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The Spectacle of Gender: Representations of Women in British and
American Cinema of the Nineteen-Sixties

By

Nancy McGuire Roche

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the
Ph. D.

Department of English
Middle Tennessee State University

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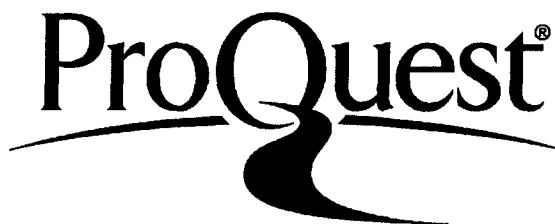
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The Spectacle of Gender: Representations of Women in British and American Cinema of
the Nineteen-Sixties

Nancy McGuire Roche

Approved:

William Brantley
Dr. William Brantley, Committee Chair

Angela Hague
Dr. Angela Hague, Reader

Linda Badley
Dr. Linda Badley, Reader

David Lavery
Dr. David Lavery, Reader

Tom Strawman
Dr. Tom Strawman, Chair, English Department

Michael D. Allen
Dr. Michael D. Allen, Dean, College of Graduate Studies

Nancy McGuire Roche

Approved:

May 7, 2011

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the women of my family: my mother Mary and my aunt Mae Belle, twins who were not only “Rosie the Riveters,” but also school teachers for four decades. These strong-willed Kentucky women have nurtured me through all my educational endeavors, and especially for this degree they offered love, money, and fierce support. And for my daughter, Anjelika, whom I hope will continue to grow as strong, independent, and fearless as the women I write about in this work. I also dedicate this dissertation to my husband, Trip, who has endured and encouraged all my academic endeavors, often supporting, single-parenting, and keeping our family together with his singular patience and wit. And finally, for all women, everywhere, who have stormed the gates of the “boys’ club” to gain admittance.

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ABSTRACT

Early feminist film critics asserted that cinematic narratives structure women's roles into images that serve to reinforce patriarchal agendas. To challenge these theories, cinema of the 1960s can be analyzed to emphasize historical events and to acknowledge the power of popular culture and mass media to affect film texts. The 1960s marked the beginning of identity politics, and films of the era illustrate new ways of thinking and being. Early feminist theory did not always register these seismic shifts, nor was the study of single films extracted from their context an adequate instrument to assess the changes taking place. This work therefore provides an overview of film texts of the 1960s to gauge their significance within the spectacle of the decade.

Representations of women in American and British 1960s cinema may be viewed as constructs which expose a changing culture and transitions in societal norms. Female characters achieved greater agency and were often represented in innovative and sometimes even astonishing ways. A liberalization of sexual mores led to previously untested images of women in film that dislodged meta-narratives while expanding the scope of acceptable behavior. The agents of gender "rupture" include Jo in *A Taste of Honey* (1961), Holly Golightly in *Breakfast At Tiffany's* (1961), Alexandra Del Lago in *Sweet Bird of Youth* (1962), Diana Scott in *Darling* (1965), Martha in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf* (1966), Pherber in *Performance* (1968), and Gudrun Brangwen in *Women In Love* (1969).

The transformations charted in this study were fueled by the European New Wave, by art house, exploitation, and underground films, and were directly related to the demise of the Production Code Administration and a liberalization of the British Board of Film Censors. The decade of the 1960s witnessed the beginning of a new cinematic grammar that undermined the binary of social codes that relegated women to the status of other. Striking blows against censorship modalities and established constructs of femininity—and therefore the patriarchy—American and British filmmakers created new identities for women of their own era, and also for the future.

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INTRODUCTION

It is undeniable that 1960s cinema is marked by a particular degree of pushing against and breaking down of censorship codes from previous decades. In this investigation, I contend that female roles of this era work as a catalyst to enhance the disintegration of censorship regulations, acknowledge modalities of American and British censorship mechanisms, and mark their significance in cinematic history. This work also examines representations of women in British and American 1960s cinema as constructs which reflect cultural transitions and a liberalization of social mores. Furthermore, I assert that during the 1960s women achieved greater agency and were often characterized in innovative, astonishing ways previously unexplored in cinema.

Fueled by the European New Wave and art house films, exploitation films, and underground and cult films, a new cinema evolved which would rupture the traditional narratives of Hollywood. As the decade progressed, films of the 1960s began to constitute a seismic undercurrent in cinema. This revolution was directly related to the dawn of “New Hollywood,” the advent of television as a popular medium, an era of expanding independence for women, the demise of Hays Code and BBFC censorship regulations, and a global rebellion in youth culture.

I also defend the idea that a cinematic revolt was begun in the “Swinging Sixties,” which led to major changes in film narratives by the early 1970s. Furthermore, I propose that a liberalization of sexual mores in the 1960s led to previously untested images of women in film. These depictions served to reject and dislodge the meta-narrative of traditional cinema, and therefore to affect gender representations. By the end of the

1960s, a kind of gender “slippage” is revealed in mainstream cinema, and locators which depict masculinity and femininity begin to change and intersect.

This study argues that early feminist film critics overlooked the larger significance of women’s roles in 1960s cinema and provides evidence that particular characterizations of women, which may seem stereotypical, dismissive or overtly sexualized, are also a form of transgression against the status quo. These roles provided a means to undermine and eventually overturn British and American censorship regulations that had been in place for decades.

In America, the Movie Production Code of 1930 was the primary agent of film censorship from the early 1930s until 1968, when the film rating systems was first employed after a decade of films challenged the rules previously adhered to. In England, the British Board of Film Censors was founded in 1912 and regulated cinema in the United Kingdom until a liberalization of its rules in 1970. For the purpose of this work, it is necessary to examine both the history of film censorship and the advent of policy reductions in the decade leading up to the dismissal of most regulatory censorship in both countries.

In the United States, the rise and fall of the Movie Production Code of 1930 reflects the moral and political aspirations of the nation during the era of its power. Since the early years of the Twentieth Century, American church and state closely watched the rise in popularity of the cinema and debated its merit as a valuable instrument for controlling the ideas and feelings of its viewers, as a barometer of American morals, and as entertainment for the masses. The Movie Production Code, also referred to by the name of its first administrator, William Hays, would become a powerful delineator of

these purposes. Furthermore, under the auspices of the Hays Code, America, and therefore the Hollywood production system, rose to power as the dominant nation in world cinema.

The following chapters therefore represent the research from which I have drawn these conclusions:

Chapter I, “Film Censorship, Femininity, and the Cultural Revolution of the 1960s,” will delineate the history of film censorship in both Britain and America, from the beginning of the Twentieth Century until the 1960s, in order to demonstrate the effect of these regulations upon the content and nature of film texts. Cultural and economic shifts in the early 1930s led to the suppression of female sexuality until it once again emerged in the 1960s. The Sixties proved to be an era of both personal liberation and revolutionary demands from minorities constituted to the role of other, such as women, ethnic groups, and homosexuals. This chapter forms the foundation for my thesis that female roles of the 1960s instigated a rupture in the patriarchal, meta-narrative of cinema which allowed transgressive and taboo topics to spill into film texts, that undermined both Hays Code and BBFC censorship policies. This chapter outlines transformations in British and American history and society to support my premise that women’s roles of the 1960s helped to destroy traditional ideologies about gender, undo the binary of social codes which relegated women to the status of other, and, ultimately, to defeat sanctioned, patriarchal representations of women in film.

Chapter II, “The Gaze: Bond Girls, Dolly Birds, Mod Girls, and Swinging Singles,” will discuss Laura Mulvey’s influential essay, “Visual Pleasure And Narrative Cinema,” in which she posits the role of women in film are both agents of patriarchal

narratives and victims of scopophilia. I will argue Mulvey's concept of woman as "the bearer, not maker, of meaning" in the context of particular films. The female star's status of "*to-be-looked-at-ness*," which connotes a sexual object on display, will also be examined. Molly Haskell's and Marjorie Rosen's views on 1960s films will be noted, while Susan Sontag's "Notes on Camp" will be employed to position certain films in the context of postmodernism. Readings of specific films will be included: the female stars of the James Bond film, *Goldfinger*, the "dolly birds" of swinging London in narratives such as *Georgy Girl*, *To Sir With Love*, *Smashing Time*, and *Modesty Blaise* will be compared to American images in *Shadows*, *Barbarella*, *Faster Pussycat! Kill! Kill!*, *Valley of the Dolls*, *Lolita*, and *Candy*. The capacity for underground, cult, and camp narratives to undermine Hollywood's reigning paradigms will be explored.

Chapter III, "The Monstrous Feminine: Hags, Predators and Women of A Certain Age," will scrutinized the transgressive positioning of female characters in films such as *Sweet Bird of Youth*, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, *Whatever Happened to Baby Jane?*, *Room at the Top*, *Alfie*, and *The Graduate*. Barbara Creed's concept of "the monstrous feminine" and Julia Kristeva's essay on abjection, "Powers of Horror," will be used to prove that even in the guise of hags and predators, these characters serve to undermine traditional film narratives with roles more radical and provoking than the formulaic, predictable storylines of 1950s Hollywood. I will use Mikhail Bakhtin's theories on the nature of carnival and the grotesque to explain the sense of destruction and renewal contained within these texts.

Chapter IV, "The Masquerade: Gender As Spectacle," will view 1960s society as a "spectacle" mediated by images, or mass media. As the 1960s progressed, public

events in the form of “happenings,” protest marches, and rock festivals entered the public’s consciousness through film and television. Marshall McLuhan’s theories on mass media, Guy Debord’s “Society of the Spectacle,” Andy Warhol’s essays regarding the effect of media on the individual psyche, and Mikhail Bakhtin’s theories on carnival, all from the decade of the 1960s, will be incorporated to explain the effect of this phenomenon on film narratives.

I will also make use of more recent interpretations of postmodernism, including Fredric Jameson’s essay on “Postmodernism And Consumer Society.” This chapter will include a close examination of films which deal with the creation of public scenes such as *Darling*, *The Knack and How to Get It*, *Blow Up*, *A Hard Day’s Night*, *Bonnie and Clyde*, and *Medium Cool*. The roles of women in these films portray different aspects of femininity, and I will discuss how 1960s counter-culture film texts mediate these positions. I will also acknowledge women’s status in the work of Andy Warhol, who makes the private sphere public and elevates the mundane into the realm of theater.

Chapter V, “One is Not Born A Woman: Gender Trouble on the Silver Screen,” will address films of the 1960s and early 1970s which undermine traditional gender roles and subvert the agenda of the patriarchy. These agents of gender “rupture” vary from Scout Finch in *To Kill A Mockingbird*, Jo in *A Taste of Honey*, Holly Golightly in *Breakfast At Tiffany’s*, Pherber in *Performance*, Gudrun Brangwen in *Women In Love*, and Myra in *Myra Breckinridge*. I will employ Judith Butler’s theories on gender “slippage” and drag in order to examine these character’s contributions, most of whom read as “queer” or other, to the breakdown in traditional gender portrayals which begins in the 1960s. As this rupture also allows male characters to become more feminized

during this time frame, I will note the use of male characters with feminine characteristics in films with strong female leads. I will discuss Michel Foucault's work on sexuality and the law in order to finalize the purpose of Hays Code and BBFC regulations. And finally, I will employ the work of Brett Farmer, Harry Benshoff, and Sean Griffin regarding queer theory and cinema to explain the gender slippage in characters such as Rupert Birkin, Pherber, Scout Finch, Holly Golightly, Geoffrey Ingham, and Myra Breckinridge.

I will conclude my argument by revisiting the work of early feminist film critics in order to disprove several of their overarching statements and limited conclusions regarding representations of women in 1960s cinema. I will discuss the changes in cinematic grammar and production provided by a decade in which European, art house, cult, and underground film produced a revolution in American cinema which reversed censorship regulations of both the MPA and the BBFC. Finally, I will restate my claim that representations of women changed drastically in the 1960s, to imbue women with greater agency, both on screen and as spectators.

CHAPTER I
FILM CENSORSHIP, FEMININITY, AND THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION
OF THE 1960s

Censor the body and you censor breath and speech at the same time.

