holds but her interest is based on something fake, not real.

In a passage, noteworthy for interrupting the flow of the narrative by a lengthy description of Holly, the narrator defines her as never-changing in her ever-changing ways, simultaneously acknowledging her contradictory nature and trying to resist it by pinning it down. As Scott remarks in his essay, while the narrator notes when describing Holly that she will never change, she is in fact changing right before his very eyes; when the narrator makes these observations Holly is reading in the library right after he has explained that libraries and her do not mix. He narrates:

[E]very few years our bodies undergo a complete overhaul – desirable or not, it is a natural thing that we should change. All right, here were two people who never would. ... They would never change because they'd been given their character too soon; which, like sudden riches, leads to a lack of proportion: the one had splurged herself into a top-heavy realist, the other a lopsided romantic. (55-6)<sup>13</sup>

By attempting to find clear terms to define Holly’s evolving, contradictory nature, the narrator merely tries to please his own need for stability, evidenced by his reluctant admission about the desirability of change. Holly, Scott argues is a floating signifier, a “fluid, spontaneous character” (139), “no one particular thing [which] makes her (potentially) everything” (140), representative of everything the narrator, characterized by “the monocentrism of the West”, the tendency to assign everything a definite, stable meaning, finds so provocative. Scott describes the two opposing tendencies represented by the narrator and Holly as follows:

two opposing forces: the first, represented by the narrator, privileges stability and density of meaning (good “literary” values); the second,

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<sup>13</sup> The other character he is describing here is a girl he went to school with, with “moist hair and greasy spectacles, ... stained fingers ... flat eyes” (55), who he views as the polar opposite of Holly. Interestingly he only describes this Mildred Grossman by way of her appearance.

represented by Holly, promotes what Barthes calls “the ethic of the empty sign”. And it is the second of these perspectives ... that eventually achieves aesthetic and epistemological dominance within the narrative. (145)

However, whereas Scott regards the preference of the stable/finite/singular over the unstable/infinite/plural as representative of the overall cultural sensibilities of the West, I believe it may also be seen in light of a particular aspect of that tradition – the patriarchy. As De Lauretis and Kuhn note, the tendency to associate stability, thought and rationality with the male, and instability, emotion, irrationality with the female is evident throughout the Western cultural matrix and seeps into everyday interactions. The instability and the plurality of the female is perhaps best evidenced in the traditional patriarchal understanding of female sexuality in terms of the binary pair of vice and virtue which requires the categorization of the female as either a “virgin” or a “whore”, a duality of categories not found in the construction of male sexuality where all (heterosexual) manifestations are generally filed under the category “natural”. With this in mind we may argue that the narrator's “genuine fear of Holly's plurality” and his need to “reduce her to a state of singularity” (Scott 143) may be seen as the attempt of the male to define, control and regulate the female.

## **2.2 Holly in Her Own Words**

While the main narrative is relayed by Holly's unnamed neighbor, the story allows her to speak for herself through dialogue consisting of quoted speech. The frequent passages of dialogue reveal to the reader that behind the image which Holly has constructed of herself are contradictory tendencies of self-assured pragmatism and restless uncertainty. She makes frequent references to the sense of agency and independence which characterize her decision-making, the choices she has made in the past as well as what she hopes and plans for the future, yet she just as frequently connotes herself as a “wild thing” that cannot be tamed; someone always on the move, belonging nowhere, while longing for a place that makes her feel like at Tiffany's – safe, happy and content. This erratic interplay of opposing forces emphasizes her contradictory nature.

Holly's pragmatic sensibilities are revealed during her first interaction

with the narrator. They meet for the first time when Holly climbs into his apartment through the window, uninvited, because she is on the run from a man she brought into her apartment:

'I suppose you think I'm very brazen. Or *très fou*. Or something.'

'Not at all.'

She seemed disappointed. 'Yes you do. Everybody does. I don't mind. It's useful.' (22)

She portrays herself in a particular way because it serves a purpose. Her shamelessness and her complete disregard of propriety contribute to the cultivation of her persona. And like her demeanor and her dialect, her emotions are something which she is able to manipulate in order to produce various representations of herself, appropriate for whatever her circumstances demand of her. She talks about how “you can make yourself love anybody” (42) and how she “sort of hypnotized” (76) herself, “*trained* [herself] to like older men” (23), who she could attach herself to in order to gain social and material capital. After convincing herself that she has finally reached her goal, found her ticket to happiness in the form of José, who has got her pregnant but has yet to propose, she excuses her past behavior by saying she “was just vamping for time to make a few self-improvements” (39).

Similarly, Holly views the other characters through her pragmatic motives. When introducing the narrator to her former agent O. J. Berman, she describes him as “an opportunity” (39) that the narrator could try to take advantage of in order to further his unsuccessful writing career.

Holly also lies in order to get what she wants, and to manipulate others into thinking they are getting what they want. She becomes friends and roommates with Mag Wildwood, another it-girl she despises, because she wants to steal Mag's boyfriend – José – from her. She, of course, succeeds in this. She also spreads a lie about Mag having an STD, because she is annoyed that Mag shows up at her party uninvited and wants to make sure Mag does not end up with any of the eligible bachelors she would rather keep to herself (“You'd think it would show more. But heaven knows, she *looks* healthy. So, well, *clean*. ... I hear so many of these Southern girls have the same trouble” (45)). During a discussion on their respective childhoods with the narrator, Holly lies about her past, painting a pretty picture of family idyll,

only to reveal a little later that it was all a lie because “you made such a tragedy out of *your* childhood I didn't feel I should compete” (53). In addition to demonstrating her manipulative tendencies, the passage adds to the mystery of her origin, which the narrator is attempting to discover.

Her past as a mystery is something she introduces during her first meeting with the narrator, when she starts talking in her sleep:

'Where are you, Fred? Because it's cold. There's snow in the wind.' Her cheek came to rest against my shoulder, a warm damp weight.

'Why are you crying?'

She sprang back, sat up, 'Oh, for God's sake ... I *hate* snoops.' (30)

As the narrator comes to discover, she hates inquiries that would force her to reveal something authentic about her, like share details of her relationship with her brother Fred. Scott views this exchange as indicative of Holly's refusal “to allow her meaning to be fixed” but not because she attempts to “maintain her enigmatic status within the narrative, but because she would rather destroy the hermeneutical process altogether” (139) – in his view, she has no “secret” to guard since the eventual revelation of her past life as Lulamae Barnes, the teenage bride, does not affect the trajectory of the narrative in any way.

**Fred.** However, in addition to introducing the mystery of her past, I believe this sequence may also be seen as representative of the deconstructionist notion of *différance*,<sup>14</sup> the concept that meaning exists outside of the text and can thus never really be grasped. Although – or perhaps *because* – Fred represents something authentic and meaningful to Holly that she wants to protect, he is kept outside of the narrative confines and referred to only in passing on a couple of occasions. His importance, however, is conveyed via Holly nicknaming the narrator after him. In doing so she creates a link to her past, connecting the starting point of her identifications with her present, complex and multiple self, while simultaneously saturating the narrator with meaning he in reality lacks. Fred's expulsion from the narrative via his death removes that meaning from the text that is Holly's own narrative and thus heightens her dilemma of belonging. Her reaction to the narrator's enquiry into her dream about Fred may thus be seen in relation to the novella's

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14 See Derrida, Barthes.

complex and layered take on signification in more ways than one.

**A Wild Thing.** The theme of Holly as a “wild thing” runs through the whole narrative, connecting her contradictory sensibilities and the mystery of her past with the notion of not belonging. Wildness, a concept which she uses to describe herself refers to a sense of being untamed, ferocious, erratic – her idiosyncratic personality. It also connotes lack of restraint, turbulence, disorder – her ever-changing sense of identity and her unconcern with propriety. It may also be used to describe to her passionate and extravagant attitude with which she lives her life: during her very first meeting with the narrator she says, in response to the narrator's comment about starting to get used to his shabby apartment: “I'll never get used to anything. Anybody that does, they might aswell be dead” (22). For her stability equals giving up.

Holly's sense of independence, aloofness and not belonging are conveyed via the metaphor of her nameless cat. The metaphor, which Scott considers “empty” in its obviousness is significant because it is only with the help of her cat that she able to have her epiphany at the end of the story, resulting in a narrative climax for her character. The introduction of the cat, and Tiffany's, Holly's safe place, spell out the thematic landscape of the novella, explicating the dilemma of not belonging:

'[P]oor slob without a name. It's a little inconvenient, his not having a name. But I haven't any right to give him one: he'll have to wait until he belongs to somebody. We just sort of took up by the river one day, *we don't belong to each other: he's an independent, and so am I.* I don't want to own anything until I know I've found *the place where me and things belong together. I'm not quite sure where that is just yet. But I know what it's like. ... It's like Tiffany's.* (40, italics mine)

The passage illustrates the obviousness of the novella's symbolic code which Scott discusses in detail in his essay: the connecting words “so” and “like” in the similes (“an independent, and *so am I*” and “*It's like Tiffany's*”) make the similarities self-evident – Holly is still searching for the place that would make her want to belong. Her restlessness and the resistance she exhibits towards being pinned down, evidenced in this passage in her repeated focalization of not belonging, are emblematic of her as a floating signifier, “pure surface, all signifier and no signified” (Scott 141), a sign whose inherent plurality makes it so vague and unspecified in meaning it can refer to

almost anything.