-Helene Cixous, "The Laugh of the Medusa"

It is important to recognize that not only did the control of film narrative define appropriate topics and treatments, but it also manipulated representations of women, often resulting in binary roles signifying either Madonna or whore. Narratives included punishments for unsanctioned actions, such as immorality or violence, which carried a warning to women who chose to live outside the "rules." Moreover, these representations encoded women as projections of the nation state and its belief system. In his much-cited article in *Screen*, "The Concept Of National Cinema," Andrew Higson states:

To identify a national cinema is first of all to specify coherence and a unity; it is to proclaim a unique identity and a stable set of meanings. The process of identification is thus invariably a hegemonising, mythologizing process, involving both the production and assignation of a particular set of meanings, and the attempt to contain, or prevent the potential proliferation of other meanings. (37)

Under the Hays Code, Hollywood was able to create a national cinema that projected female characters in a very specific manner. This standard was accomplished by

gathering representations that fit into a particular moral code, which were also exported internationally. It is crucial to acknowledge, however, that during the lashing out against the Hays Code in the late 1950s and 1960s, women's roles were used as a tool to chip away at the cultural façade created by the regulations of both the Movie Production Code and the British Board of Film Censors.

The Movie Production Code's ascension to power and the tale of its demise provides a fascinating look at the American culture of two very disparate decades. As no historical event occurs spontaneously, it is also important to note the significance of incidents leading up to The Code's origin and authority over the creative process of an entire generation of American film production. This chronicle is interwoven with significant elements of American history and influenced by the standing power of the Roman Catholic Church. The rules by which films could be created and produced encoded narratives which mythologized certain aspects of American society while repressing others. The Hays Code served as an invaluable means to sustain and empower a religious-based morality and a dominant political ideology.

As the story of the rise and fall of film censorship in Britain is also essential to this examination of the roles of women in Sixties film of both cultures, the history of The British Board of Film Censors and the effect of post World War II economics and culture upon British society will also be addressed. The analogous story of the removal of censorship regarding specific moral topics in both countries will be noted as the effect of an evolving liberalization of both church and state in two similar cultures.

It is salient to note that movies arrived in America in 1895 and the first incidence of film censorship occurred that same year, as a short entitled *Dolorita in the Passion*

Dance was removed from a Kinetoscope in Atlantic City after complaints to authorities were made. Regardless of regional tastes and moral sensibilities, however, by the early years of the Twentieth Century, film had become the single most popular form of entertainment for the lower classes in America. The popularity of film and a concern regarding its thrall over the masses developed simultaneously it would seem, for in 1907, less than a decade after film arrived in America, the city of Chicago passed the first law to regulate content.

The control of entertainment for the working class was nothing new to American cities, however. In New York City the problem of suitable topics for the edification of the general community had been waged at the level of the public theater spaces for over seventy years. In “The Politics of Performance,” Daniel Czitrom notes that “These issues included the alleged dangers commercial entertainments posed to children, disputes over Sunday blue laws, the licensing authority of the police department, and the connections between plebeian culture and the underworld” (17). A delicate balance of power between the authority of the state and the local police, those who produced films, and those who consumed them, had begun. It was imperative to agencies who sought to regulate content, as well as those who meant to profit from it, that this new form of entertainment be separated from the stigma of vaudeville and burlesque. The licensing of movie theaters established a proving ground for battles waged on many levels.

Not only was the consumption of movies by the public a means of capital gain to those who produced them, but other groups also were invested in the outcome of censorship battles. Social activists, progressive reformers, the press, and local religious institutions agreed with John Collier of the National Board of Censorship, who called for

this new medium to become the “redemption of leisure.” A cry for decency in entertainment was also a familiar theme to residents of New York City, for as early as 1839 the Society for the Reformation of Juvenile Delinquents convinced city government to issue licenses for all venues, even those outdoors, such as gardens or fairgrounds. This act was based on the supposition of a direct relationship between the theater and criminal behavior of minors. And as the popularity of the cinema escalated, the question of content also became more pressing. Czitrom emphasizes another factor: “New York’s movie wars—fought over theaters and screens, in the courts and the streets—illuminate a crucial transformation: the supplanting of locally based, municipally licensed cheap theater by the nationally organized, industrial oligopoly that came to dominate our popular culture” (17).

As a counter measure to censorship, in 1907 a group of movie exhibitors formed the Moving Picture Exhibitors Association, or MPEA. Within two months this group, who owned more than 500 venues, had won the right to consider movies exempt from Sunday blue laws. The MPEA won an injunction to keep their theaters open on Sunday, and shortly thereafter a ruling by the Supreme Court supported the MPEA’s plea. Within the year, Czitrom holds, theaters such as The Dewey were selling out 1,200 seats daily and the movie business had become “big business.”

Debate over content continued to escalate, fueled by the perspective of religious and social reform groups which chose to “protect” the delicate sensibilities of children, women, and foreign immigrants. While these arguments grew more heated in New York, the municipality of Chicago devised a simpler means of discrimination: all movies were screened at police headquarters and immediately approved or censored. After pressure

from the mayor's office, the MPEA agreed to work with a board of liberal clergy and progressives known as the People's Institute to form the National Board of Censorship of Motion Pictures or NBC, an association that would voluntarily regulate the content of film. The idea of voluntary censorship in lieu of government intervention would also play heavily in the decision to create and implement the Motion Picture Code of 1930.

During the period from the earliest days of regulation by individual municipalities to the establishment of the Hays Code, censorship of movies was relegated to local government, which created confusion as laws varied from town to town and state to state. In December 1908, however, a trust of ten major motion picture producers and distributors known as The Motion Picture Patents Company was formed to gain control of the American film industry. The trust, in an effort to maintain product control, combined with the NBC to create the Voluntary Censorship Committee. This revolving assemblage was comprised of lawyers, doctors, activists and representatives from the clergy to view films submitted by the production companies. Czitrom continues:

Most objections centered on excesses in scenes dealing with overt sexuality, prostitution, drug use, and the too-explicit depiction of murder and robbery. The board presumed a very simple psychology at the core of the moviegoer's experience: "Every person in an audience has paid admission and for that reason gives his attention willingly ... Therefore he gives it his confidence and opens the window of his mind. And what the movie says sinks in. (35)

This governing principal, the idea that one's mind could be influenced or even controlled by movies, was a concern for religious communities and government, not only

locally, but also internationally. Using movies for the purposes of propaganda is as old as silent pictures, which presented a viewing public with the dangers of immorality or crime. Recent film theorists such as Francis Couvares reject the notion that films influence ideology, however. Couvares holds that many of the topics of censorship are older than film. He states:

The movies, then, arrived on the scene of an on-going social and cultural drama; they helped to reshape the story, but neither solely authored the script nor devised the setting ... Although undeniably powerful, neither Hollywood nor the other culture industries controlled contexts within which their products were consumed. They therefore fully controlled neither the meaning nor the effect of that consumption. (2)

Whether movies reorient a viewer's morals, manipulate audiences into rampant consumerism, or form concrete representations of gender in the minds of spectators is a topic of ongoing debate. Couvares holds that, "Censorship battles reveal the bonds and cleavages in society by mobilizing people's emotions and sometimes their political energies in defense of values and commitments and in opposition to adversaries perceived to be dangerous and alien" (3). Americans censors were overtly concerned about sexual and criminal imagery, while British censors worried extensively about movies' ability to inflame the lower class against the upper class, as well as moral issues. What is central to this work, however, is the desire of both countries to control certain representations of women, which both The Code and the BBFC would facilitate. The ongoing history of censorship, therefore, reveals the rationale behind this process.

In America, movie regulation in the form of voluntary censorship followed the transition of the capital of movie production from New York City to Los Angeles, California. Production companies had initially looked for a place to make cowboy films, but found themselves in a location which enabled them to avoid the control of the Motion Picture Patents Company. By 1915 when D. W. Griffith filmed *The Birth of a Nation*, generally considered to be the first narrative film, the center of American movie production was Hollywood. By the end of that year, Paramount, Warner Brothers, RKO, and Columbia were all Hollywood based companies.

In his book *Pre-Code Hollywood: Sex, Immorality, and Insurrection in American Cinema, 1930-1934*, Thomas Doherty delineates many of the factors which preceded the Movie Production Code. Shortly after production centralized in California, “the vital components of classical Hollywood cinema were a conventional visual style and a sturdy economic structure” (4). The Hollywood machine, Doherty observes, was well on its way, with means of production stabilized and standardized:

A technologically complex, capital-intensive business dependent on circuits of national distribution, the motion picture industry around 1920, came to describe not just a location but also an economic practice. The vertical integration of motion picture production, distribution, and exhibition—in which a single corporate entity produced, sent out, and screened the film product—crystallized into the mature oligopoly of the Hollywood studio system. (4)

Yet Hollywood was more than a technical production system at this point. As Doherty theorizes, it was also a “moral universe.” And in the early 1920s, that moral

universe was threatened by scandal. The director/actor Roscoe “Fatty” Arbuckle was indicted for the rape and murder of a young actress, Virginia Rappe, and the director William Taylor was found murdered with a bullet in his back. Also the drug related deaths of Wallace Reid, Olive Thomas, and Barbara La Marr caused a public outrage that did not go unnoticed by those who felt the moral center of Hollywood had careened off kilter.

Hollywood had stumbled, as had the rest of urban America, toward the Jazz Age and The Roaring Twenties. The 1920s were by all accounts a period of liberalization for women. The Modern Era had arrived, and with it came a wave of feminism in which women achieved more freedom in both America and Britain. The Nineteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was ratified in 1920, giving women the right to vote, and the flappers had granted women the right to smoke, drink alcohol (albeit illegally), bob their hair like a man, drive a car, dance to jazz in public, and generally flaunt the rules of gender conventions.

In the decade prior to the 1920s women had fought against Victorian attitudes and morals to create the freedoms the flappers, or young liberated women of the jazz age, would enjoy. Margaret Sanger had lobbied for available and safe birth control for women of her age. After observing her patient’s deaths from the affects of self-inflicted abortions, Sanger began an all-out campaign for women’s rights to obtain contraceptives. In her 1914 publication, “The Woman Rebel-No Gods No Masters,” Sanger railed against the Catholic Church, which she felt had turned women into “mere incubators.” The pamphlet led to her indictment for mailing out literature illegal under the Comstock Act.

Also prior to 1920, the suffragettes had organized, marched and served time in jail to procure votes for women. In 1917, the founders of the National American Woman Suffrage Association, Lucy Burns and Alice Paul, were arrested in front of the White House along with 216 supporters for holding signs demanding the vote. During their incarceration, Burns was beaten and Paul was locked in a psychiatric ward, tied down, and force-fed during a hunger strike. Thirty-three other suffragettes were severely beaten while jailed as well. The following January, Woodrow Wilson introduced the Nineteenth Amendment as part of his “war effort.”

If the previous decade had been marked by a world war and battles for greater freedom for women, the 1920s was the age of the woman who enjoyed them. Writers such as F. Scott Fitzgerald and Dorothy Parker now portrayed women as liberated, sexual creatures and propagated a new type of female for the Age of Modernism. In consumer culture, and in the entertainment industry, the Modern Woman was defined, exploited and commoditized. And Hollywood did not ignore the radical antics of a post-war culture intoxicated by affluence and nonconformity.

It is crucial to note the positions of power that women held in the film industry during the two decades prior to the Movie Production Code of 1930. By the end of World War I, women directors were making salaries commensurate to men, and female screenwriters and editors were common. In her book, *Women In Hollywood: From Vamp To Studio Head*, Dawn Sova catalogues the work of women in the early days of the film industry. She theorizes that women were empowered in early cinema because:

There were no “regulations” in the filmmaking business— whoever could achieve a desired effect or result, male or female, got the job. The

availability of start-up money determined who might become a studio head ... Actresses such as Florence Lawrence, Clara Kimball Young, and Mary Pickford, for the most part anonymous in the early films, parlayed their familiarity with the business into the creation of their own studios.

(2)

Sova believes that women quickly rose to positions of power in the movie business because these careers were not perceived as status bearing. By the early 1920s a number of women including Alice Guy Blanche, Mabel Normand, Dorothy Davenport, Lois Weber, and Florence Lawrence all served as the heads of studios. Alice Blanche, who emigrated from France to work for Gaumont Studios in America, became the first female studio head and the first credited female director in world cinema. She founded the Solax Company, the largest studio in pre-Hollywood America, with her husband Hubert, and went on to direct more than 300 films distributed by companies such as Pathe Exchange and Metro Pictures. J. Hoberman states:

The Life of Christ (1906), a 33-minute series of tableaux, was Guy Blaché's nickelodeon spectacular. It's a credible precursor of the studio blockbuster, but the movies that pack the greatest punch are the slapstick comedies she made at the same time: *The Sticky Woman* (rampant orality), *The Result of Feminism* (total role reversal), and *Madam Has Cravings* (because madam is pregnant), are all robust—even raunchy—efforts, with a decidedly female perspective on male prerogatives. (55)

Neither was Alice Guy Blanche the only woman empowered by the advent of the film industry; there were many. In 1919, the actress Mary Pickford, who had played the

role of a child in silent films until she was almost thirty, founded United Artists with D. W. Griffith, Charlie Chaplin, and Douglas Fairbanks, all of whom were interested in retaining “creative control” over their work. Meanwhile, Anne Bauchens and Rose Smith, who worked with Cecil B. DeMille, became credited film editors.

During this period a number of women screenwriters made names for themselves in the movie business, such as June Mathis, Anita Loos, and Jeanne Macpherson who wrote for Paramount, Metro Pictures and MGM. A Canadian who relocated to America, Nell Shipman, directed, wrote, and acted in films for her own production company, and the well-known Dorothy Azner wrote, edited, and produced films for Paramount. Azner’s productions launched the careers of actresses such as Clara Bow, Katherine Hepburn and Rosalind Russell.

Unfortunately, this trend lasted for less than two decades. Sova states, “Not only did the proportion of women directors drop sharply after the 1920s ended and female-headed studios went out of business, so did the number of scripts written by women” (xii). She postulates that the decline of women in the movie business intersected with the advent of the sound era: “As the film industry grew larger and entered the Golden Age of the 1930s and 1940s, many women were pushed out of the high-powered jobs of producer, director, and studio executives, although some fought tenaciously to remain in an industry that sought to exclude them” (xii). This phenomenon was demarcated by the Depression and other socio-economic factors as well. Julia Wright states, “Prejudices about women’s technical capabilities may have been an argument for explaining women’s disappearance, but greater economic stakes and competition for jobs suggests larger industrial and socio-economic reasons for their decrease in employment after

1927” (9). The only female to continue to direct into the Hays Code era was Dorothy Arzner, whose work has been scrutinized by several feminist critics, including Laura Mulvey. After 1930, not only were women excluded from filmmaking, they were also expelled from historical accounts of the movie industry. This question has become noteworthy, as roles of women in the early days of cinema has become a topic of current research and fresh information has been excavated by feminist scholars.

In the first decade of the Twenty-First Century, feminist film critics are now asking why feminist film scholars of the 1970s largely ignored the early work of women in the film industry. If these women existed and were powerful, why has history forgotten them; or worse, chosen to overlook their significance? In an article in *Cinema Journal*, Jane Gaines states, “Recent research ... confirms the significant participation of women in nearly all aspects of the motion picture industry in the silent era, from distribution and exhibition to directing and producing” (113). Gaines goes on to remark upon the extent of this phenomenon: “In the United States, enough women were visible as producers in 1917, for example, for *Photoplay* to remark on what it described as a ‘her own company’ epidemic” (113).

The question Gaines poses has to do with the way history is conceived and reconceived for the purpose of scholars who wish to acknowledge certain facts while ignoring others—in this case, namely those who originally catalogued the history of film and those who began to record the significance of women in film from a feminist perspective:

Such is the case with the question of why the field, which both fostered and developed such a widely influential feminist theory of film, beginning

in the mid-1970s, did not acknowledge this historical phenomenon, particular to the silent era. To ask why these women were forgotten is also to ask why we forgot them. For they were both overlooked by the first generation of traditional historians and not “recognized” by the second generation of scholars. (113)

Gaines’s inquiry creates a tension between the purpose of second-wave feminist film critics and modern scholarship. Why, she asks, was a significant aspect of film history ignored? Gaines wants “to know why 1970s feminist film theory explained symbolic subjugation to men but not the power some women in the early industry exercised over others?” (114). She connects this query directly to the work of Laura Mulvey, stating that “The problem is also us. In retrospect, we may now be able to see how a theory that held that woman was ‘bearer, not maker of meaning,’ might eventually lead to a stage when we would be interested in the industrial conditions of women’s meaning making” (114). This reasoning underscores my attempt to reconstruct the purpose women’s images in cinema serve at a particular juncture in history, as scholarship not only controls our concepts of the past, but may also reconfigure it to support particular research.

In her article, Gaines invokes the German feminist Heide Schlupmann, who shares her intent in questioning early feminist frameworks:

The emergence of feminist film history in the 1970s owed little to theoretical interest and much to political film reception. This gave rise to a contradiction: whereas feminist film theorists scrupulously analyzed the systemic oppression of the female subject in film, contributions to film

history celebrated the strengths of women as directors and cutters, the subversiveness of the actresses and the wealth of experience of an older generation of female spectators. (qtd. in Gaines 114)

Perhaps it was tempting for early feminist critics to start the history of film with the oppression of women, but this assumption is inaccurate. To see the era of silent film and the age of filmmaking prior to the Hays Code as a time when women were empowered in American movies is to link their undoing to the censorship and regulatory fastidiousness of cinema when undercut and controlled by Will Hays and the Legion of Catholic Decency. It is therefore imperative to note the positions women held in the film industry prior to the mid-1930s, as well as to review the qualities they reflected on screen.

The Rise of a Reigning Paradigm

The saga of the Movie Production Code began in 1922, when movie production companies founded a trade association, the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America, and appointed Will Hays its director. For the remainder of the 1920s, however, this group was ineffectual. During the 1920s, American films continued to reflect women who were both liberated and sexualized. In *Dame In The Kimono: Hollywood, Censorship and The Production Code From the 1920s to the 1960s*, Leff and Simmons state:

Ironically, with Hays' Committee on Public Relations and the Formula as a shield, producers roared through the twenties ... "It Girl" Clara Bow's

teasing sexuality wowed the flappers. Erich von Stroheim's *The Merry Widow* brought moviegoers, among other pleasures, a sexual fetishist who died atop his bride on their honeymoon. For one scene in *The Dancer of Paris*, Dorothy MacKaill wore merely stones and beadwork. (6)

Yet it was this freedom of expression that would lead to the ultimate instigation and enforcement of the Movie Production Code of 1930. Images of liberated, seductive women on screen, narratives of sex and violence, and eventually, the scandals created by Hollywood's stars in real life and exploited by the press in larger-than-life fashion, would help to give the Catholic Legion of Decency and the Hays Office greater power to control representations and narratives offered for public consumption.

Concurrently, the Stock Market Crash of October 1929 and the following depression in the early 1930s affected cinema more powerfully than any other factor. By the 1930s, bread lines and unemployment lines would dispel all images of the Roaring Twenties from the Silver Screen. The days of the carefree, liberated female, as represented by Hollywood, were over—at least until another world war arrived and women became the work force necessary to run the country.

Thomas Doherty maintains the rise to power and eventual domination of the Hays Office gave a few individuals control over the diegesis of American cinema. From a modern perspective, or perhaps even more importantly, a postmodern one, Doherty notes that the Golden Age of Hollywood both began and ended with the Hays Code. The wealth of images and narratives we absorb from late night television are also referenced by modern films which often rely heavily on plot and images from Hollywood cinema created under the Hays Code. From the shadowy, gothic images of film noir and its

femme fatales to the hero of the postcolonial American West, the cowboy, and from the iconic images of Marilyn Monroe, seething with bridled sexuality, to the ultimate demise of any gangster who dared to live outside the law—the Movie Production Code of 1930 governed and controlled American film for over thirty years.

As Thomas Doherty states:

An artistic flowering of incalculable cultural impact, Hollywood under the Code bequeathed the great generative legacy for screens large and small, the visual storehouse that still propels waves of images washing across a channel-surfing planet. The synergistic spread of American entertainment, the whole global kaleidoscope of films, television, video games, computer graphics, and CD-ROMS, draws on the censored heritage for archival material, deep backstory, narrative blueprints and moral ballast. (2)

Not only did the progenitors of movie censorship finally triumph with the Depression raging at the door of America, they continued to control the entertainment of its populace until the 1960s destroyed the moral conventions which had fueled and fed it.

This transition, accomplished by 1968, reveals that images of women outside the constraints of a Victorian moral order helped to facilitate the liberation of American cinema. As Doherty has delineated, however, the effect of the Hays Code still echoes through every aspect of our media and popular culture and still resonates in the American psyche, even among younger generations who did not witness it first hand. The effects of censorship pervade the history of cinema in America, even before the advent of the Hays Office. Temporarily dispelled during the 1920s, forces that called for control of movie content were never completely silenced. And with the Hollywood scandals of 1922,

came a more insistent call for censorship among politicians and clergy. F. Barton Palmer and Robert Bray write:

When, in 1922, Hollywood's profitable business relationship with its eager consumers was threatened by scandal, both on—and off screen, the major film producers empowered Will Hays, a very Waspish, Republican former postmaster general, to manage the industry's public relations. By the end of the twenties, Hays had been charged in particular with ensuring (or perhaps better, restoring) the conventional morality of the films that Hollywood released. (61)

As president of the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America, Will Hays worked to keep the peace between a film industry that continued to churn out images of “wild youth, dancing daughters, straying wives and dark seducers” (Doherty 6) and the moral vanguard which opposed them. In 1930, however, he gained support in the form of a written text outlining very specific terms of the film topics which would be allowed or rejected. This document was The Motion Picture Production Code of 1930, written by Father Daniel Lord, a Jesuit Priest and a Roman Catholic, and Martin Quigley, also the editor of the *Motion Pictures Herald*. Doherty postulates that at the very heart of The Code was the morality of the Roman Catholic Church:

Their amalgam of Irish-Catholic Victorianism colors much of the cloistered design of classical Hollywood cinema ... deference to civil and religious authorities, insistence on personal responsibility, belief in the salvific worth of suffering, and resistance to the pleasures of the flesh in thought, word, and deed. (6)

Through the Production Code, Quigley and Lord sought to control the moral structure of America's visual entertainment. Like the early Victorian censors, they were most concerned with proper role models for youth, the "protection" of women, respectful portrayals of foreign cultures and people, and plots which demonstrated the futility of crime. Hollywood, in general, responded by ignoring the existence of The Code altogether. Greta Garbo, Mae West, and Jean Harlow continued to portray gorgeous "floozyes," and films such as *City Streets* (1931) and *Bad Company* (1931) glorified the lawlessness of the gangster by providing an audience with the thrill of identifying with characters who flaunted the system and made crime look glamorous. Also in 1931, Helen Hayes starred in *The Sin of Madelon Claudet*, a movie about a woman who turns to a life of prostitution and stealing to send her illegitimate son to medical school. The film, flaunting the rules of The Code, won Hayes Best Actress award at the Academy Awards the following year.

The nonconformity of Hollywood, however, was not tolerated for long. In 1934, after President Franklin Roosevelt began to establish the New Deal, his administration quietly communicated to major movie production companies that the federal government was ready to assume the task of film censorship. Shortly thereafter, the Production Code Administration or PCA was created. As a form of internal policing, the Motion Pictures Producers and Distributors of America controlled the PCA; Hollywood now answered to the capitalists behind the industry, rather than the studios, producers, or directors—the creative forces behind the pictures.

And to head this office, Will Hays appointed another Roman Catholic, Joseph Breen, who would remain in this position from 1934 to 1954. Breen believed that film

was a force which could steer the moral zeitgeist of America, and he never faltered in his course. Starting in 1934, the Catholic Legion of Decency organized vast boycotts of films that did not meet Code standards, and a fine of \$25.000 was levied against any theater showing a film without PCA approval. The Jazz Age was over, and America was contrite. And it would not be until Breen left office in the mid 1950s that cracks would materialize in the foundation of The Production Code.

In the ensuing era, aspects of film that did not meet Code specifications were negotiated directly between the censors and production teams. As Lea Jacobs remarks, “The process of negotiation is most evident at two levels: in the treatment of dialogue and the construction of blatantly offensive scenes or sequences” (95). For the next three decades, content that did not meet stipulations of The Code became veiled. Eventually, audiences would learn to read these encoded messages and translate them into narrative meanings which could not be shown under Code stipulations. The Code essentially trained moviegoers to read symbolic and forbidden messages embedded in the text from minor and suggestive clues purposefully planted there by production teams.

Filmmaking became negotiation; hints were often hidden in the diegesis of Classical Hollywood film in the hope that censors would not notice their implications. Audiences also became adept at reading visual ellipsis. As Jacobs further observes, “in numerous films of the period ... the image of the heroine alone on the streets is used to imply the possibility of prostitution” (96). Obviously, other particular images could not accompany this scenario, such as money transactions or an act that implied seduction. In this manner, sex became a taboo subject for film, and any blatant reference to it disappeared from the grammar of Hollywood cinema. Thus, in propagating widespread

subliminal messages about sexuality and morality, those in control of Hollywood became agents of religious ethics, specifically those of the Roman Catholic Church and of the patriarchy.