After the main narrative twist, the revelation of Holly's origin, she contemplates on her existence, recognizing for the first time the downsides to her rootlessness, illustrated via the use of the metaphor of the “wild thing”:

'Never love a wild thing, Mr. Bell,' Holly advised him. 'That was Doc's mistake. He was always lugging home wild things. A hawk with a hurt wing. One time it was a full-grown bobcat with a broken leg. But you can't give your heart to a wild thing: the more you do, the stronger they get. Until they're strong enough to run into the woods. Or fly into a tree. Then a taller tree. Then the sky. That's how you'll end up, Mr. Bell. If you let yourself love a wild thing. You'll end up looking at the sky. ... It's better to look at the sky than live there. Such an empty place, so vague. Just a country where thunder goes and things disappear.' (69-70)

This passage again draws attention to the dilemma of not belonging, conveyed by words such as *empty*, *vague* and *disappear* while the use of the animal metaphors, a hawk and a bobcat, help convey wildness and nonconformity. Like the wild animals, Holly, too, is untamed, undomesticated. However, like the animals with their ailments, she is also broken; being always in flux, “travelling”, keeps her at a distance from others and as such she is not able to get close to anyone or let anyone get close to her. This may also be illustrated in her “hardness”, the flip-side to her aloofness, her lack of concern for how her actions affect others which may be seen in her dismissive reaction to the narrator reading one of his short stories for her (discussed in detail in due course) and her unconcern with his sadness at the thought of losing her when she reveals her plan to move to Brazil.

### **2.2.1 “I'd rather have Garbo any day” - on Holly's Sexuality**

One of the defining characteristics of Holly is her unconventionality in regards to sexuality, which the film adaptation subsequently handles very differently. Her sexuality in the novella is presented ambiguously, which adds to the construction of her identity as full of controversies. On one hand, she prescribes to the dominant ideology of hetero-normativity, but on the other hand, she is progressive,



acknowledging the post-modern view on sexuality which presents it as a continuum as opposed to clearly defined categories. She dates men in order to meet someone rich to marry and be set up for life, but she acknowledges that she likes women too. While she considers everyone to be “a bit of a dyke” (25), she criticizes one of the short stories the narrator reads her for being boring because according to her interpretation it is about a lesbian couple, which “bore the bejesus out of [her]” (25). While she uses disparaging terms when referring to sexual minorities, she also advocates for their equal rights to marriage. I will now look at how the ambiguity of Holly's sexuality is constructed in the narrative.

In her essay Smith argues for the free-spirited Holly and the closeted gay narrator as representatives of the “twin narratives of postwar 'deviant' sexuality, freedom and containment”, however, I believe Holly individually moves in and out of both narratives, alternating between a confidently liberated, non-judgmental approach, and one that sees her question, evaluate and reign in her sexuality, while the sexuality of the narrator is rendered all but invisible. During her moments of freedom Holly clearly demonstrates her misalignment with the notion of normality in terms of female sexuality. In a particularly enlightening scene the narrator overhears Holly and her friend/enemy Mag discuss Mag's unease with the idea of leaving the lights on during sex, which Holly finds utterly ridiculous. Mag, in disagreement tells her that it is her view, her preference of darkness, which is considered normal, to which Holly replies: “It may be normal, darling; but I'd rather be natural” (49). By contrasting normal with natural Holly sheds light to the artificiality of the way the discourse on sexuality is organized – how the often restrictive categories, which our culture has constructed in order to organize sexuality are just that, *constructed*, discursively, and not something that have simply come about organically. Protesting further Holly states:

'What's wrong with a decent look at a guy you like? Men are beautiful, a lot of them are, José is, and if you don't even want to look at him, well, I'd say he's getting a pretty cold plate of macaroni. ... You can't possibly be in love with him.' (49)

In this passage Holly simultaneously advocates freedom, by being allowed to get a “decent look”, and judgment, by having a set criteria that she uses to legislate and make sense of sexuality. Having interpreted Mag's hesitations she passes her verdict

and rules that Mag cannot possibly be in love with the man. This passage presents Holly subverting the traditional, patriarchal notions of female sexuality and their unease with a woman deriving pleasure from sex. The pleasure, Holly argues, may also be derived by looking, which may be seen as a hint at the importance the narrative places on appearance of things.

Holly's discovery of her pregnancy results in her consciously attempting to align herself with acceptable mid-century idea(l)s of femininity as she throws herself into "a keen, sudden un-Holly-like enthusiasm for homemaking" (76). In a long monologue about her future married life with José Holly advocates for propriety while simultaneously acknowledging and lamenting on her desire for freedom to express herself sexually, ungoverned by the regulatory practices of the institution of marriage. As she prepares for her future married life with José she says:

I wish I'd been a virgin for him, for José ... I toted up the other night, and I've only had eleven lovers – not counting anything that happened before I was thirteen because, after all, that just *doesn't* count.

She goes on to elaborate that by "lover" she is indeed referring to sexual partners by comparing herself to her acquaintances who have "had the old clap-yo'-hands so many times it amounts to applause". She, in her own opinion, differs from Mag Wildwood and Honey Tucker who she sees as "whores" because at least she always "*tr[ies]*" to believe she's in love with the men she sleeps with before cashing their checks (76). By judging Mag and Honey for something she does herself, albeit due to different motives, she acknowledges that she is in fact very aware of society's attitudes towards sex as something that should belong to loving relationships. However, her emphasis on the word "*try*" conveniently conceals whether she is successful in convincing herself.

Holly's references to her sexual activities before the age of thirteen and their role in her characterization have not been discussed in any of the texts I found written on the novella. Although her off-hand comment reveals her to be a victim of sexual abuse, victimhood is not part of the identifications which she projects in her dialogue. However, the above mentioned references to brokenness in relation to the animal metaphors she uses to convey her wildness do hint at childhood traumas. Her dialogue also suggests that she certainly has some unresolved issues regarding her

attraction to much older men:

I can't get excited by a man until he's forty-two. I know this idiot girl who keeps telling me I ought to go to a head-shrinker; she says I have a father complex. Which is so much *merde*. (23).

Additionally, the relationship between Holly and Doc Golightly is presented as rather incestuous and the narrator initially mistakes him for Holly's father. Although he is quick to correct the narrator's mistake, his subsequent description of how Holly and Fred came to live with him presents him as a father figure, who adopted the two orphans after his first wife died, whereas Holly's description of their last night together after Doc departs for Texas reveals that their relationship is indeed sexual:

'I haven't been to bed yet,' she told [Mr Bell], and confided to me: 'Not to sleep.' She blushed, and glanced away guiltily. For the first time since I'd known her, she seemed to feel a need to justify herself: 'Well, I had to. Doc really loves me, you know. And I love him. ... you don't know the confidence he can give to birds and brats and fragile things like that.' (68)

Holly's childhood traumas and instability which could perhaps be summed up as a lack of a "proper" childhood altogether contribute towards her characterization in terms of giving her an impetus for finding a real home, somewhere she belongs and that makes her feel safe, like at Tiffany's. Her comment about having a father-complex may be interpreted as indicative of the novella's tenuous hermeneutic code – it is exactly what she has, and she vocalizes it herself, without the reader having to piece things together and decipher meaning from cleverly hidden clues.

**Homo-/Bisexuality.** Holly's attitudes towards homosexuality and the way she vocalizes them are also indicative of her contradictory nature. The way she carries herself is a combination of refinement ("well groomed", stylish clothes) and crudeness (as evidenced by her use of the "n-word"), and similarly, when discussing the nature of sexuality, she does it while alternating between liberal, post-modern attitudes, and using derogatory terms and stereotypes. When the narrator reads her one of his short stories about two women living together, she comments: "Of course I like dykes themselves. ... I just can't put myself in their shoes". The narrator is taken back by her

interpretation, to which she says “if it's not about a couple of old bull-dykes, what the hell *is* it about?” She goes on to explain that she sees herself as a “bit of a dyke” and says “[a]nd of course I am. Everyone is: a bit. So what? That never discouraged a man yet, in fact it seems to goad them on” (25).

Throughout the discussion on the topic she uses the derogatory term, indicating having bought into the idea of homosexuality as something that warrants criticism and derision. However, she simultaneously demonstrates her awareness of the fact that human sexuality is a lot more complex than the strict divide between straight and gay. She also touches upon the subject of how the sexualities of men and women are judged against different criteria and how lesbians often are presented as the stuff of male fantasies.

Holly's conflicting attitudes towards homosexuality are featured later in the story, when she discusses her hopes and dreams for the future with the narrator. Holly, having gotten pregnant by José, reveals that her soon-to-be husband is not “[her] idea of the absolute finito”, “her guy ideal” and that she would rather “settle for [Greta] Garbo any day” (76). She goes on to elaborate:

A person ought to be able to marry men or women or – listen, if you came to me and said you wanted to hitch up with Man o' War<sup>15</sup>, I'd respect your feeling. No, I'm serious. Love should be allowed. I'm all for it. (77)

Holly's unwillingness towards defining herself in terms of her sexuality demonstrates the problematic of reducing the spectrum of human sexuality to narrow, restrictive categories. The polarity of categories used to organize, authorize and sanction human behavior creates symbolic boundaries, drawing lines between “good” and “bad”, and “normal” and “abnormal” (Hall 157) and constructing female sexuality on a binary opposition of good and bad, in congruence with an all-encompassing sense of morality. During her monologue where she muses about her future with José, Holly demonstrates how these categories function in discourse, where meaning is dialogic. Her newly acquired role of homemaker who dotes on her man is “a bore” but “the answer is good things only happen to you if you're good.” She then goes on to re-

<sup>15</sup> Pugh points out the irony in this statement. As per Holly's own theory, all straight men like either baseball or horses, and the narrator does not like horses. Holly's suggestion of the narrator wanting to marry Man o' War, the celebrated racehorse, suggests that he does like horses after all (connoting he's straight) – which is presented as ridiculous and which, as Holly's “No, I'm serious” demonstrates, he protests, as it is the opposite of the truth (53).

define goodness: “Good? Honest is what I mean ... unto-thyself-type honest. Be anything but a coward, a pretender, an emotional crook, a whore” (77). She acknowledges the significance of “good”, socially licensed femininity in which sexuality is permitted only within the confines of marriage before re-defining it to suit her own purposes – she just needs to be honest to herself. Herself, however, and as discussed above, does not lend itself easily to definition when the categories available are so black and white which can be seen in her questioning of herself in “Does that make me a whore?” (76).