To investigate the nature of the cinematic image in the 1960s, it is also critical to look at the history of censorship in Britain. Once again the ability of church and state, or of the clergy and the government, to control the urges and ideas of a large number of people seems imperative to those who work to preserve a specific moral order. The British critic Tom Mathews states that at the heart of the issue of film censorship is the fear of the effect of mass media upon the masses. Mathews holds:

But the practice of censorship as a means of blanking out what we do not want to witness has not been an arbitrary vendetta against precocious voices. It is, in fact, a systematic process which chooses its victims with care. The direction and intensity of censorship is determined by the popularity of a new medium. Thus film was censored in Britain more than any of the other media until cinema was superseded by television as the primary mass medium in the fifties. (1)

It is central to his argument that those who seek to control the cinema are more anxious about the effect of film than concerned with actual content. In England, there was more trepidation about preserving the class system in times of fragile economic states. Just as the image of the flapper became taboo after the advent of the Great Depression, the working class of England was largely ignored by film until the beginning of the kitchen sink realism trend in the late 1950s. Therefore, the image or ideal that must be censored is specific to the status quo, which must be preserved.

The first incidence of legislation regarding film censorship in Britain came in the form of the Cinematograph Act of 1909. The Act stipulated that cinema should be regulated by local councils or government, and that theaters must be licensed. As in New York City at the turn of the century, control of the venues also provided control over the content of the entertainment. The Act was predicated upon the idea that nitrate film was highly combustible and thus a danger when projected in certain physical locations. The effect of the law, however, resulted in the censorship of particular films *and* the establishments projecting them.

The history of censorship in Britain differs from America, largely in the construction of censorship regulations. Whereas in America calls for censorship ultimately resulted in a rulebook for movie production by 1930, in England a Board of Film Censors was formed in 1912. This committee created regulations in reaction to individual films which were found offensive. For the BBFC, censorship was an ongoing project primarily related to social issues, fears of working class uprisings, and revolutionary leanings.

A review of early popular British Kinetoscope or peepshow films, as compared to the popular American fare, provides a singular measure of difference between the two cultures. Whereas the first American peepshow to be censored was *Dolorita in the Passion Dance*, the first British censorship involved a microscopic view of a piece of cheese. In 1898, the British film pioneer, Charles Urban produced a ninety-second view of a piece of British Stilton under a microscope. Protests from the cheese industry claimed viewers would be disgusted by bacteria projected to such a large size and refuse to consume its product. The film was withdrawn (Mathews 7).

In reality, the component of the term “peepshow” (which pervades our vernacular today) is an actual reflection of this early brand of entertainment. Customers paid to see short films with provocative titles, which actually showed very little or nothing of the suggested sexual content. It is remarkable to note that British kinetoscope also projected shorts involving violence toward animals and even human death (9). These topics were part of the substance of newsreels in the early age of British cinema. Therefore, it was not the subject matter of film which provoked censorship, but primarily a fear of the reaction of the public and especially the lower classes. This trepidation was common ground for both American and British censors. In both instances, censorship was bred from fears of the effect of film on “youth,” essentially its potential to instigate criminal activity in poor and working class neighborhoods by children and adolescents. As in America, local governments, decency leagues, and the Church called for control of what was available for public viewing.

In a move to stall government control of film, members of the film industry also created the first British board of film censors in order to avoid more stringent government intervention. In 1912, a group of producers and distributors, headed by the filmmaker Cecil Hepworth, made a visit to the British Home Office and suggested formation of the Board of Film Censors. This panel would be funded by the industry itself and report to a Home Office appointed supervisor who would serve to arbitrate decisions between the Board and filmmakers. Unlike his American counterpart, Will Hays, the rulings of this chief officer could not be appealed or ignored. The Board operated with only two ratings: “U” meaning the film was approved for universal viewing, and “A,” which was intended for adults only, those over the age of sixteen.

The first head of the Board was George Redford, who had worked as Chief Examiner of Plays. As it turned out, Redford became too ill to function after several weeks, and his secretary, Joseph Wilkinson, who had been the Secretary of the Cinematograph Exhibitors Association, began to function in his stead. Unfortunately, not only would Wilkinson have to walk a tightrope between demands from the military, local governments, and fears that arose from the Communist Revolution of 1917, but Wilkinson was also going blind.

The BBFC exercised its power absolutely and made up the rules for national film censorship as it went along. Any topic that was deemed controversial, bad for the British national image, or seen as a means to promote discontent among the lower classes, was immediately censored. Not only were these films banned completely or butchered beyond recognition, the public was never made aware of movies that were censored, or why. These films had not violated the rules of a production code which spelled out the reasons for its actions, they were banned in secret behind closed doors. And though the BBFC had just two rules when they went into operation in 1913, that Christ could not be represented and that nudity would not be tolerated, the number quickly expanded to include “indecorous dancing, confinements, native customs in foreign lands abhorrent to British ideas ... scenes tending to disparage public character and institutions” (Mathews 24).

What the instigators of the BBFC had once envisioned as a means to pacify censors eventually turned against them. Seeking to avoid conservative measures by local governments, filmmakers found themselves at the mercy of an absolutist agency which censored every topic deemed contrary to a traditional, upper-class British view of life.

Andrew Higson has also stated, “histories of national cinema can only be understood as histories of crisis and conflict, of resistance and negotiation” (37). This assertion is also salient to the issue of censorship, whereby a nation state insures its survival by controlling narratives made available to the populace. This is certainly true of British censorship in the decade following the inception of the BBFC.

Higson’s statement is pertinent to the history of censorship in both Britain and America. The scuffles between the Hays office and film producers in the early days of The Code’s inception often led to compromise or blatant disregard, but in British cinema censorship proved absolute. In 1915 another rule was added to the list of BBFC topics, one banning issues between “Capital and Labour.” This regulation was added due to a strike of Welsh coal miners who eventually forced their company to meet demands. This incident was viewed as a bad influence upon the masses. Several themes blacklisted in the decade after the launch of the Board of Censors were viewed as threats to the preservation of national order. One of the first of these was World War II. Under pressure from the military, the British government did not want the horrors of war made available to a nation in the midst of one. For the first two years of the war, films on this subject were censored, until a demand from the British people changed that policy.

In the mid-1920s a number of such films involving social issues, known as “Propaganda Films,” were censored. Propaganda films such as *Human Wreckage* (1923) purportedly showed audiences the consequences of immorality or drug addiction. The rationale of the Home Office was that the average British viewer of such didactic works, even ones illustrating the evils of drug addiction, prostitution, or abortion, was not able to identify the moral message inherent in such narratives. As the BBFC was afraid that

showing the effects of war might dampen morale, similarly the film, *Damaged Goods* (1937), in which a husband contracts a venereal disease after an evening with a prostitute, could neither be exhibited.

By 1917, the list of banned topics included numerous regulations that prevented contempt for British government or royalty, as well as narratives of “controversial politics.” Long sensitive to matters which could elicit public outcry against the political status quo, the BBFC was especially distressed when Sergei Eisenstein’s *Battleship Potemkin* arrived before the Board during a General Strike in 1926. The government was afraid of a working class revolt due to the recent election, which had brought the Conservative Party to power. *Potemkin* would not be shown in Britain until 1954. The censorship of this film was a testimony to the absolute power of the Board.

During World War I, the BBFC was still in its early stages, and foreign films, especially American ones, were shown without approval ratings. For example, D. W. Griffith’s *Intolerance* (1916) played in London and featured not only a physical representation of Christ but also the bare breasts of maidens in a Babylonian temple, thus breaking the two cardinal rules of the BBFC. By the end of the silent era, however, the power of the BBFC held sway over both foreign and domestic films. Due to social content, Fritz Lang’s *Metropolis* (1927) was so heavily edited that it became incomprehensible. *Pandora’s Box* (1929), starring Louise Brooks, was sliced due to scenes that implied lesbianism, and the ending of the film was completely redone for British audiences to show Lulu saved by the Salvation Army instead of murdered by Jack the Ripper. The Censorship Board also banned F. W. Murnau’s *Nosferatu* (1922), without the English population even knowing of its existence.

As film headed into the era of “talking pictures,” the reign of British censors continued. By the early 1930’s control over film narrative was firmly secured in both America and Britain. Over the next two decades, American film would enter its Golden Age, while British film concerned itself with national image and national security. Even as Hitler prowled at the entrance of the free world, during the action of the Second World War, and into the Atomic Age, the reign of film censorship continued across both nations.

Britain, however, was enthralled by Hollywood film. Tom Mathews states that during the 1930s, seventy-five percent of all films screened in Britain were American made. England accounted for fifty percent of Hollywood’s international sales, and the truth of the matter was that the British preferred American’s gangster films and vamps to their own cinema, which usually consisted of boring domestic dramas and stodgy, upper-class comedies. British censors justified showing American films with topics they had banned from their own productions. Because these were not created on their shores, American films therefore did not reflect British culture. For example, James Cagney’s prison drama, *Each Dawn I Die* (1939), was shown with the disclaimer, “Prison conditions revealed here could never exist in Great Britain” (Mathews 53). If the BBFC did not approve of the content of an American film, it merely removed the offending portion. British audiences still flocked to see edited American films, because they preferred them to their own cinema, which had been heavily edited *prior* to production.

Mathews provides the key to the very cozy relationship between censors in the two countries:

whereas film censorship in Britain at this time was inconsistent, willful and prim, it was still predominantly political. American film censorship, on the other hand, was largely moral. Due to their ideological beliefs and the lack of profit incentive, the Hollywood moguls did not want to make politically adventurous movies anyway. (57)

The BBFC realized that it would have to contend with Hollywood, and Hollywood recognized there was a great deal of money to be made from exportation of films to Britain, so in 1936 Will Hays traveled to England to court the BBFC. He went as an ambassador to improve and cement the relationship between the American and British film industries; he also went to hear British demands. The British censors now wanted to see American scripts before they were produced and to exert an influence upon American censorship. The BBFC wanted a say in the production of American film before it reached England, in order to have less to edit and less culpability for the butchering of continuity. Hays complied, but to a point. He also made it clear that Americans would not completely rewrite films to meet the British censors' taste. When the BBFC wanted multiple edits to gloss over the effect of city slums on youth in Lillian Hellman's screenplay of *Dead End* (1937) because Britain was in the midst of a depression, Sam Goldman refused. Mathews relates, "their colleagues at the Hays Office knew that they could only make so many demands upon Goldwyn" (83). Goldwyn had been a member of the committee who offered Will Hays his job as "Czar of the Movies."

Censors in both countries could agree, however, that it was time for the vamps to go. Will Hayes went back to American and concocted a list of stars that he had decided were "box office poison," and began an all-out war on the careers of blatantly sensual

female stars such as Mae West, Marlene Dietrich, and Greta Garbo. After Hays distributed his list, none of these women had their contracts renewed by the studios, and by 1940 the vamps were gone—until the sexually liberated actresses of the 1960s reincarnated them.

Over the next twenty-five years, the parade of light and image across the silver screen, in compliance to the BBFC edict that cinema be devoid of any topic which could lead to “controversy” and the under the Hays Office’s strict control, the female characters who inhabited cinema would assume the guise of dancing princesses, cool blondes, and femme fatales. In 1939, Scarlet O’Hara conveyed the glamour and ultimate destruction of the American colonial south, while Dorothy inhabited the spectral fantasyland of Oz. Musicals would provide a diversion from the harsh realities of a world war; and later, shady detectives moved through the chiaroscuro of American Noir, dissatisfied anti-heroes, called by the siren song of heartless “dames.”

The British watched wartime romances and war dramas, which allowed the intermingling of classes in friendship and bravery. An air of realism permeated British films, even though the content was a romanticized view of the times at hand. The small villages of England were glorified as happy homes and hearths; women had affairs and looked for identity as the war raged on. At the end of World War II, Ealing Studios, founded in 1938, moved forward with an age of warm and cozy comedies, which cheered a physically and economically shattered nation.