**Holly's Miscarriage.** The narrative of Holly's miscarriage at the end of the story paves the way for her eventual disappearance from the overall narrative confines. As Holly is about to leave New York for Brazil with José, she goes horse riding with the narrator, as a way of spending a fun, final day together. When the narrator gets into an accident, Holly rides to her rescue and suffers a miscarriage as a result of the strenuous exercise. The horse riding incident, a rare “action” moment in the otherwise unhurried, contemplative and descriptive style of narration marks as a transition to a more rushed narrative style. The final events are presented jumbled together, with the miscarriage referred to only in passing, over the last few pages: Holly gets arrested as details of her association with the gangster Sally Tomato have become tabloid fodder. The public interest makes José break off with her in order to shield his reputation. As the narrator delivers José's Dear John letter to Holly in the hospital where she has been whisked off, he describes the scene:

'I lost the heir.' She looked not quite twelve years: her pale vanilla hair brushed back, her eyes, for once minus their dark glasses, clear as rain water ... The instant she saw the letter she squinted her eyes and bent her lips in a tough tiny smile that advanced her age immeasurably. 'Darling,' she instructed me, 'would you reach in the drawer there and give me my purse. A girl doesn't read this sort of thing without her lipstick.' (89-90)

The sight of Holly at the hospital, at her most vulnerable state (without her sunglasses, which the narrator duly notes), presents her via terms of childhood, another indication of her contradictory identifications. After she has made herself presentable to the outside world again she quickly evaluates the situation in pragmatic terms and notes: “bless you for being such a bad jockey. If I hadn't had to play Calamity Jane I'd still be

looking forward to the grub in an unwed mama's home" (91).

Aside from its most common use for a spontaneous abortion, miscarriage may also be used to refer to failure, perversion, error – an unwanted or an unjust outcome, as evidenced by the term “a miscarriage of justice”. The miscarriage may thus be seen in relation to Holly's way of life, her resistance towards the strategies of containment the hegemonic societal norms impose on women in 1940s America. At the end of the story, as Holly disappears, she discharges herself from the narrative, escaping the narrator's attempts to define her. In the following chapter I will illustrate how Holly's disappearance is presented in the final pages of the novella.

### **2.3 Holly as a Floating Signifier**

I have thus far argued, in line with Scott, that Holly's departure at the end of the novella constructs her as a floating signifier, an empty sign that may only be defined by its vagueness, thus validating the interpretation of her and the narrator as representatives of opposing sensibilities towards definition and containment. However, before her eventual disappearance Holly has a moment of self-reflection about her sense of rootlessness which allows us to bring another aspect into the analysis of what her vague and unclear fate may be deduced to convey.

Holly's sudden epiphany in the taxi on her way to the airport makes her realize something about herself which has been obvious to the reader all along, highlighting the tenuousness of the novella's symbolic code. She stops the car and leaves her nameless cat on the curb, only to vocalize a moment later:

Oh, Jesus God. We did belong to each other. He was mine.... 'But what about me? ... I'm very scared, Buster. Yes, at last. Because it could go on for ever. Not knowing what's yours until you've thrown it away. (99)

By recognizing her relationship with her cat Holly recognizes that she may have already found somewhere to belong. By figuring out where she belongs Holly acknowledges the potential of being defined, having her meaning fixed to a stable center of reference. However – she eventually resists this, boards the plane to South America, refuses to be defined, and disappears. The narrator reveals his final connection to her in the form of a postcard received sometime after her departure. The

card reads:

*Brazil was beastly but Buenos Aires the best. Not Tiffany's, but almost. Am joined at the hip with duhvine Señor. Love? Think so. Anyhoo am looking for somewhere to live (Señor has wife, 7 brats) and will let you know address when I know it myself. Mille tendresses. (100)*

The post card describes her current state of affairs by moving from positive to negative. She begins by confiding that she has *almost* found her Tiffany's, a place where she belongs, and a wonderful man to boot, before revealing that he is actually married with children and that she does not have a place to live. In other words, she is still “travelling”.

In order to instill in his life some form of closure in regards to his friendship with Holly the narrator tries to find the nameless cat. Easing back into his leisurely, contemplative mode of narration he describes eventually succeeding, spotting the cat in the window of a cozy apartment. He narrates: “I wondered what his name was, for I was certain he had one now, certain he'd arrived somewhere he belonged. African hut or whatever, I hope Holly has too.” (100) In his essay Scott sees the narrator's last wish of Holly having found somewhere to belong as his hope, despite disappearing from his life and despite of her continuous traveling, of have given her that place within his narrative, to have succeeded in fixing her onto something (144). This hope, Scott argues, is evidenced in the narrator's dismissive “whatever” (it does not matter where she has arrived, just as long as she is no longer “travelling”) and his change in tense from the past to the present; by leaving the past behind and re-entering the present the narrator wishes that Holly, too, has been able to find some stability. Although the beginning of the narrative, the re-emergence of Holly in his life in the form of the woodcarving in the photograph, reveals that stability to be elusive: is it or is it not of Holly? Has her meaning been finally fixed onto a literal object? Has the male need to define and contain her, represented by the narrator's unease with her vagueness, finally overcome her plurality?

As her fate is left ambiguous, we may consider Holly to have escaped the male definition of her. However, as her disappearance is presented in terms of potential unfulfillment (the postcard certainly does not paint a pretty picture), how are we to consider the ideological implications of the narrative? In an interview in 1968

Capote spoke of his delight at the emergence of a “new morality” (Truman Capote: Conversations 141) evidenced by the emerging faultlines on the dominant societal order based on a rigid gender hierarchy and the proliferation of discourses in understanding gender, sexuality, subjectivity and identity. As the novella was published a full decade earlier, when the upcoming societal changes were less evident, we may interpret Holly's vague and undefined fate as uncertainty over the eventual fate of the woman who resists the patriarchal strategies of containment imposed upon her. In her essay Smith suggests Holly as Capote's wish for the return of the independent women of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the flappers and the early feminists, who were lost within the hegemonic mid-century notion of feminine domesticity. Perhaps it is thus most conducive to regard her as a character who stands out among the “domesticated” women of her era by resisting the male need to define her, while simultaneously acknowledging the alleged security that patriarchy may bring, for example, via the legal institution of marriage. It is precisely for the difficulty in finding an appropriate, satisfying interpretation for Holly that makes the novella so conducive for the exploration of the possibilities and the downfalls created by the emerging faultlines on hegemonic ideologies. And it is exactly for the opposite reason that makes analyzing the film so fascinating, in that it so clearly takes the opposite approach in its representation of the complexities of the novella.

### **3 Hollywood and the Politics of Representation**

In the following chapter I will discuss the film adaptation of *Tiffany's* and illustrate how the themes introduced in Capote's novella were transposed into something quite different through the process that turned the novella with its many controversial elements into a romantic comedy. I will begin by exploring the film industry's tendency to remove elements of sexuality, particularly female sexuality, from literary material during the adaptation process, before moving onto an in depth discussion of the film text. I am interested in how the film industry's need to “cleanse” literary works of references of female characters engaging in sexual activities relates to the discourse on sexuality in society as a whole and how it ties in with notions of power. Some of the issues I will discuss in this chapter are: what kind of power was wielded by the PCA in its refusal to allow the filmmakers depict the characters' sexualities as per the original script? What kind of power was wielded by the filmmakers by



refashioning Capote's story into a romantic comedy featuring a female protagonist who falls in love with a man who explicitly tells her that he thinks he “owns” her and that she “belongs” to him? How are these issues positioned within the matrix of power that regulates gender and sexuality in society? What kind of messages do they implicitly convey of the societal and ideological context in which they were created? In order to answer these questions I will first look at how the notion of power relates to the production and consumption of cultural products, before moving on to illustrating the power structures that infiltrate the film text.

Because of their direct mode of engagement by “showing” instead of “telling” and due to their popularity among all social strata, films were during their early years considered to carry “special Moral Responsibility” not required of other forms of media (Black 104).<sup>16</sup> As with other media before and since their arrival, the potentially harmful effects of films were the source of anxiety for many concerned parties from state officials to religious leaders (Starr 318-24) and early scholars in mass communication carried out studies seeking to expose the effects films had on children and teenagers<sup>17</sup>. These studies, although now considered rather controversial, were influential in the introduction of the Production Code. Although the scope of the entertainment industry has expanded exponentially during the (little over a) century films have existed, cinema forms a significant part of our popular cultural landscape and as such films, as cultural products and as a mode of storytelling, contribute to our understanding of the society and the world we inhabit.

Since our understanding of the world is produced discursively and within a particular cultural and temporal context, cultural products born out of a particular context are also discursive. That is to say that the implicit ideological, societal and political messages that a cultural product can be deduced to convey are conditioned by the context of interpretation. Simultaneously, a particular context allows for the deduction of certain messages – we are only able to pose those questions and make those interpretations that our cultural and historical context allows us to and may run into an intentional fallacy when trying to recreate the original, intended meaning. However, this does not mean that we should not discuss what cultural products made in a different cultural context from our own can be interpreted to convey, we just need

<sup>16</sup> In 1928 weekly cinema attendance was at 65 million, almost half of the population. Two years later it had reached 90 million, 75% of the population. (Black 104 and the 1930 US Census)

<sup>17</sup> For example, the Payne Fund studies (1933) carried out by academics were edited into a book arguing that films had a corrupting effect on young people. Upon publication the book became a bestseller and helped pave the way for film regulation (Black 109-10).

to be aware that we discuss these issues with the right terminology – as interpretations, subject to argumentation.

Films, like other cultural products produced for and consumed by great numbers of people play a significant role in our collective cultural consciousness because of their very public and far-reaching nature. “The material specificity of cinema” (De Lauretis 106), its complete reliance on socioeconomic and technological factors only makes this aspect of cinema that much more relevant. Since the production of films is expensive and financially risky, those who control the entry into the arena of film production wield a substantial amount of power since they get to decide what gets produced and by whom. Similarly, a considerable amount of power is also wielded by the makers of the products that are consumed by the “masses”, due to the very fact that they are the ones that make their way into the hands, minds and discourses of such a large number of people. During the Studio Era<sup>18</sup> the American film industry the control over film production, distribution and exhibition was concentrated on a fairly small number of people. This type of vertically integrated structure only serves to highlight the influence of the few at the top. As the films were initially the entertainment of the lower classes, immigrants and children, there was an interest from the moral right to reign in the industry from the start. Although this era came to an end legislatively with the introduction of the anti-trust laws in 1948, by then the film industry had carved out its niche as a major provider of idealized narratives, stories, and images of characters and lives ordinary people could only dream of and aspire to, a status it still holds today.

Hollywood, used metonymously to signify the mainstream American film industry, is thus a major player in creating narratives for public consumption. When we take into account the current structure of the mainstream film industry dovetailed within media conglomerates and its history of vertical integration, we can understand the magnitude of this power – power, which can be used to reinforce existing ideologies or question them<sup>19</sup>.

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18 The Studio Era refers to the time period when the American film industry was dominated by “the Big Five”, the major studios Fox Film Corporation, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, Paramount Pictures, RKO and Warner Bros. The era spans from early 1920s until 1948, when the introduction of anti-trust laws separated film production from distribution and exhibition, putting an end to the studios' monopoly position. However, although new film companies sprang up, the status of the major studios did not begin to weaken until the popularization of the television in the mid-to-late 1950s. Thus the effects of the Studio Era in the American film industry can be felt as late as the early 1960s. For further discussion, see Black and Starr.

19 For example, Hollywood's power to question existing ideologies can be seen when studying the reception of films such as *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner?* (dir. Stanley Kramer, 1967) and *In the*

The promotion of the dominant social order of naturalized patriarchal gender hierarchy through the depiction of female stock characters such as bimbos, femme fatales, damsels in distress, girls next door etc. is an implicit side-effect of the industry's hegemonic power. When part of this power was harnessed by the PCA in order to control the portrayal of material that was considered an affront to dominant ideologies, film production became filtered through a very specifically motivated point of view. By demanding scenes containing sexuality to be cut, the PCA effectually forced filmmakers to suppress and conceal the offending themes; the scenes were either removed completely or filmmakers found ways to portray them by allusions and symbols (such as panning away from an embracing couple to an open window in order to connote sex). However, the fact that something is not talked about does not mean that it is not part of the discourse – the “absences and gaps” (Foucault 83) created by the cuts and allusions contribute to the discourse as much as everything that is said:

[S]ilence ... is ... an element that functions alongside the things said, with them and in relation to them within over-all strategies. There is no binary division to be made between what one says and what one does not say.  
(Foucault 27)

The absences and gaps are noticeable in the novella's handling of the narrator's closeted homosexuality: it is there, evidenced by the subtle hints inserted into the narrative as discussed above. In classic Hollywood film narration the symbols and allusions work towards constructing the female as the narrative image and the male as the voyeur. Through the logic of the fetish the female comes to represent the locus of the sexuality hidden from view, by simultaneously suggesting and withholding the desire of the male voyeur. In the next chapter I will discuss how this works in the film version of *Tiffany's* in which Holly is portrayed as the object of the gaze of Paul, the main voyeur, and the viewer, who is invited to identify with him via the use of various cinematographic and narrative methods.

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*Heat of the Night* (dir. Norman Jewison, 1967), both starring Sidney Poitier, which contributed to the discourse on race relations and civil rights.

### 3.1 Sexual Politics in the Film

In this chapter I will offer the reader a close reading of the key scenes in Edwards' film, concentrating on a) how Holly is constructed as the object of the male gaze, who Paul represents and who the viewer is invited to identify with, and b) the main themes in the film and how they relate to gender, sexuality and subjectivity. With the help of the strategies of viewing explicated by De Lauretis, Kaplan, Kuhn and Mulvey, I will identify cinematographic and narrative methods the film uses to construct the gaze and to introduce the themes as symptomatic of the hegemony of the patriarchal societal order it recreates. I intend to bring into my analysis the symbolism and allusions found in the visual and aural *mise-en-scène* and how they are used to construct the relationship of the woman as the narrative-image/spectacle and man as the voyeur, as well as illustrate how those symbols and allusions work in the employment of the extensive metaphor of marriage, which allows the relationship of the high class escort and the gigolo to be seen as socially licensed, appropriate, and relatable. The notions of complexity and plurality, which were central in the characterization of the literary Holly and in the explication of her contradictory identity, were all but eradicated during the adaptation process, and the filmic Holly is, despite the narrative attempt to convince the viewer otherwise, eventually a rather straightforward and conventional character.

During the adaptation process Capote's depictions of sexualities that were uncommon in 1950s American literature, as well as elsewhere in the mainstream cultural fabric, were erased. The gay male narrator and the bisexual female protagonist with a carefree attitude towards pre- and extra-marital sex were deemed unsuitable for film audiences and were thus removed and replaced by an old-fashioned narrative of heterosexual love, because it was believed to reflect audience preferences and values. Some elements, hinting at the original novella's unconventionality such as the storyline of Paul's mistress, were added in order to keep the film's tone just edgy and adult enough. However, *vis-à-vis* the ideological interpretations offered by the adaptation decisions undertaken by Axelrod, Edwards and the PCA, the film, despite occasionally teasing the audience with the promise of offering them a new kind of heroine, an unconventional, independent woman who lives according to her own rules, ultimately succumbs to the promotion of the patriarchal matrix of power, where a woman's personal fulfillment and happiness is forever dependent on a man.

The film presents the central conflict, dictated by genre requirements, as the classic “boy meets girl” -narrative. The nameless narrator of Capote's novella was transformed into the character of Paul Varjak, played by George Peppard, who in similar fashion to the narrator is an aspiring author and befriends Holly when he moves into her building in New York's chic Upper East Side. The temporal setting of the novella has been changed and the film takes place in one chronological narrative in the contemporary present, the emergence from the socially conservative 1950s into the 1960s, an era characterized by rapid social upheavals and a questioning of traditional moral codes and gender roles.

While the screenwriter Axelrod (under the direction of the PCA) effectively removed the traces of Holly's sexual activeness, by developing the closeted, repressed, always-on-the-outside-looking-in narrator into a romantic male lead, he bestowed on him a sexuality almost on par with that of the original, free-spirited Holly. Whereas Holly came to nearly assume the prim and proper nature of the public image of the actress tasked to play her, Paul was given license to enjoy the status of being a “toy-boy”, the young lover of a rich, older, married woman. In some sense the literary Holly and the closeted narrator were almost reversed into the sexually liberal Paul and the Hepburnesque Holly.

In her analysis of the film Cornut-Gentille D'Arcy calls to question the “misleading objectivity or seemingly liberal approach” (377) in the portrayal of Holly and Paul as assumed equals. Paul, like Capote's Holly, is financially dependent on (the opposite) sex which Cornut-Gentille D'Arcy views as a means of making sure the two protagonists inhabit the same level of sexual depravity from which their mutual love eventually redeems them. However, when taking into consideration the greater directness used to depict Paul's sexual escapades, it becomes clear his representation relies on the overwhelmingly greater liberty that society awards men in relation to sexuality – it is not seen in terms of congruence with morality, in a binary opposition of “good” and “bad”, “acceptable” and “unacceptable”. It is revealed early in the film that Paul, a writer, has not published anything for several years and relies on his mistress, nicknamed 2E (played by Patricia Neal), to support him financially. However, unlike in the case of Holly, it is revealed that he actually has sex with 2E, whereas Holly does not sleep with the men she dates, only cashes their checks.

The behavior of Holly and Paul is contrasted in a scene adapted directly from the novella and transposed in one crucial aspect – in the novella it is Holly who

has been having sex whereas in the film that person is Paul. In the novella Holly and the narrator meet properly for the first time when Holly climbs into his apartment through the fire escape explaining that she is running from “the most terrifying man” (21), a date she brought home with her who bit her during sex. The film version shows how Holly brings a man into her apartment, goes to the bedroom, locks the door, changes into a robe (while the camera cuts away) and climbs out of the window into the fire escape while the man keeps pleading her to open the door. The fact that she changes from the cocktail dress into a robe comes across as a deliberate effort to show the audience that she is not sleeping with him; she undresses only when she is alone, behind a locked door – out of the prying eyes of her date and (as conveyed by the cuts) the audience. Through the window Holly watches Paul sleep, shirtless – code for post-coital – as his mistress leaves money on the table and leaves the apartment.

The scene illustrates the striking double-standard in the mid-century American society's views towards sexuality as well as the unease the film industry felt in regards to deviating from them. The film industry, including its regulatory agent had less of a problem with depicting, however delicately and by way of allusions, male protagonists with sex lives, whereas a female protagonist, particularly an unmarried one, could not be engaged in similar activities if she was to remain moral, “good” and sympathetic to the audiences. Holly's sexual antics, which are detailed in the novella in their cavalierness and in her frankness in discussing them, are completely erased from the screen. Although she does still take money from the men she goes out with, the “50\$ for the powder room” is received in exchange for conversation and her delightful company. As for 2E, the woman who is allowed to maintain a sex life – she gets away with it because unlike Holly, the fulfillment of the narrative promise does not depend on her “goodness”. She is portrayed as cold and manipulating, shown lying to her husband and attempting to pay Paul off when he tries to break up with her. She serves as a warning sign against the dangers of liberated female sexuality.