In post-war America a procession of intelligent and witty career women were replaced by perfect housewives and working girls protecting their virginity. Cowboys rode across a wild landscape, and soldiers stormed the shores of Iwo Jima. All of these

were projections of the American image, creations of the American Dream Machine. Safe and sanitized images flickered by, until the viewing public had memorized the variables available to them, learned the rules of clearly defined genres, and picked the stars most appealing to personal tastes. Until finally, there *was* change.

But it was not a modification of censorship policies which eventually allowed the liberalization of film content, it was a cataclysmic transformation of the culture and population of both countries, which would no longer accept artistic censorship and outdated mores enforced by the Hays Office and the BBFC. Therefore, it is essential to specify the dynamics which produced a cultural revolution in Great Britain and the United States, as well as the individual battles which functioned to deregulate censorship in both nations.

“The Line it is Drawn/ The Curse it is Cast”

The history of England and the United States diverged radically during the post World War II time frame. And the reason was obvious: Britain had been under attack by air raids during the war, while America had not. Even as the United States experienced a period of unprecedented prosperity, while remaining anxious about the specter of Communism abroad and the threat of a new, deadly power it had unleashed upon the world in the form of the atomic bomb, Britain was laboring under an era of reconstruction. And during this period of recovery, its grand empire would fade away, while its government converted to socialism.

Britain had been bombed nightly during the war, and it would be the early 1950s before the city could begin to rebuild. Meanwhile food rationing continued on until 1954. At the end of the war, England could not afford to govern its empire, which had once formed one quarter of the earth's population. In 1945, the U.K. borrowed 4.4 billion dollars from the U. S. to rebuild the country and to import more food for its population. Also in 1945 the Labour Party was elected to power and installed Clement Attlee as Prime Minister. Both Attlee and Labour favored decolonization in order to focus Britain's efforts toward the task of restoring their own country. This election marked the beginning of the Welfare State and socialism in Britain.

Britain withdrew from India in 1947, from Palestine in 1948, from Egypt and the Suez Canal in 1956, its African colonies by the late 1960s, and most all of its Caribbean and Pacific Island territories by 1980. Concurrently, America had developed into a super power at the end of World War II, competing only with Russia for a position of superiority. The liberated countries in Europe would become a proving ground of power between these two nations, which began not only to compete but also to suspect each other's intent for world dominance. By the 1950s, the two countries were engaged in a "cold war," mistrusting each other's form of governance and ideology.

In England, a National Health Service was instituted in 1948 and utilities were also nationalized that year. Britain moved to cut its defense spending, just as the U.S. stepped up the Arms Race and the Cold War. In 1951, the Conservative Party took over the government and stayed in power until 1964. Crucial to the development of British popular culture in the 1960s was the reality that the British economy directly improved under this rule. By 1954, there was a 300 million pound sterling surplus and food was

de-rationed. In 1953, Prime Minister Harold McMillan began a campaign to re-build houses in England and during a two-year period, almost a million British homes were rebuilt, income levels improved for the lower and middle classes, more of the population was educated, and employment soared. Economic prosperity returned to England.

With prosperity also came leisure. The economic climate in 1950s Britain led to a rise in youth culture as forms of entertainment changed, not to mention the national identity. A major social factor that England shared with its ally, the United States, was a growing population of young people with money to spend. The spread of television into most households would provide a guide to current styles of music, politics, and fashion. With money to splurge as consumers, teenagers began to dictate who and what they chose as fashionable. As a result of the ready availability of American television and film, American style and music quickly invaded the popular culture of post-war Britain. And a decade later, the British would return to triumph over American popular culture in the persona of four musicians, who arrived just three months after the country had buried its youngest and most charming president. When the Beatles landed in America in February of 1964, the “British Invasion” had begun. And all of it was televised.

In *The Neophiliacs* (1970), Christopher Booker marks the beginning of a major change in Britain as the year 1956. Booker relates the upheaval to “the coming of commercial television, the rise of the Angry Young Men, the Suez crisis, the coming of the rock ‘n roll craze, and even, after a period of comparative quiescence, the beginning of a crime wave” (27). The social factors most responsible for the changes in England, Booker posits, were a never-before-experienced material prosperity and a period of “Americanization,” which he defines as: “a brash, standardized mass-culture, centered

on the enormously increased influence of television and advertising, a popular music more marked than ever by the hypnotic beat of jazz, and the new prominence, as a distinct force, given to teenagers and the young” (25). Booker also contends that “Above all, with the coming of this new age, a new spirit was unleashed—a new wind of essentially youthful hostility to every kind of established convention and traditional authority, a wind of moral freedom and rebellion” (26).

The end result of these factors is central to the scope of this discussion. It is essential to acknowledge that a discourse between the U. S. and Britain ultimately affected film narratives in the 1960s. Moreover, the representation of women in these narratives is often a response to a media-mediated dialogue between the two cultures. By the mid-1960s, the “youthful hostility” which rebelled against authority in both the U. S. and Britain would lead to a revolution in art, music, literature, and, ultimately, the way film was conceived and executed. The following chapters will provide evidence of this assertion.

Additionally, the immediate communication of news events, fashion sense, pop music trends, and film narratives between the two countries created a dialogue of counter-cultural intent. The political content and anger of American folk music, the heavy sexual swagger of the blues, and the rebellion of rock and roll would not go unnoticed by British youth. Conversely, the examination of previously taboo topics in British cinema, the technique of films such as Richard Lester’s *A Hard Day’s Night* (1964) and Michelangelo Antonioni’s *Blow Up* (1966), and British rock bands such as The Rolling Stones, The Beatles and The Who would enthrall U. S. consumers. While America provided a strong influence on British teens of the 1950s, British popular culture

would in turn affect America after the arrival of the “British Invasion” of rock and roll in 1964. By the mid-1960s, Americans would be sporting Carnaby Street style and Beatles’ haircuts, while by the late 1960s the youth of London would be affecting a California hippie mode of hair, dress and slang. Yet, as early as the 1950s cogent factors in youth culture signaled dissatisfaction with the status quo in both populations.

Booker cites the arrival of the “Teddy Boys” as one of the initial signs of cultural upheaval. The Teddy Boys were a group of young men, initially from South London, who dressed in Edwardian frock coats, tight pants and wore American slicked-back hairstyles. Booker believes this group of young men was deeply affected by American films and rock and roll. The Teds, along with their counterparts, the Mods and Rockers, who appeared later in the 1960s, were barometers of self-made youth culture. Whom they emulated, their dress, how they wore their hair, and their leisure activities were all hallmarks of a gang, a clan, a group that identified with certain aspects of popular culture and style.

The Teddy Boys were certainly influenced by American films, such as James Dean and Marlon Brando in *Rebel Without a Cause* (1955). The Teddy Boys were one of the first signifiers of a melding of popular culture between the two nations. As the Teds donned Edwardian jackets in a throwback to an older generation, it is important to realize that this fashion statement would have reflected the “thrift store” bounty of the times. The Teds symbolized a combination of British working class style and means, but they also appropriated American style and attitude. The phenomenon of the Teddy Boys quickly proliferated from London into the rest of the country, and before long, the Teds, comprised primarily of working class youth, were found throughout Britain.

Rock and roll music became a major influence on Britain's youth, to the extent that when the American film *Blackboard Jungle* (1955) played in the Elephant and Castle neighborhood of South London, a group of Teddy Boys, excited by an opening which featured Bill Haley's "Rock Around the Clock," tore up the cinema, destroyed the seats, and carried their anarchy out into the streets, creating a riot of generalized mayhem and crime.

When looking at youth culture in Britain, it is also necessary to recognize the voices of the participants in this revolution. The rock impresario Andrew Loog Oldham, who worked for Mary Quant in 1958 and went on to discover and fashion rock icons such as the Rolling Stones and Marianne Faithful, looked at the Teddy Boy phenomenon in a different light:

Teds were magnificent specimens with an attitude way out above any station. They were the first teenagers to stand up, let it rip and be counted. Beatniks didn't count: they sat around drinking coffee and smoking Gauloises, while the Teds draped and duck's-arsed themselves into a national outrage that made headlines. They spent their newly disposable incomes taking the piss. (29)

And this admiration of rebellion would be essential to those who created the style-makers and trendsetters of the 1960s. In the meantime, a craze for "skiffle" bands, a British copy of American folk music, also spread in popularity throughout Britain. Oldham sees this music as the precursor of British rock and roll.

The other side of London pop culture, which Oldham refers to as Beatniks, was another prominent "cult" of this time frame, a group of young intellectuals who also

romanticized American culture. This crowd favored coffee bars and jazz clubs, and a large number of them went to art schools for upper-level education. These young British men and women also displayed a propensity for nonconformist trends and were influenced by both Parisian and American fashion and film. As early as 1955, however, a unique British style revolution was in the making as two art students Mary Quant and Alexander Plunket-Green, opened *Bazaar*, a boutique, and began to sell innovative one-of-a-kind fashions to their friends.

Within a year or so the words “sexual revolution” would also be used by this group of young intellectuals, who began to experiment with drugs as well as a new and unabashed sexual freedom. By the end of the decade, the traditional British magazine, *Queen*, had discovered youth culture and turned itself into a “mod rag,” and the hair stylist Vidal Sassoon had open a salon on Bond Street where he envisioned women’s hairstyles cut like Bauhaus architecture (Levy 32). This was the world of the Mods, and it would be from this culture that Oldham and the equally chic Brian Epstein would create the style of the British Invasion as they managed and transformed bands such as The Rolling Stones and Beatles into pop culture idols.

From the era of mid-to-late 1950s also came a group of writers, playwrights and filmmakers who spawned the Free Cinema movement, The Angry Young Man phenomena, and also created the British New Wave in film. As Antonia Lant observes:

War produced the need for images of national identity, both on the screen and in the audience’s mind, but British national identity was not simply on tap, waiting to be imaged, somehow rooted in British genealogy ... the stuff of national identity had to be winnowed and forged from traditional

aesthetic and narrative forms, borrowed from the diverse conventions of melodrama, realism, and fantasy, and transplanted from literature, painting, and history, into the cinema. (31)

The British New Wave, unlike other cinema movements of Europe, was based solely on the plays and novels of a generation of writers who were also rebelling against a status quo of literary standards. In “The British New Wave,” R. Barton Palmer cites the “signal literary event” of this movement was the opening of *Look Back in Anger* in May of 1956. Palmer states, “The play features the dissatisfaction of protagonist Jimmy Porter with the state of post-imperial British society, with the upper-class wife for whom he feels a destructive passion, and with his job operating a stall at the local market” (59). Written by John Osborne, the play was directed by Tony Richardson at the Royal Court Theater in London. Joan Littlewood’s company, Theater Workshop, was responsible for producing nineteen year-old Shelagh Delaney’s *A Taste of Honey* (1958), and *Oh, What a Lovely War!* (1963). All three of these plays were later adapted into film.

The dissatisfaction with class hierarchy and working class life, which leads to a state of alienation, would become the hallmark of a film genre inhabited by angry and frustrated young men and women. In tandem, young authors who broke with literary tradition to write realist novels, including John Wain’s *Hurry On Down* (1953), Martin Amis’s *Lucky Jim* (1954), Iris Murdoch’s *Under the Net* (1954), and Colin Wilson’s *The Outsider* (1956), a work of non-fiction which deals with the estrangement of the artist in modern society, were lauded as the progenitors of a new generation in British literature. Palmer states: “a number of young realist novelists had by the end of the 1950s produced a series of bestsellers that, in the serious vein of Osborne and Delaney, gave vent to anger

with a pronounced Northern voice ... These novels would provide the basis for the British new wave films, beginning with Jack Clayton's *Room at the Top*“ (59-60).

These “Angry Young Man” dramas also fell under the description of “kitchen sink realism.” They were filmed in black and white, with the gritty *mise-en-scene* of Northern industrial landscapes, and featured the confusion and wrath of young British working class protagonists. The term “kitchen sink realism” was borrowed from an art movement of the same time period. In December of 1954, the art critic David Sylvester used the phrase in an article in *Encounter* to describe the work of realist artists such as John Bratby, who actually painted still lives of working class kitchens, including the everyday accoutrements of ordinary people. The celebration of ordinary life entailed a political and artistic choice, and this idea also appealed to young British filmmakers.

The Free Cinema Movement is generally viewed as the beginning of the British New Wave. This faction was concurrent with the French New Wave, or *Nouvelle Vague*, which favored unknown actors, outdoor locations, hand held camera work, and narratives which were written to be the antithesis of old garde French post war films. Free Cinema was founded by a group of young documentary filmmakers that included Lorenza Mazzetti, Karel Reisz, Tony Richardson, and Lindsay Anderson, who was their leader. On February 5th, 1956, the first showing of their work at the National Film Theater also included a manifesto: “As filmmakers we believe that no film can be too personal. The image speaks: sound amplifies and comments. Size is irrelevant. Perfection is not an aim. An attitude means a style. A style means an attitude” (British Film Institute).