### **3.1.1 Holly, Paul, and the Male Gaze**

As we saw above, in the novella Holly is seen filtered through the consciousness of the male narrator and in the film she is similarly presented from a male dominated point of view. Although she is the central figure in the film, her portrayal is skewed

towards Paul's viewpoint – Paul is, after all, the transposition of the narrator of the novella. The narrator's voyeuristic tendencies, discussed above, become highlighted through the shift of medium from literature to film. Since *Tiffany's* is so concerned with the appearance of things, which via the use of the “showing” mode of engagement of film gains particular emphasis, a discussion of how the gaze functions to engage the viewer and direct her identification processes is extremely relevant. The notion of being looked at or observed, and particularly while not being aware of it, as well as obliviousness to how one is seen by others are also significant on a thematic level and interestingly, while Holly is the main object that is gazed upon, the film uses the same technique for Paul, too.

**Holly as a Spectacle, the Main Object of the Gaze.** The different notions of looking, observing and obliviousness are at play in the opening sequence of the film, where they are used to introduce the main thematic landscape of the film – the desire to belong. The opening stands out from the main narrative of the film in its dreamlike quality, described in Axelrod's script as “magic ... An emptiness. A quiet. A moment of limbo” (1). The melody of the film song “Moon River”, which is used throughout the film as Holly's leitmotiv, can be heard on the background.<sup>20</sup> In the famous scene Holly gets out of a taxi in front of Tiffany's, on the empty Fifth Avenue and looks inside the store, drinking coffee from a take-out cup and eating a pastry. Tiffany's, which she views as her safe place, the only place in the world that feels like something resembling a home, is closed. She stands outside, separated from it by a pane of bulletproof glass – she can see inside, but it remains out of her reach. As Cornut-Gentile D'Arcy notes, when the camera moves to show her from the inside of the store window, the notion what she is striving for being out of her reach becomes highlighted (381).

The sense of voyeurism, which comes to define Holly's portrayal throughout the film becomes evident during the opening sequence, as the camera follows her during her moment of private reflection. The shot where she is portrayed from within the store serves to illustrate this: she looks straight ahead, her eyes covered by dark sunglasses, into a space that is presumed to be empty, but is now inhabited by the viewer. In this scene Holly's dark glasses, which Scott sees as an empty symbol for her shielding her true self from the rest of the world, come to lend extra emphasis to her detachment and obliviousness towards being looked at and how

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<sup>20</sup> The use of “Moon River” is discussed in detail in Payri (2011).

she is viewed by others. The setting, a deserted Fifth Avenue, highlights her underlying loneliness and her being out of place, but it also conveys a sense of her world not being quite like it should be. Fifth Avenue, the commercial center of Manhattan, is not supposed to be empty and quiet, but alive with consumerism. This may be seen as indicative of the “wrongness” in Holly's life, her resistance towards the establishment and the hegemony of patriarchal values. The sense of wrongness also invokes the return of the equilibrium, the ending of the film where things are “put to right” and Holly is recuperated within the patriarchal matrix.

The opening scene immediately constructs Holly as the main spectacle of the film and the main object of the gaze. As she steps out of the taxi in an elegant Givenchy evening gown, a sparkling diamond necklace and a matching tiara, she immediately stands out among the somber, muted tones of the background. As Kuhn notes, glamorous costumes are among the means classic cinema employs to construct the female as a spectacle (60). From the opening scene onwards Holly's wardrobe (as well as her apartment) is used to convey her uniqueness and create contrasts between her and the other characters. The black dresses, showcasing the height of French couture, have an understated sense of class in their graphic and minimalistic, yet feminine cuts and they help establish her modernity and set her apart from the New Look-influenced silhouettes and color palettes of the 1950s. However, in certain sequences of particular narrative significance Holly stands out in jewel tones, such as in the “marriage” sequence (to be discussed in the next chapter), where she wears a cocoon shaped orange coat, and in the sequence which ends in her having an emotional breakdown as she learns about the death of her brother Fred, where she wears a striking bright pink dress in a silhouette that echoes the fashions of the previous decade and its ideals of feminine domesticity, a matching pink satin coat and a pink tiara. The cocoon-like coat could be seen to convey a sense of maturity that the symbolic marriage bestows upon her, whereas the pink outfit, which she wears after her row with Paul and once she has started seeing José, symbolizes her renewed sexual availability via the associations of the color pink with eroticism and femininity. The fact that she is partly covering herself with the coat (worn on one shoulder) plays on the themes of innocence – also associated with the color pink – and sexuality.

**The Meeting of Holly and Paul.** The sequence where Holly and Paul meet carries on in using Holly as the object of the gaze, while establishing Paul as the main holder of that gaze. Through the sequence, which thrusts Paul headfirst into the



chaotic and curious life of Holly, the narration assumes his point of view as the voyeur of the spectacle that is Holly. By merging the admiring of the spectacle with Paul's viewpoint, the narration merges Paul with the film viewer.

The sequence also introduces the seemingly liberal motives of the filmmakers as it uses the interplay of reversed roles in comparison with the novella. Whereas in the novella it is Holly who rings the narrator's buzzer in order to get inside the building, and later introduces herself by barging into his apartment uninvited, in the film it is Paul who calls upon Holly's help to get in, and then invites himself in by asking to use the telephone. As he rings her buzzer, he wakes her up. She is wearing an ornate turquoise and gold sleeping mask with matching ear plugs, which serve to highlight her obliviousness to her surroundings and how she shuts herself outside of the "real world" by surrounding herself with glamorous things. As she opens the door, she sees Paul walking up the stairs. The camera keeps switching between Holly and Paul's viewpoints, in order to introduce their interest in one another and to suggest Paul as the potential, alternative object of the gaze. Soon after Holly has let Paul into her apartment, she realizes she is late for an appointment with her friend, the gangster Sally Tomato. As she runs around the apartment, trying frantically to get ready, she goes into a monologue which is used to introduce the metaphors that connote her sense of not belonging; the nameless cat as her alter ego and Tiffany's as her safe place.

The sequence which shows Holly getting ready to meet Sally plays with many notions of looking and concealing. It portrays Holly in contrast with the elegant figure seen earlier standing outside Tiffany's, but despite rushing around absentmindedly, she of course soon emerges looking immaculate. As she does her make-up, she is shot from behind so the viewer sees her face reflected from the mirror, as does Paul, again merging his viewpoint with the viewer's. Holly talks to Paul via the mirror, not face to face, which could be taken as an indication of her putting on a facade to hide her real self and her dilemma of not belonging. By allowing Paul and the viewer to only see her reflection, Holly prevents them from getting too close to her, and what they see is not the real her, but only an image.

The sequence where Holly gets ready also plays on the idea of Holly's nudity, something which is used at several other occasions later in the narrative. When Holly goes to the bathroom to change in to a dress, Paul and the viewer are given a hint of her nudity, as she continues the conversation hidden from view. As the camera

shows a glimpse of her in the bathroom, she already has the dress on, so all the viewer sees is her zipping it up. Such scenes, where Holly's state of undress is suggested are frequent in the film, implanting in the viewer the idea of her nudity as a possibility which is of course never realized; at the beginning of the party scene, she appears dressed only in a towel, albeit an elegantly wrapped, toga-like one. In a later scene, she opens the door to Paul and muses out loud whether she is dressed, before wrapping the robe she is using to cover herself around her. When she is shown waking up, fumbling for something to wear before settling on a men's dress shirt, the film narration subtly hints both at her nudity and her being intimate enough with a man for him to leave his shirt in her apartment. However, the man whose shirt it is is not introduced or in any way referred to in dialogue and thus his significance in the narrative as a previous sexual partner of Holly's is questionable. Although it is there as an allusion, when compared to the treatment of Paul in terms of sexuality and nudity, which I shall discuss next, it becomes clear that there is a world of difference in the subtle allusions used for Holly and the frankness reserved for Paul and the flesh-and-blood reminder of his virility, 2E.

**Paul as the Object of the Gaze.** In the sequence that follows Holly spies on Paul, who is now portrayed as the object of the gaze, reflecting again on the seemingly liberal motives of the filmmakers by reversing the traditional gender roles. As discussed earlier, the sequence clearly showcases the contrast in portraying male and female sexuality both in its realization and in the motivations of the filmmakers; as mentioned above, the filmmakers reportedly felt the need to establish Paul's active heterosexuality from the beginning, in order to distance themselves from the ambiguous narrator of the novella and the "effeminate" protagonist of Elliott's first draft (Krämer 63).

The set of Paul's apartment serves to introduce his status of sexual servitude in relation to 2E. 2E, who Paul introduces to Holly in an earlier scene as his "decorator", blends in in her dark green skirt suit and gold bag with the dark color scheme of the apartment. In addition to the dark wallpapers the apartment is furnished with elaborate, golden antique lamps, candelabras and oil paintings, giving it a look of old-fashioned, tacky, suffocating excess. In contrast, Holly's apartment, while rather bare, is accented with bright jewel tones connoting her youth, as well as a sofa made out of a bath tub, a chest of drawers made of stacked suitcases and a zebra skin rug, which convey her eccentricity and unconventionality. Thus placing Paul in this setting

serves to convey 2E's control over him as his sexual patroness; when he eventually leaves her he does so by walking out of the apartment, telling her to go find a new “writer” the same size as him to fit into the clothes she had bought Paul.

The dialogue after Holly has climbed into Paul's apartment following 2E's exit contains the riskiest lines of dialogue in the film as it reveals to the viewer what Holly and Paul do for a living, which serves as to establish them as equals of sorts. It also features lingering shots of Paul's shirtless torso, and suggests, through his gestures and his request to Holly to hand him his robe that he is indeed naked. As Holly comments on the money 2E left on the table, Paul gets upset:

Holly: I must say, she works late hours for a decorator. ... 300 [dollars].  
She's very generous. Is it by the week, the hour or what?

Paul: Ok, party's over. Out.

Holly: Oh, Fred. Darling Fred, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to hurt your feelings. Don't be angry. I was just trying to say, I understand. I understand completely.

Paul: It's ok. Stick around, make yourself a drink. Throw me my robe and I'll make you one.

Holly: You stay right where you are. You must be absolutely exhausted. I mean it is very late, and you were sound asleep and everything.

In this sequence Paul's sexual activeness becomes a signifier of his masculinity, his position within the paradigm which constructs the male as the “active principle of culture”, the one who “creates the action”, the original subject. The female is thus constructed via passivity and a lack of a proper subject position. Both 2E and Holly attempt to resist this positioning. Whereas 2E's resistance towards her “correct” position within the paradigm results in her being coded a “bad” woman for it, Holly eventually accepts hers when she realizes that her fulfillment depends on it. Holly's acceptance of her correct position, that of passivity, within the patriarchal gender paradigm allows her to be “good”. The sequence thus innovatively suggests the idea of Paul as the object of the gaze by utilizing cinematographic conventions traditionally reserved for the depiction of female characters. However, unlike in the case of female characters, the narration does not deny Paul his active subject position.

**Moon River.**<sup>21</sup> The famous sequence where Hepburn performs the film song “Moon River”, while accompanying herself on guitar, is used to convey Holly's interiority to Paul and the viewer and again establish her as the object, laden with the responsibility of fulfilling the narrative promise made to the male. At the beginning of the sequence Paul is writing in his apartment as he hears the music and walks over to the window. A close up of his typewriter reveals what he has written: the beginning of a story called “My friend” which is obviously about Holly and begins “There was once a very lovely, very frightened girl. She lived alone except for a nameless cat.” Like the narrator of Capote's novella, who relays Holly's story to the reader, Paul, too, attempts to place Holly within a narrative of his construction.

As the main voyeur of the film, Paul watches Holly from his window above, while she is unaware of his gaze and goes on singing. The song, which melody at this point is familiar to the viewer through repetition, conveys a sense of interiority via its lyrics; a subconscious longing for that one special person to share her life with (“Where ever you're going, I'm going your way / Two drifters, off to see the world”), someone she can relate to, someone who has the same hopes and dreams for the future as her (“We're after the same rainbow's end / Waiting 'round the bend / My huckleberry friend”). Holly's dreamlike state is suggested via the visual cues of framing her in a soft-focused close up, to show her gaze, with her eyes half-closed, off into the distance.

As the story Paul is writing when he hears Holly's song suggests, he has already made up his mind about her and what she is like. Hearing her sing “Moon River” validates his interpretation of her, and allows him access into such emotions in Holly's subconscious of which she appears to be either in denial or unaware. The ending of the film later reveals that Paul was indeed right all along, he knew what she wanted before she admitted it to herself – him.

**The Strip Club Sequence.** The sequence where Holly and Paul go to a strip club after bidding farewell to Holly's ex-husband, Doc Golightly, and before having an argument about money, use another character as a substitute for Holly's nudity and re-introduce the issues the film narrative has with straying away from the accepted paradigm of activity and passivity. As both Holly and Paul stare intently at the dancer as she removes her clothes on the stage in front of them, Holly gets more and more drunk and wonders whether the dancer is paid well. Just as the dancer is

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21 For full lyrics, see the Appendix.

about to take her top off the camera cuts away. As Holly muses on, Paul becomes clearly distracted, and his eyes are fixed on the stage. In this scene the dancer acts as Holly's foil; while the camera teases Paul and the viewer several times with the concept of Holly's nudity, she cannot appear undressed in the film, thus the dancer is used to convey that for her. By portraying Holly as the object of the gaze and the main narrative spectacle, the film invites Paul and the audience to want her. The use of the dancer as a substitute also demonstrates the intentions of the PCA in terms of portrayals of nudity or state of relative undress: as the dancer is not part of the narrative and the audience is not meant to identify with her she can appear (semi)nude – she is a prop, not a character.

The argument Holly and Paul have at the end of the strip club sequence serves to illustrate how Holly's refusal to conform to what is expected of her – traditional femininity, passivity, “goodness” - causes a rift in her friendship with Paul, highlighting the dilemma they both have in navigating within the thematic landscape of love, money and ownership. The drunken Holly explains to Paul that she intends to marry the chubby and childlike, eccentric millionaire Rusty Trawler, because she needs to be able to support her brother Fred once he gets out of the army. A close up of Paul shows that he disagrees with this plan, which Holly notices and tires giving him money in order for him to go get more drinks. The dialogue follows:

Holly: I don't accept drinks from disapproving gentlemen. Especially not disapproving gentlemen who are kept by other ladies. So take it. You should be used to taking money from ladies by now.

Paul: If I were you, I'd be more careful with my money. Rusty Trawler is too hard a way of earning it.

Holly: It should take you exactly four seconds to cross from here to that door. I'll give you two.

Both Holly and Paul's anger at being called out by the other exhibits awareness of and unease with their positions in regards to the love/money conundrum. This sequence also serves as to transition to my analysis of the film in thematic terms. As I have now established, the film narration constructs Holly from the very first scene onwards as the object of both Paul's and the film gaze, a spectacular narrative-image that the fulfillment of the narrative promise, the recuperating of Holly within the patriarchal

power matrix, depends on. In the next chapter I will demonstrate how the thematics of love and money come to define the relationship between Holly and Paul for the remaining of the film where it is presented via the extensive metaphor of marriage.

### 3.1.2 Love and Ownership - The Extensive Metaphor of Marriage

The adaptive shift into the territory of romantic comedy resulted in changes in the handling of many themes and one which experienced a particular departure from its original cynical outlook was the theme of love. While the film is perhaps best known as a lighthearted romantic comedy with a happy ending, the theme of love is not portrayed quite so unproblematically as the overall reception and the iconic status of the film might suggest. As the ways in which Holly and Paul make their money suggest, love in the film is conflated with the theme of ownership. This becomes apparent in the dialogues both Holly and Paul carry out in regards to the relationships they have with other characters as well as with each other, as discussed above. Additionally, the theme is overlaid with the extensive metaphor of marriage, which presents Holly and Paul's relationship in terms of the normative, socially acceptable institution of marriage and thus lends narrative plausibility to the disturbing connotations that the theme of (love as) ownership evokes.

Marriage is also used in order to create a distinction between Holly and 2E. In contrast to Holly, 2E is portrayed as a woman with an active sex life and the main dividing aspect in regards to which one of the women is “allowed” to have sex, is marriage. Whereas 2E is married and cheating on her husband with Paul, Holly's marital status, which in the novella is presented very ambiguously, has been cleared up as per the demands of the PCA during the adaptation process; in response to Axelrod's script, which presented Holly as a divorcée, the PCA demanded her teenage marriage be annulled instead (Wasson 91). Thus it may be considered as per its legal and religious definition as if it never took place. Having Holly's marriage end in an annulment as opposed to a divorce symbolically erases her sexual past, re-virginizes her and thus allows her to eventually adopt the role of “good” womanhood as she embarks on a relationship with Paul at the end of the film.

**The Proposal.** Holly and Paul's relationship is presented symbolically in terms of courtship leading to marriage through the metaphor of the ring. The initial proposal of marriage is made by Holly, demonstrating again the seemingly liberal

motivations of the filmmakers. After Holly and Paul have made up following their earlier row about money, the talk again turns to Rusty Trawler and Holly reveals that it turned out that Rusty was not rich after all. The dialogue follows:

Holly: I'd marry you for your money in a minute. Would you marry me for my money?

Paul: In a minute.

Holly: Well, it's pretty lucky neither of us is rich, huh?

In addition to demonstrating Holly's prerequisite for getting married, money, the scene again highlights the sense of modernity and unconventionality the filmmakers were aiming towards by reversing the traditional gender roles in having Holly “propose” to Paul.

**The Ring.** After the proposal Holly and Paul head to Tiffany's, Holly's safe place and the only place in the world that makes her feel like at home for “the wedding”. At Tiffany's Paul suggests getting a ring engraved for Holly as a thank you gift for her encouragement of his writing career. The ring, which Paul previously found in Doc Golightly's, Holly's former husband's, box of Cracker Jacks allows their relationship to be seen as a marriage, and thus makes it socially licensed and acceptable. As the cheap ring found in a box of confectionary is elevated to something more valuable through having it engraved at Tiffany's, Holly and Paul's relationship is elevated from something vague into something clearly defined by social standards. Although Paul does not give the ring to Holly right away (the clerk at Tiffany's tells them it will be ready the following day), when he proposes the idea of the ring, Holly happily tells him she “accepts” it, which, as the viewer soon finds out, he interprets as her commitment towards pursuing a relationship with him.

**Giving Away the Bride.** As Paul finds the ring in the box of candy Doc buys, the gifting of the ring to Holly comes to signify her transfer from Doc to Paul, from a father figure to a more appropriate mate. Similarly to the novella, when Paul and Doc meet, Paul mistakenly thinks the middle-aged Doc is Holly's father. Their father-daughter-like relationship is made even clearer when Doc tells Paul that he took in Holly and her brother Fred, adopted them, when they were orphaned. In an obvious departure to how the sequence is played out in the novella, there is no hint at Doc and Holly's relationship ever having had a sexual element to it. As Doc motions to Paul

that he can keep the ring, the ring comes to assume the status of a dowry he, Holly's adaptive father, pays Paul. The use of a dowry adds to the metaphorical connection between love, marriage and ownership since it connotes that the status of the bride in the financial transaction of marriage within a patrilineal society is that of a pawn, “an object of exchange ... analogous to money” (Johnson and Cook, quoted in Bordwell, 91). As Doc leaves for Texas, he tells Paul “Keep an eye on her, will you son?”, acknowledging their relationship as the father and the son(-in-law), who has now assumed the role of the guardian and protector of Holly. The use of the conventional metaphor of “keeping an eye on someone” also serves to connote observing or watching someone closely – continuing acting as the voyeur Paul has been all along.