Anderson's documentary *O Dreamland* (1953) was shown that night. The film targets a carnival attraction that mimicked capital punishment to create a spectacle for

viewers; the film was Anderson's personal reflection of the state of Britain. Reisz and Richardson's film *Momma Don't Allow* (1955), a documentary shot on location at the Green Jazz Club, and Mazzetti's *Together* (1955), a film about the relationship of two deaf mutes during working hours, were also exhibited. Like the progenitors of French New Wave, this group admired American director John Ford and the founders of the Italian Neorealist movement, Roberto Rossellini and Vittorio De Sica. Anderson, however, was also influenced by the British war-time documentarian, Humphrey Jennings, who portrayed everyday life with what he thought was a "highly efficient" and poetic manner.

These four directors' documentary styles directly influenced the British New Wave of the early 1960s, where they would play a part as well. Anderson went on to direct *This Sporting Life* (1963) and *If* (1968), Reisz made *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* (1960), and Richardson went on to create *Look Back in Anger* (1959), *A Taste of Honey* (1961), and *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner* (1962). After 1947, British filmmakers also had National Film Finance Corporation money to aid with indigenous projects. From the Free Cinema Movement and into the 1960s, they would continue the work of discovering a national identity, while exploring the cultural changes occurring in their midst.

In the United States, an increase in consumerism, economic stability, and the rise of youth culture also predominated in the late 1950s and 1960s. The political environment in post-war America, nonetheless, was extremely different from England. Marked by a determination to defeat world domination by communism, an ideology developed which would lead to economic and political policies that would change the

course of American history. Unlike Britain, which had decided to divest itself of its empire and concentrate on domestic policy, America found itself consumed with the threat of communism and concentrated on international strategies. On March 12th, 1947, Harry Truman appeared before Congress to ask for funds for failing governments in both Turkey and Greece in order to secure their loyalties to democracy. His intent to defend the Middle East and Europe from the influence of communism became known as the Truman Doctrine. He stated:

We shall not realize our objectives, however, unless we are willing to help free peoples to maintain their free institutions and their national integrity against aggressive movements that seek to impose upon them totalitarian regimes. This is no more than a frank recognition that totalitarian regimes imposed on free peoples, by direct or indirect aggression undermine the foundation of international peace and hence the security of the United States. (Truman, Harry)

By the 1950s, the “Red Scare” was a real and palpable presence to American citizens. With an escalating race for influence around the world, a proliferation of nuclear weapons by both countries, and an increase in military spending, the American military-industrial complex was set into motion in the 1950s.

In 1957, the Soviet Union launched an unmanned space ship, *Sputnik*, into the atmosphere above the Earth, and by early 1958 the U. S. had also accomplished this feat. President Dwight Eisenhower signed a bill creating the National Aeronautics and Space Administration in order to compete with Russia. In the meantime, Republican Senator Joseph McCarthy launched a systematic witch-hunt for communist sympathizers and left-

leaning liberals with investigations by the House Un-American Activities Committee.

The Committee was a carry-over of Senator Jack Tenney's California Joint Fact-finding Committee on Un-American Activities, founded in the late 1930's, but HUAC created a "red scare" of national proportions.

As Dan Georgakas points out, "HUAC charged that Communists had established a significant base in the dominant medium of mass culture. Communists were said to be placing subversive messages into Hollywood films" (1). There were also fears that "Communists were in a position to place negative images of the United States in films that would have wide international distribution" (1). Georgakas postulates that it was actually Liberals not Communists that HUAC was attempting to censure. He also points out that "Nearly 60 percent of all individuals called to testify and an equal percent of all those blacklisted were screenwriters. Only 20 percent of those called and 25 percent of those blacklisted were actors" (1). Those who were blacklisted, castigated or even jailed included Sam Jaffe, Zero Mostel, Charles Chaplin, Bertolt Brecht, Edward Dmytryk, Ring Lardner, and Dalton Trumbo. And this fear of prosecution for one's beliefs overshadowed the practice of filmmaking in 1950s America.

Conversely, as the medium of television spread across the country, Americans began to have the luxury of deciding issues for themselves as more and more aspects of life appeared in live broadcasts within their homes. Mitchell Stephens writes, "The number of television sets in use rose from six thousand in 1946 to some twelve million by 1951. No new invention entered American homes faster than black and white television sets; by 1955 half of all U. S. homes had one" (3). Stephens also relates that in 1954 Edward R. Murrow narrated an expose of Joseph McCarthy on his documentary program,

See It Now, stating, “His mistake has been to confuse dissent with disloyalty” (3). A nervous CBS then offered the senator free airtime to defend himself, but his appearance before the nation proved to work against his purposes, and later that year the U. S. Senate censured him.

In the late 1950s, television would become a staple of American life. By 1960, fifty-two million televisions had been purchased in America, which meant families in nine out of every ten homes possessed one (Winthrop 798). That year, the Kennedy-Nixon debates were televised, and a more relaxed, photogenic, and attractive John Kennedy would defeat his opponent. Television also influenced national opinions on matters such as civil rights and The Viet Nam War. Americans would watch President John Kennedy speak to the threat of possible nuclear war during the Cuban Missile Crisis in October of 1962, and by the end of the next year his funeral was broadcast live. During the decade, the funerals of two more assassinated American activists, Bobby Kennedy and Martin Luther King, Jr., would also be televised and Americans could observe scenes of live combat from the war in Viet Nam.

During this turbulent decade, America’s youth would evolve from the “outsider” figures of 1950s films, dressed in jeans and poodle skirts and listening to Elvis Presley, to a darker, intellectual force that considered revolt and turmoil as a means to have their opinions heard. From Martin Luther King Jr.’s March on Washington, attended by political folk rock icons such as Bob Dylan and Joan Baez, to the novels of the Beat Writers Jack Kerouac and William S. Burroughs, young people resisted the status quo in America. The 1960s became a tumultuous era, as protests against segregation escalated

in the South in the early 60s and student protests against the war in Viet Nam became common events.

In 1962, the Students for a Democratic Society convened their first convention in Ann Arbor, Michigan, elected Tom Hayden as their president, and issued the Port Huron Statement, which criticized racial and economic inequities, as well as the tarnished state of the American Dream. The treatise lists many of the causes of the students' disillusionment, including:

The worldwide outbreak of revolution against colonialism and imperialism, the entrenchment of totalitarian states, the menace of war, overpopulation, international disorder, supertechnology—these trends were testing the tenacity of our own commitment to democracy and freedom and our abilities to visualize their application to a world in upheaval. (Hayden, Tom, et al.)

Additionally, in 1966, after the assassination of Malcolm X and the Watts Riots in Los Angeles, Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale founded the Black Panther Party in Oakland, California. The group dedicated itself to a revolutionary ideology which condemned the oppression and enslavement of black people and called for “fundamental change” in America. Unlike the SDS, the Black Panthers were not opposed to the use of violence.

In 1969, the more radical members of SDS founded the aggressive Weather Underground Organization, which also advocated violence in the form of riots and the bombing of draft offices and government buildings to protest the war in Vietnam. Additionally, in June of 1969, police raided The Stonewall, a gay bar in New York City's East Village, as they did frequently. But this time, patrons choose to fight back and the

Stonewall Riots occurred, marking the beginning of the Gay Rights Movement in America. Throughout the 1960s, violent protests, revolutionary actions, and the alienation of the young from their parents' generation became more and more of a reality. And to some extent, most of America was aware of and even alarmed by these social changes.

From their living rooms, Americans could watch images of villages being burned, Vietnamese children on fire, and body bags of American soldiers being returned by plane. Live broadcasts of children in Selma, Alabama, being blasted with fire hoses in 1963, and rioters at the 1968 Democratic convention being beaten by police, would deeply affect American ideology and sensibilities. By the mid-1960s, Hollywood could no longer compete with free entertainment from the box in the living room, and the country could no longer ignore the social and political upheaval of the era.

As serialized television programs with familiar weekly faces, along with plays, variety entertainment programs, music, and sports became available to a mass audience, for the first time Hollywood found it had major competition. Additionally, a fresh new way of filmmaking would arrive from Europe in the early 1960s, and its popularity continued to mount. Soon the producers of the American Dream Machine would realize it needed to reassess its audience, technique, and narratives. Hollywood productions saw competition in the form of art house film, underground film, and European films, which could be made for considerably less money, without major stars, and devoid of the predilections of the Hays Code.

In *Sure Seaters: The Emergence of Art House Cinema*, Barbara Wilinsky discusses the importance of an American art house cinema which arose in the 1920s.

Originally, these were theaters that offered a guaranteed seat, amenities such as coffee, and a better class of picture. By the late 1940s, however, this meaning had changed. “Art film theaters were most often small theaters in urban areas or university towns that screened ‘offbeat’ films such as independent Hollywood, foreign language, and documentary films ... and offered specialized and ‘intelligent’ films to a discriminating audience that paid high admission prices for such distinctions” (2). By the 1950s, the number of these films increased markedly. Wilinsky relates that in 1950 there were approximately 80 of such venues in the U. S., but by 1963 the number had increased to 450 theaters. As the number of households with televisions increased and the *Paramount Decision*, also known as the Hollywood Anti-trust Case of 1948, ordered that film corporations divest themselves of their theater chains, the ability of Hollywood production companies to create major profits became more of a challenge.

As Wilinsky recounts:

... transformations within society resulted in changing reasons for moviegoing for many people. The interaction of social factors, such as the cold war, the growing and conflicted youth culture and the rising popularity of television with the shifting economics of U. S. society impacted the shape and meaning of filmgoing and art film-going. (2)

As the movement grew, Wilinsky posits, a defining feature of the trend was moviegoers who prided themselves as intelligent, discerning, and, ultimately, as individuals who valued something different from the Hollywood mandate. This attribute of “oppositional taste” defined the Art House crowd: “Rising up as a new, emergent culture in reaction to

changes in social values, cultural hierarchies, and industrial systems, art cinema shaped itself as a alternative to dominant culture” (3).

It is important to recognize the great influence this trend had upon American film, as the art house theater was often the only place certain foreign films, counter-culture films, and, finally, underground films could be shown. Art house films questioned the dominant ideology of Hollywood and provided a means to undermine its traditional genres and narratives. Through the art houses came the European films, such as Vittorio De Sica’s *The Bicycle Thief* (1948), Ingmar Bergman’s *Wild Strawberries* (1957), Roger Vadim’s *And God Created Woman* (1956), Jean-Luc Goddard’s *Breathless* (1960), Federico Fellini’s *8 1/2* (1963), and controversial American films such as Daniel Petrie’s *A Reason in the Sun* (1961), that could show no where else in the American South. Later would come films from unconventional American directors like Andy Warhol, John Cassavetes, and John Waters.

Inevitably, the influences that created the new waves of Europe would also lead to a revolution in American film. In *European Cinema: Face To Face With Hollywood*, Thomas Elsaesser writes, “European cinema has, since the end of World War II, had its identity firmly stamped by three features: its leading directors were recognized as *auteurs*, its styles and themes shaped a nation’s self image, and its new waves signified political as well as aesthetic renewal” (9). This description is also applicable to the wave of change in American cinema that would occur in the 1960s and become known as the “New Hollywood,” or Hollywood Renaissance.

The rise of New Hollywood would begin in the mid-1960s as major production companies such as Warner Brothers, United Artists, Columbia, and Twentieth Century

Fox began to lose money. When these corporations could no longer own motion picture theaters, they could no longer control what was shown there. Suddenly, there was no guaranteed audience for their films. Paul Monaco states that “By the 1950s, that reality pointed toward the major studios increasingly placing their emphasis on distribution and thinking more globally. Earnings abroad for the Hollywood majors, in fact, surpassed their domestic revenues for the first time in 1958; that trend continued every year throughout the 1960s” (10). The number of feature films made in the U. S. markedly decreased as well. Monaco states that studios such as Paramount, which had once created as many as a hundred films a year, dropped their production rates to fifteen annually for the duration of the 1960s.

As the number of movies fell, production risk for each motion picture exponentially increased. Therefore, as will be discussed in ensuing chapters, the need for certain movies such as *Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* (1966), *The Graduate* (1967), and *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967) to achieve ratings approval by the Production Code Office became more crucial. The financial pressure for approval of high budget films, as well as the appointment of the more liberal Jack Vallenti as the head of the MPA, would instigate the liberalization of the Hays Code, and therefore emancipate American films.

Yannis Tzioumakis, in *American Independent Cinema*, defines the strategy of New Hollywood as “a form of a relatively low-budget independent production by (mostly) hyphenate filmmakers that quickly became the model for mainstream Hollywood filmmaking for a short period of time” (170). These films are important to the scope of American filmmaking, as European, low budget, and art house films began to have a visible effect on the narrative, technique, and style of U. S. film production.

Tzioumakis continues, “Combining a mixture of exploitation strategies, art-house filmmaking techniques and an emphasis on distinctly American themes within not always clear-cut generic frameworks, the Hollywood Renaissance films can be seen as the product of a new marriage between independent film productions and the majors” (170).

Much like the *auteur* directors of the European new waves, American directors now had more power over their work and its content, which they used to create “stylistically diverse and narratively challenging films that were much more tuned in to the social and political climate of the era” (170). Younger directors such as Mike Nichols, Arthur Penn, Stanley Kubrick, and even Roger Corman, would help to foster the onset of a new American film phenomenon. And cinematic representations of America, as seen both domestically and internationally, would soon transform.

Concomitantly, along with sweeping changes in American and British society which saw the rise of minority, youth, and counter-culture political groups demanding more power, came another movement which would not be silenced: the Women’s Movement, also known as Second Wave Feminism. Arising during an era when methods of radical protest were in full swing, early feminists joined the ranks of other current political factions, using tactics borrowed from labor movements, civil rights marches, and radical student protests to achieve their means. In this context, the movement entered the cultural zeitgeist of an era which heralded activism and counter-culture protests. Women demanded equality in areas of the public and private sphere previously controlled by men. And early feminist film theorists would also claim that representations of women in film fell under the domination of the patriarchy.

This movement was termed Second-Wave Feminism, since the first wave of feminists began in Britain with Mary Wollstoncraft's, *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792), and Marian Reid's *A Plea for Women* (1843), followed by advocates in the 1800s such as Florence Nightingale and Francis Power Cobb, and later on Maude Royden, Christabel Parkhurst, and Millicent Fawcett. Then, in America came Margaret Sanger, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Alice Paul, and Susan B. Anthony. This first wave of feminists called for laws which would give women the right to vote, marriage equality, entitlements for education and employment, and reproductive rights.

Simone De Beauvoir's *The Second Sex*, published in France in 1949 and in English in 1953, is credited with beginning the second wave of feminism in the cultural climate post World War II. Echoing existentialist theory, De Beauvoir holds that woman's placement in society is due to her being seen as "other" by men. Using the philosophy of Hegel and Sartre as her starting point, De Beauvoir believes the "self" needs an "other" to define itself, to determine "self" by what it is not. The process must be a reciprocal and equal progression. However, the necessary interaction between male and female is denied by the protocols of society. Consequently, after years of social domination, woman defines herself only in relation to man. De Beauvoir states:

One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman. No biological, psychological, or economic fate determines the figure that the human female presents in society; it is civilization as a whole that produces this creature, intermediate between male and eunuch, which is described as feminine. Only the intervention of someone else can establish an individual as *Other*. (267)

De Beauvoir also looks at the interaction between two states she describes as transcendence and immanence, which should exist in a state of interplay. De Beauvoir holds that transcendence, the life available to men, is creative, active, and dynamic, while women are offered a life of routine, repetition and ineffectuality, which leads to immanence. Because woman lives out roles ascribed to her by the patriarchy, she is denied transcendence and imprisoned by immanence. De Beauvoir also divides *The Second Sex* into “Facts and Myths” which she uses to look at womanhood from the rubric of the biological, the psychoanalytic, the historical, the literary, and also from categories of female classification. De Beauvoir’s theories are still readily referenced by feminists today, and from her work also came the most important American feminist composition of the 1960s, Betty Friedan’s *The Feminine Mystique*.

The Feminine Mystique is decidedly an American treatise. In her work, Friedan not only presents “the problem that has no name,” the vague, uneasy feeling that there is something more to life, even when one has everything she has been taught is necessary for fulfillment. Not only does Friedan dissect the variables of society that create passive and dutiful wives and mothers, she also points out the underlying message of consumer society which equates material goods with pleasure and satisfaction. Friedan holds that women in post-war America were taught not only how to be, but also what they must buy to feel fulfilled and successful. This is the vital lie, she posits, necessary to consumer culture.

Friedan employs *The Feminine Mystique* to debunk concepts of American femininity in a systematic way. Using her background in journalism, she hunted out facts to create a heretofore-unseen collage of American life inhabited by silent, unfulfilled

women. She quotes statistics, eviscerates Freud, discusses how American women lost the path created by an earlier generation of activists and doers, chose children over creativity, and even made ridiculous decisions, such as to avoid chemotherapy for cancer rather than risk hair loss. Importantly, Friedan also discusses how women came to equate femininity with passivity and male dominance. Friedan became known as a radical, insistent, and controversial feminist who went on to become one of the most important women of her generation, helping to found the National Organization for Women in 1966, NARAL Pro-Choice America, and, along with Gloria Steinem, the National Women's Political Caucus in the early 1970s.

Following after Friedan came other groups such as New York Radical Women founded by Shulamith Firestone and Pam Allen, and extremist treatises such as Valerie Solanas's SCUM Manifesto, both from 1967. In 1968, Robin Morgan and Carol Hanisch led a group from NYRW to the Miss America pageant in Atlantic City. They protested the sexism and racism of the competition, which they felt fostered impossible standards of beauty and a Madonna/whore attitude toward women. In 1970, three major works of feminism were published, including Shulamith Firestone's *The Dialectic of Sex*, Germaine Greer's *The Female Eunuch*, and Kate Millett's *Sexual Politics*. In 1972 Gloria Steinem co-founded *Ms. Magazine* with Letty Pogrebin.

Then in 1973 the first works of feminist analyses of women's roles in cinema were published. From America came both Molly Haskell's *From Reverence to Rape* and Barbara Rosen's *Popcorn Venus*. In Britain, Laura Mulvey composed "Visual Pleasure in Narrative Cinema," which appeared in *Screen* in August 1975. These three texts

asserted that traditional film narratives structure women's roles into stereotypical images used to reinforce patriarchal agendas. By 1975, however, Claire Johnston and Pam Cook began to criticize the work of Rosen and Haskell, and the discourse which constitutes feminist film theory was begun.

It is essential to recognize that feminist film criticism is a direct result of the Women's Movement as it arose in the 1960s. Furthermore, it must also be established that feminism paralleled major changes in the film industry and that 1960s film narratives were tremendously influenced by a rapidly changing society. I will therefore recognize both factors in the scope of this dissertation, especially as I will endeavor to prove that early feminist film theorists were often short sighted, determined to create paradigms which may or may not exist, and eager to base their tenets on a Freudian psychoanalytic theory, currently recognized as faulty.

CHAPTER II

THE GAZE: BOND GIRLS, DOLLY BIRDS, MOD GIRLS, AND SWINGING SINGLES

Mrs. Fothergill: “Ah, Scorpio!” Modesty Blaise: “There is a sting in my tail.” - *Modesty Blaise*

Don’t question why she needs to be so free. She’ll tell you it’s the only way to be. -Keith Richards

Predicated upon feminist theory, and in a manner similar to its foundational ideology, feminist film theory began to garner criticism for its methodology and substance almost from its inception. The first examples of feminist film theory came from America with two very similar books, Molly Haskell’s *From Reverence to Rape: The Treatment Of Women In The Movies* and Marjorie Rosen’s *Popcorn Venus: Women, Movies and the American Dream*, both published in 1973. Considered the first works of their kind, Haskell and Rosen independently fashioned a summary of women’s treatment in film, which treks from decade to decade with overviews of trends and genres. Both works cite examples and give impressions of literally hundreds of films beginning in the 1920s and ending in the early 1970s.

The critic Janet McCabe states, “the first attempt at devising a feminist film criticism focuses on female representation as somehow reflecting real social attitudes, opinions, cultural values and patriarchal myths” (7). This first pass at feminist film theory, known as “reflection theory,” is based upon the idea that Hollywood cinema

structured women's roles into distinct, recognizable categories such as "the glamour goddess, the femme fatale, the self-sacrificing mother" (7). The foundational premise of reflection theory is the assumption that cinema is a mirror which directly reflects society.

In the introduction to her work, Haskell holds that "Movies are one of the clearest and most accessible of looking glasses into the past, being both cultural artifacts and mirrors" (Haskell xiv). While Rosen contends, "more than any other art form, films have been a mirror held up to society's porous face. They therefore reflect the changing societal image of women—which, until recently, has not been taken seriously enough" (9). Rosen, however, takes this idea further, to an overtly simple conjecture which underpins her entire stance:

Because of the magnetism of movies—because their glamour and intensity and "entertainment" are so distracting and seemingly innocuous—women accept their morality or values. Sometimes too often. Too blindly. And tragically. For the Cinema Woman is a Popcorn Venus, a delectable but insubstantial hybrid of cultural distortions. (9-10)

Film theorists who came after Rosen criticize her obviously simplistic vision of spectatorship and its implications. However, both Rosen and Haskell's work runs a parallel course, and both agree that certain decades of cinematic representations of women resonate with male dominated manipulation, control, and exploitation. Other periods are less objectionable.

Both Rosen and Haskell find the 1940s a decade when women were portrayed with a sense of empowerment, since they were helping to run in country at a time when men had been called to war. Rosen states, "Necessity undoubtedly mothered

emancipation. Working meant more than feeding one's self and family while the head of the house was fighting for democracy; it was a patriotic gesture" (201). Rosen believes that images of "Rosie the Riveters," such as Ann Southern in *Swing Shift Maisie* (1943) and Claudette Colbert in *Since You Went Away* (1944), and films which featured women as nurses, like *So Proudly We Hail* (1943), war correspondents, including *Somewhere I'll Find You* (1942), and WAC and WAVE recruits, such as *Keep Your Powder Dry* (1945), eventually led to more empowered female characters like Lauren Bacall in *To Have and Have Not* (1944), and Katharine Hepburn in *Adam's Rib* (1949). She also observes that female characters fell back into roles of traditional femininity as soon as the 1950s dawned.

While Molly Haskell praises the autonomy and craftiness of the *femme fatales*, she also states, "But for all her guts and valor, and for all her unredeemable venality ... she hadn't a soul she could call her own. She was, in fact, a male fantasy" (190). In a nod to women's roles in the work force during the war, Haskell writes, "And they were given positions of authority, in the war and at home, in films and out, that they would be unwilling to relinquish" (192). But Haskell holds that women ultimately were given no more empowerment in the 1940s than they held before: "For every hard-boiled dame there was a soft-boiled sweet-heart, and for every tarnished angel an untarnished one" (193).

Haskell never wavers in her thesis. Even regarding films which portray tough career women, equal or sometimes superior to the men around them in every way, Haskell contends, "This, of course, is the source of the tremendous tension in films of the time, which tried, by ridicule, intimidation, or persuasion, to get women out of the office

and back to the home, to get rid of the superwoman and bring back the superfemale” (222). The burning threat of Rosalind Russell in *His Girl Friday* (1940) and *Take a Letter, Darling* (1942), or Hepburn in *Sylvia Scarlett* (1935) and *Adam’s Rib* (1949) is soon quenched, she preaches. While *Popcorn Venus* is full of historical and sociological facts that serve to underpin Rosen’s thesis, this is less so for Haskell’s argument. She extrapolates trends from large groups of films to form arbitrary ideas about specific decades. Haskell relies upon generalizations to build her hypothesis.

Haskell and Rosen’s ideology is analogous, and this is especially so regarding the 1960s. Rosen proposes that the 1960s dawned with women terrorized by the fear of becoming spinsters, while Doris Day in films like *Pillow Talk* (1959) showed an entire generation of American women how to preserve their virginity. Film content continued to follow the status quo of the 1950s, until Joan Didion and Gloria Steinem arrived on the scene to preach female independence through magazines of the day such as *Esquire* and *Mademoiselle*, and Helen Gurley Brown wrote *Sex and the Single Girl* in 1962. Rosen reminds her reader that Brown wrote, “Those who glom on to men so that they can collapse with relief, spend the rest of their days shining up their status symbol and figure they never have to reach, stretch, learn, grow, face dragons or make a living again are the ones to be pitied. They, in my opinion, are the unfulfilled ones” (324). Rosen also cites the availability of birth control in 1960 and the loosening of Hays Code restrictions as a factor in changing film narratives.