**The Wedding Night.** The marriage sequence sees Holly and Paul leave Tiffany's and spend the rest of the day playing a game of doing things the other has not done before, before ending in a symbolic wedding night. The lead up to the wedding night plays with the themes of seeing, looking and concealment, as after leaving Tiffany's they go to a toy store and steal Halloween masks. Afterwards, when they return to their apartment building, still wearing the masks, Holly almost trips on the stairs and yells “I can't see!”. The fact that the sequence of them running from the store to the apartment is without dialogue emphasizes Holly's statement. In the hallway the camera shows Holly and Paul in a close up as they slowly remove the masks, as if seeing each other clearly for the first time. The focus on their faces, the soft music in the background and the lack of dialogue give away what comes next – the kiss. In the next scene Paul wakes up in his bed, sees the two masks in his apartment, and smiles. He sets out to look for Holly in her apartment, but finds an empty bed that has not been slept in, implying to the viewer that they spent the night together, thus consummating their marriage. The fact that Paul is wearing pajamas makes the inference even subtler – in a previous scene his nudity after having slept with 2E was made quite clear. However, had the screenwriter Axelrod had his way, there would have been no doubt over the course of actions following the kiss; in a passage from his original script, which was cut from the film at the insistence of the PCA, Holly was meant to whisper “I just thought of something neither of us has ever done. At least not together...” (Wasson 95, Axelrod 92).<sup>22</sup> It is worth noting that the intention of the screenwriter was to give Holly more agency over her sexuality, make

<sup>22</sup> A quote from Geoffrey Shurlock, the censor of the PCA, scribbled on Axelrod's script during the script's review process reveals that the according to the PCA “this story cannot handle an affair between Paul and Holly.” (Wasson 95)



her stand out even clearer among other female characters in popular culture. However, this was put an end to by the PCA. The removal of this line of dialogue highlights the PCA's unease with female sexual agency and its agenda of promoting the status quo of patriarchal hegemony.

### 3.1.3 Love and Ownership – the Conflict

Holly and Paul's confrontation after the wedding night marks the climax of the film's dramatic structure, presenting their opposing interpretations of the previous events in conflict, causing a rupture within the teleology of the narrative. While the conflict brings out the thematics of love, money and ownership out in the open in very explicit terms, it is also rich in subtext, which serves to find narrative plausibility to Paul's side of the story, demonstrating the patriarchal ideologies running through the narrative. In addition to the dialogue the positioning is achieved via cinematographic means, as the narration is fixed to portraying Paul's side of the events; after the kiss in the hallway the viewer does not see Holly, but only Paul, who is looking for her at different locations and meeting with 2E. The conflict sequence also sees Paul become more vocal in forcing a change in Holly, in order for her to eventually fulfill the narrative promise made out to him.

**The Conflict.** The conflict sequence introduces the teleological rupture in the narrative by having the female undermine the superiority of the male. The narrative constructs this in two stages, first by introducing the conflict between Paul and 2E, as he breaks off their relationship, and then between Holly and Paul, as he tells her he loves her and is rejected. Since 2E's symbolic function is to represent the “bad” woman, a warning sign for Holly, her attempt at subverting the teleology of the narrative, which seeks to fulfill the narrative promise made to the male, is immediately stopped by Paul. As Paul tells 2E that he has found someone else, she tries to throw money at the problem by writing him a check and telling him to take Holly for a holiday, believing that afterwards he would surely return to her. She says:

Surely you've noticed me writing checks before. ... You're entitled to a vacation with pay. Think of it as a matter of fair labor practices. Of course, if you were really smart you'd get some of the other boys together and organize a union.

By presenting Paul and 2E's relationship as a labor contract in which she is in the dominant position of the employer and he in the subservient position of the employee, the film narration underlines the ideological conflict of the arrangement, demonstrating its inherent patriarchal bias. The conflict is resolved via Paul's rejection of 2E, which he does by explaining to her that he has found another woman, who he is able to fix so that she may fit in the dominant gender hierarchy. Holly, while also rebelling against the patriarchy, does so only because she does not know better: Paul explains to 2E that he is not leaving her for another rich woman who can support him (which she suspects), but for "a girl who can't help anyone, not even herself. But the thing is, I can help her, and it's a nice feeling for a change." His explanation reveals that he views Holly as someone who needs help, his help, to steer her towards the right direction (of matrimony and traditional gender roles). The word choice and the emphasis gained by the repetition of "help" draws attention to the sense of things not being quite right in Holly's life, which was introduced in conjunction with the characterization of her during the opening sequence. Paul's suggestion that Holly cannot "help anyone, not even herself" contains the premise that she is unable to effectually control her actions. By describing Holly as someone who needs to be helped (by him) to do the right thing, Paul presents himself as having the moral high ground. By constructing himself as the helper and Holly as the one who needs his help Paul also constructs him as the male who forces the change in the passive female, fixing her to the stability the patriarchal order provides.

The second stage of the conflict, Holly and Paul's meeting in the library recreates the teleological rupture of the narrative by having now Holly resist Paul's superior agency. Their interaction, however, is much more explosive as his previous meeting with 2E, since unlike with her, Paul is unable to resolve the situation to his advantage. After he finds Holly in the library, immersed in books about South America, he tells her that he loves her. He is met with a blank look, followed by an explanation that she has just found out the handsome and rich José is infatuated with her, so she is determined to make it her business to marry him. After Paul's insistence that she abandon her plans the following dialogue takes place:

Holly: Do you think you own me?

Paul: That's exactly what I think!

Holly: I know it's what everybody always thinks, but everybody happens to be wrong.

Paul: Look, I am not everybody. Or am I? Is that what you really think? That I'm no different from all your rats and super-rats... Wait a minute, if that's what you really think, there's something I want to give you.

Holly: What's that?

Paul: Fifty dollars for the powder room.

This exchange explicitly spells out Paul's interpretation of their relationship in terms of his presumed entitlement to Holly. However, in addition to the clarity explicating the love and ownership paradigm, the exchange contains the subtext of Paul calling Holly a whore for sleeping with him. While the narration never spells out whether Holly sleeps with the men she goes out with in exchange of the 50\$ for the powder room, it is what Paul suggests by paying her for the night they spent together.

Paul's lines explicate that his issue with Holly lies in her attempt to assert her individual and independent subjectivity; he is unable to reconcile with her interpretation of the previous night's events because it does not conform to his view, which sees it a form of contract. His anger and disbelief at Holly potentially viewing him as one of the “rats and super-rats” may thus be seen as his inability to accept, even for a moment, that he may not be “the active principle of culture”, which the overall dramatic and narrative arch of course presents him to be. As the genre conventions dictate, the attempt to undermine the logic of the narrative is merely used for dramatic purposes, to create a conflict and thus instill the need for its resolution – the ending of the film forces Holly to accept the error of her ways and recognize her subservience to Paul.

**The Hysterical Woman.** Before the conflict between Holly and Paul is finally resolved, they are forced to confront each other for one more time, during which Holly is portrayed as the classic Hysterical Woman. The sequence in which Holly learns of the death of her brother Fred and begins to trash her bedroom in a fit of anger and grief shows both Paul and José at a loss with what to do to console her, to make her react in a more dignified manner. After Paul manages to stop Holly from breaking any more of her belongings,<sup>23</sup> he leaves, telling José to deal with the aftermath since she is his problem now. A shot from above shows Holly lying on her

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23 In Axelrod's script Paul “slaps her hard across the face” to get her to stop (106).

bed in the bright pink outfit, with down from a ripped pillow falling on her, lit by a stream of light from an open doorway. The camera frames the scene so that José, who is standing on the doorway, about to enter the room, is seen only as a shadow on the floor. The lighting, the contrast of the shadows and the framing, which leaves José outside of the shot, referred to only via his shadow, create an aura of foreboding, horror, and suspense.

The framing of the scene plays upon the depictions of both Holly and José, creating a tension between them. By showing the viewer José's shadow, the narration creates an expectation in the viewer to see him enter the room. However, as this expectation is never met, the shadow comes to signify his changed presence in Holly's life, and mark his last scene in the film. The portrayal of José as a shadow in the doorway may also be seen as a reference to him as the Bad Guy, about to disturb the sleeping Holly. However, by portraying Holly amid the trashed room which José is about to enter may also be seen as referring to the hero about to enter the lair of the mythical beast. The tensions created by the filmic conventions, the associations they evoke and the contrast between Holly's pink outfit signifying her sexuality, innocence, youth and naïveté and the darkness of the room with its broken furniture, smashed up perfume bottles and the falling feathers serve to emphasize Holly's contradictions, manifested earlier in her “unladylike” demonstration of her grief, which the men in her life are not able to reconcile with.

**The Resolution.**<sup>24</sup> The resolution of the film re-introduces the ring as the symbol of everything that could have been – love, happiness and marriage – and finally sets things right by having Holly accept her appropriate role in the dominant gender paradigm. Holly, despite having eventually been rejected by José, as details of her association with the gangster Sally Tomato have become public, has decided to flee to South America in the hopes of finding another rich man, and is heading towards the airport accompanied by Paul who tries to talk her out of her plan. As his persuasion fails, he angrily tosses the ring to Holly and in a lengthy monologue reveals he has been “[carrying] it around for months” before getting out of the car. Only when Holly has the symbol of everything conventional womanhood has to offer literally in her lap, does she finally understand its worth and goes after Paul. As an indication of the seemingly liberal tone of the film, the giving back of the ring is played out in reversed gender roles – according to the film cliché it is the woman who

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<sup>24</sup> Refer to the Appendix for the script for the final scene.

gives back the ring to the suitor she rejects.

The dialogue of the resolution scene is dominated by Paul “laying down the law” while Holly listens, which if viewed in Lacanian terms, effectively denies Holly her independent subjectivity. As Kuhn explains, “subjectivity is constituted in and through speech acts” (45), of which she utters none as she finally realizes that she does indeed love Paul. The monologue has Paul spell out to her how wrong she is about life, while she quietly listens and looks away teary-eyed. By suggesting that only (his) love is true freedom and her trying to live her life according to her own rules is confinement, he effectively tells her that there can be no freedom for a woman outside of the hegemonic gender paradigm. During the confrontation Paul’s feelings of entitlement towards Holly resurface when he re-introduces the thematic of love as ownership and tells her “You belong to me”, to which she replies “No. People don’t belong to people.” The line could have just as easily been written as “We belong together” which would have had an even stronger effect, due to the mutuality and reciprocity conveyed via the plural form, giving both actors equal agency. By saying “You belong to me” Paul reduces Holly into an object, stripping her of her agency.

Whereas in the novella Holly vocalizes her epiphany via dialogue, in the film she is silent and the conclusion she arrives at – that she does indeed love Paul and belong to him – is presented via Paul’s dialogue and Holly’s subsequent silent actions. The fact that she does not speak in the film is significant; the man literally spells out to the woman what she ought to think and what she ought to want from life, while she sits quietly and listens. What gets conveyed in the narration of the reconciliation sequence and in Holly’s silence is the acceptance of the hegemony of traditional, patriarchal gender hierarchy and silent, obedient femininity. The hegemony of traditional relationships trumps seeking personal fulfillment elsewhere; trying to find a meaning to life somewhere else is shallow and pointless. Additionally, the conclusion implies that as Holly needs to have Paul tell her that she has been a fool to try to live according to her own rules, women need men to help them “figure themselves out”.

The metaphor of Holly’s nameless cat, signifying her alter-ego in both the novella and in the film reappears at the end of the story where it is used to emphasize Holly’s realization that she does indeed belong to Paul. After Paul has exited the car following his speech, Holly runs after him and they look for the cat together. Once they find it, they kiss. Unlike in the novella, where Holly loses the cat forever, in the

film they are reunited, and thus finding the cat comes to signify Holly finding herself and her rightful place, in Paul's arms, where she remains as the film ends.

Wasson reveals that an alternate ending was filmed, based on Axelrod's original script, in which Holly, after jumping out of the taxi, seeks Paul and vocalizes her epiphany – and gives the cat a name, but it was scrapped in favor of Edwards' vision (164). As Cornut-Gentille D'Arcy notes in her essay, any attempt at a liberal, modern viewpoint into gender relations is undone in having Holly accept Paul's notion of love at the end of the film. As the film ends, "Moon River" starts to play and for the first time since Holly's performance the song features lyrics so the viewer may be reminded once again that the "two drifters ... after the same rainbow's end" have finally found each other.

#### **4 Conclusions**

I hope that I have been able to illustrate the politics of representation at work in these two texts. The differences in the portrayals of the two Holly Golightlies and in the dynamic between her and the central male characters around her constitute a world apart in the ideological interpretations on offer. Whereas Capote's novella recognizes the patriarchal need to "make sense" of the woman by defining her as a means of control, whether that control is successful is ambiguous due to Holly's resistance towards it. In the film adaptation the control is exhibited via the male gaze, constructed of the camera gaze and the gaze of the male protagonist, turning Holly into a narrative-image, a spectacular fetish object, denying her the subject position awarded to the male. This process confines Holly to the symbolic plot-space of a boundary for Paul to cross. Despite her attempts in "disturbing it, perverting it, making trouble" (De Lauretis 139) by behaving in ways that seek to undermine and subvert the hegemonic gender matrix, Holly is eventually made to accept her place within it, dictated by Paul.

Reading the two works and the adaptation process connecting them thus helps shed light on the "machineries ... of representation" (Hall 433) at work within the mainstream film industry and on the power it wields by constructing, regulating and organizing the social and ideological concepts, phenomena and entities its products portray. By masquerading the dominant ideologies as idealized narratives through filmic conventions and with the help of the cult of the movie star, Hollywood

may appease the powers that be while simultaneously gratifying the needs of the masses to be entertained. Exposing the “symptomatic meanings” (Making Meaning 8-9) interwoven within the narratives thus becomes a strategy of resistance.

The hegemonic, male-dominated, mainstream film industry's impetus towards the simplification of complex literary themes is evident in the film narration's need to find a stable center in Holly by having her meaning fixed to Paul. Having a conventional set of values and idea(l)s about gender relations and sexuality imposed upon Capote's controversial and subversive story made it relatable and appealing for mainstream audiences and financially lucrative to the studio, while simultaneously pleasing the industry's morality censor.

Capote's Holly and the narrator may be seen, as Smith notes, as his wish to see a wider range of characters represented within popular culture, and a recognition for gender identities and sexualities different from those acknowledged and approved by the dominant culture. His wish has to some extent been fulfilled, as much has changed since the publication of his novella and the release of the film adaptation over a half a century ago. Attitudes have shifted. Feminism, queer theory, cultural criticism and other inherently postmodern schools of thought have gone against the grain of previous grand narratives and helped redirect the discourse away from the ideals of heteronormativity and feminine submissiveness by questioning and challenging them at every turn. Female (and male) characters who do not fit into a narrow, restrictive binary of gender and sexual identities are not an anomaly in the cultural products of today, and literature and films frequently feature female characters whose identifications are complex and contradictory and whose stories are not dependent on those of men.

This seeming abundance of complex, subversive characters could, of course, be further explored (and contested,) by applying the analytical approach I have taken here to other texts. One could, for example, study a canonical work and some of its film adaptations, some recent and some created decades ago. Due to the enduring popularity of classic literature many of the works of Jane Austen or William Shakespeare (to name but a few), which contain a wide array of complex characters and often deal with many divisive social issues, have been adapted into film on several occasions, producing a variety of interpretations, including modernized ones. Comparing the source text with a film adaptation made in the heyday of Classic Hollywood, and a modernized one made in the last few decades, would no doubt

allow one to thoroughly explore the ideologies and values they convey. Another approach could be to shift the focus from the politics of representation of gender and sexuality in a literary text and its film adaptation to the representation of another core category used to organize societies – race. Or, one could look for works where the area of focus I have suggested has been altered or reversed during the adaptation process; adaptations where the gender roles have been changed, which is something that has been explored in theater, could be a fascinating avenue.

In any case, the possible applications for studying texts, their adaptations and their thematic dynamics are endless and the examples presented above only scratch the surface. What they all have in common, however, is that as cultural products they offer a pathway into understanding the cultural context they were created in, and the culture they speak to. Literature, art, and entertainment are fundamental to the human experience. They do not exist in a separate realm from the society that produced them but are engaged in a continuous discourse with it. Analyzing and deconstructing cultural products may thus help us uncover some of the hidden “truths”, the deeply ingrained attitudes that we subscribe to and reproduce often unknowingly, and help us articulate and discuss those that we do not support.

As I implied in the introduction to this paper, our perception of cultural products may change over time and the last half a century has seen Holly Golightly, as realized by Hepburn, become the epitome of class and elegance. Her look, her character and her storyline have achieved referential status not only among authors, filmmakers and fashion designers but also wedding planners and bus tour guide operators. The kooky character of Edwards' film has become an archetype for dozens of characters after her, the idealized “muse” whose narrative purpose is to help the male lead achieve his goals, while simultaneously delighting the audiences with her unconventional charm. All in all, she has become unrecognizable from the teenage hustler of Capote's novella.

The emblematic status that Holly has garnered over the last half a century thus allows us to view her as the narrative-image of Hollywood's own grand narrative, the symbol that embodies the story that Tinseltown keeps telling itself over and over again: the ditzy Manhattan socialite with roots in the Dust Bowl represents the industry's transformative abilities as a self-styled Dream Factory, turning hopeful wannabes into stars. Holly's questionable methods of making money and the cynical end to her story (either by fading into oblivion or by embracing the ideology that



denies her of her agency, after unsuccessfully rebelling against it) may thus be seen as representative of the industry's harsh realities, hidden beneath the surface.

## Appendix

### **Moon River** (music by Henry Mancini, lyrics by Johnny Mercer)

Moon River, wider than a mile,  
I'm crossing you in style some day.  
Oh, dream maker, you heart breaker,  
wherever you're going I'm going your way.  
Two drifters off to see the world.  
There's such a lot of world to see.  
We're after the same rainbow's end--  
waiting 'round the bend,  
my huckleberry friend,  
Moon River and me.

© 1961 Paramount Music Corporation

### **The final scene**

Paul: I'm not going to let you do this.  
Holly: You're not going to let me?  
Paul: Holly, I'm in love with you.  
Holly: So what?  
Paul: So what? So what? So plenty! I love you! You belong to me!  
Holly: No. People don't belong to people.  
Paul: Of course they do.  
Holly: Nobody's going to put me in a cage.  
Paul: I want to love you!  
Holly: It's the same thing.  
Paul: No, it's not! Holly!  
Holly: I'm not Holly. I'm not Lulamae either. I don't know who I am! I'm like cat here, a no-name slob. We belong to nobody, and nobody belongs to us. We don't even belong to each other.  
... [Holly asks the driver to stop, opens the door and shoos the cat out of

the car]

Paul: Driver, pull over here... You know what's wrong with you, Miss Whoever-You-Are? You're chicken. You've got no guts. You're afraid to say "OK, life's a fact." People do fall in love. People do belong each other because that's the only chance anybody's got for real happiness. You call yourself a free spirit, a wild thing. You're terrified somebody's going to stick you in a cage. Well, baby, you're already in that cage. You built it yourself. And it's not bound by Tulip, Texas or Somaliland, it's wherever you go. Because no matter where you run, you just end up running into yourself. Here. I've been carrying this thing around for months. I don't want it anymore. [Throws the ring at Holly.]

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