In Rosen’s opinion, however, cinema of the 1960’s disappoints and does not represent the increasing autonomy of women in society: The sexually repressed Natalie Wood suffers a breakdown and loses her man in *Splendor in the Grass* (1961), Shirley

MacLaine's Fran Kubelek attempts suicide when jilted by her philandering boss in *The Apartment* (1960), Julie Christie's *Darling* is fun and mod, but she is ultimately selfish and unfulfilled. Antonioni's *Blow-Up* (1966), "virtually excised women from the center of activity" (331), and teen films such as *Beach Blanket Bingo* (1967) and *How to Stuff a Wild Bikini* (1967) were tame, asexual stories set in the midst of a sexual revolution. Rosen states that Hollywood's idea of "taking modern risks meant filming gossipy, bitchy soap operas like *The Group* (1966) or *Valley of the Dolls* (1967)" and "most films depicting pop culture were English imports—and often very stupid ones at that—picking up on the 'groovy' and amoral girl-women who had become our new heroines" (338).

Haskell's disdain for 1960s film is deadlier still, and she excoriates the era by writing:

But even these, the great women's roles of the decade, what are they for the most part? Whores, quasi-whores, jilted mistresses, emotional cripples, drunks. Daffy ingénues, Lolitas, kooks, sex-starved spinsters, psychotics. Icebergs, zombies, and ballbreakers. That's what little girls of the sixties and seventies are made of. (328)

Haskell is on the attack with her first sentence: "From a woman's point of view, the ten years from, say, 1962 or 1963 to 1973 have been the most disheartening in screen history" (323). Listing a multitude of factors, from the fall of classical Hollywood to the collapse of the star system (which Haskell contends caused women to lose their "economic leverage"), she sums up her feelings succinctly when she states, "With the substitution of violence and sexuality (a poor second) for romance, there was less need

for exciting and interesting women; any bouncing nymphet whose curves looked good in catsup would do” (324).

I will argue against both Haskell and Rosen’s perceptions of women’s roles from the 1960s. It is critical to note that currently most feminist film critics dismiss these theories as well. In her book *Aftershocks Of The New: Feminism and Film History*, Patrice Petro writes:

The earliest account of film history written from a feminist perspective —Marjorie Rosen’s *Popcorn Venus: Women, Movies, and the American Dream* (1973) and Molly Haskell’s *From Reverence to Rape: The Treatment of Women in the Movies* (1974)—are now dismissed as popularized and theoretically unsophisticated histories, noted for their sweeping and teleological historical claims. Detailing the decade-by-decade repression of women in the Hollywood cinema, both books are also criticized for their historical reductionism, for their assumption of an identity between text and context, audience and screen, in short, for their reliance on what is commonly referred to as “reflection theory.” (34)

Petro sees Haskell’s account as more nuanced and less influenced by traditional sociology than Rosen’s. For example, Petro praises Haskell for certain stances, stating that she “avoids the pitfalls of reflection theory by setting up an atemporal and normative ideal of heterosexual romance against which the trajectory of film history is judged” (69), points to homoeroticism in the traditional “buddy movie,” and criticizes the violence of New Hollywood films. But ultimately she dismisses Haskell for “reducing the history of

women and film to the (failed) history of heterosexual romance in contemporary U. S. cinema and culture” (36). Petro contends that Haskell’s theories were:

quickly abandoned in favor of more theoretically sophisticated, and more historically limited, approaches to women and film. Questions of authorship, in particular, allowed feminist theorists to challenge established ways of writing about film history and to rethink, at the level of production, the complicated relationships between gender identity and sexual difference in film. (36)

Janet McCabe concurs, and includes Rosen, by stating:

But their claim that cinema reduces image of women to a limited range of female stereotypes as a “vehicle of male fantasies” and “the scapegoat of men’s fears” (1987:40) is never proved beyond listing historical examples and sweeping claims. These writers ... were seen by other feminists as failing to provide adequate theoretical frameworks for deconstructing the complexity of what they were saying. (10)

Conversely, Petro praises the writings of Claire Johnston and Pam Cook, first published in 1975, for redefining “the terms of traditional auteur criticism by submitting the concept of film authorship to poststructuralist revision and to a thoroughgoing feminist critique” (37). Johnston and Cook have also criticized the work of Rosen and Haskell because it did not “sufficiently account for how ideology functions to produce meaning within the film text” (10).

Johnson, in her essay “Women’s Cinema as Counter Cinema,” uses semiotics based on the work of Roland Barthes to analyze Hollywood cinema. She regards female

representations in cinema as a “sign” of the ideological concept of woman as perceived by men. This practice reduces her to “not-man,” or other. Since Hollywood conventions use verisimilitude to recreate conventions of realism, the woman becomes the bearer of a sign that is “not male,” and is thus deprived of meaning. Johnston also calls into question the work of Rosen and Haskell by asserting:

Much writing on the stereotyping of women in the cinema takes as its starting point a monolithic view of the media as repressive and manipulative: in this way, Hollywood has been viewed as a dream factory producing an oppressive cultural product.... The idea of the intentionality of art which this view implies is extremely misleading and retrograde, and short-circuits the possibility of a critique which could prove useful for developing a strategy for woman’s cinema. (32)

Pam Cook also bases her early work on post-structuralism; she employs Bertold Brecht’s ideas about the relationship between spectator and text and recommends the reading of film as a text in order to deconstruct its meaning. She holds that the traditional narratives of Hollywood “lock” the spectator into a “fixed position” which prevents the questioning of the film text and its encoded messages. Both Cook and Johnston have written on the films of Dorothy Arzner, as a pre-Code director who often challenged stereotypical Hollywood narratives with her work. Cook holds that Arzner’s use of irony helps to distance the spectator from the cinematic representation and thus shatter the illusion of cinematic verisimilitude. This conscious awareness repositions the spectator to question the authority of patriarchal representations.

Alongside these early feminist works utilizing reflection and post-structuralist theories, also came Laura Mulvey's much-debated, seminal essay, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," published in *Screen* in 1975, which took Freudian psychology as its basis. Sue Thornham, editor of *Feminist Film Theory: A Reader*, states that while Johnston argues that "the figure of 'woman' functions within film as a sign within a patriarchal discourse, not as a reflection of reality. Mulvey analyzed how cinema as an 'apparatus' creates a position for the film spectator, drawing on psychoanalytic theory to explain this positioning" (53). Mulvey's work carries implications for film theory in general as it produced a shift in the focus of investigation, "away from a purely textual analysis and towards a concern with the structures of identification and visual pleasure to be found in cinema: in other words, toward the spectator-screen relationship" (53).

Mulvey, along with the French film theorists Christian Metz and Jean-Louis Baudry, used the psychoanalytic theories of Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan to compare "the operation of the 'cinematic apparatus' upon the spectator to that of the dream" (53). All three discuss the gaze of the spectator as different from other types of theater, because it is a one-way phenomenon, a look that is not returned, which therefore creates a powerful voyeuristic pleasure for the audience. Freud accounts for both voyeurism and fetishisms as a means for males to protect themselves against fears of sexual difference, or, in other words, castration.

Mulvey's work is built on the French theorists' belief that the male spectator both knows that the film exists for his pleasure (its presence), and also knows it to be mere fiction (its absence). Unlike Metz and Baudry, Mulvey looks exclusively at the topic of sexual difference in her theory of "the male gaze," taking into account both the pleasure

of looking, or scopophilia, as well as a fear of castration, which is, she theorizes, simultaneously experienced by male spectators.

Mulvey's essay is also a kind of manifesto; it operates to explain her theories and to call for a kind of filmmaking which would deconstruct patriarchal control. She begins by stating that she will "appropriate" psychoanalytic theory as a "political weapon." Mulvey bases her work on the idea that phallogentrism depends on the model of the "castrated woman," to give meaning to its world. Mulvey theorizes the "symbol" of woman translates as a "lack," but she is also a powerful reminder of the threat of castration. Furthermore, woman must raise her child into this symbolic order:

Either she must gracefully give way to the word, the name of the father and the law, or else struggle to keep her child down with her in the half-light of the imaginary. Woman then stands in patriarchal culture as a signifier of the male other, bound by a symbolic order in which man can live out his fantasies and obsessions through linguistic command by imposing them on the silent image of woman still tied to her place as bearer, not maker, of meaning. (59)

Therefore Mulvey argues that woman is bearer of "the look," while man is "maker" of the look. By creating the image of woman as mere spectacle, or as the object of voyeuristic pleasure, man controls the diegesis of the film to perpetuate phallogentrism: "In their traditional, exhibitionist role, women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote *to-be-looked-at-ness*" (63). Mulvey ends her essay with a brief examination of the films of Sternberg and Hitchcock. But it is essential to note that

Mulvey has chosen films well entrenched in the era of the Hays Code and which reflect traditional Hollywood technique and narrative.

In “Visual Pleasure And Narrative Cinema,” Mulvey calls for the construction of an alternative cinema to challenge mainstream film. I propose that an “alternative cinema” was already in place by the late 1960s, at least five years prior to the composition of her essay. Mulvey’s controversial premise has been the topic of much criticism over the last thirty-five years. While many scholars have worked to repudiate her, others have used her theory as a foundation. As feminist film scholarship evolved, by the 1980s most critics began to question the essentialism of her premise.

In 1983, E. Ann Kaplan published her essay, “Is the Gaze Male?” Both Kaplan and Kaja Silverman went on to state that either sex could function in the position of voyeur. Their work holds that the male does not always possess the controlling gaze and the female is not always a passive object. Furthermore, in her 1984 essay, “Oedipus Interruptus,” Teresa De Lauretis argues that the female spectator is involved in a process of “double identification” with the positions of both active and passive subjects. And in 1983, Steve Neale identified the gaze of Classical Hollywood cinema as not only as male, but also a “heterosexual gaze” (Cohan 47), he claimed that Mulvey’s work was predicated on essentialism and bore the assumption of heterosexual normativity.

In 1988, the critic Jane Gaines questioned the position of black women in feminist film theory. In “White Privilege and Looking Relations,” she states, “Thus it is that women of colour, like lesbians, an afterthought in feminist analysis, remain unassimilated by this problem” (294). The critic bell hooks holds that black women in film are an “absent presence” (310), and proposes an oppositional gaze, by which black women look

from a “location of disruption.” Jackie Stacy writes about identity and identification in fandom; she examines how women identify with film stars and proposes that too much credence has been given to the use of psychoanalytic theory and cinema without sufficient research. And finally, Judith Butler questions whether most feminist film theory is tethered to the concept of a “heterosexual matrix,” and proposes that ideology regarding race and gender should be “mimed, reworked, resignified” (338)

This ongoing dialogue in feminist film theory has led scholars such as Claire Johnston, Mary Ann Doane, and Barbara Creed to expand upon the agenda and methodology of those first critics, while others like Jane Gaines, Judith Butler and bell hooks dispute the foundational ideology of their work and instead examine the complex intersections of class, race, and gender in cinema. Since no other feminist film critic has received the attention that Mulvey created with gaze theory, I will use her theory, as well as the work of her critics, to consider 1960s film in a new light. I will also reexamine some of Haskell’s and Rosen’s premises.

Additionally, I would like to suggest that the rigid analyses of film proposed in the 1970s do not take into consideration the power of low budget film, exploitation film, art house film, and underground film to disrupt the privilege of the male-controlled gaze. Only concerned with Hollywood film, these original feminist critics miss the intent of counter-culture 1960s cinema to rebel against the status quo and to undermine its agents such as government, religion, and also, patriarchy. Many of the films that Rosen and Haskell criticize can be defended, especially in light of Susan Sontag’s “Notes On Camp” (1964). Since Jane Gaines and other feminist film critics have recently called for a

reexamination of cinema from the decade prior to the Hays Code, the 1920s, I assert that the era of the 1960s, which marks the conclusion of the Hays Code, is also noteworthy.

Angel-Headed Hipsters

In 1957, the director John Cassavetes created his first feature-length movie, *Shadows*, considered by several film critics to be the first American Independent film. In 1959, *Film Culture*, edited by Jonas Mekas, honored *Shadows* with its first Independent Film Award; the film also won the Critics Award at the Venice International Film Festival in 1960. In his book *The Sixties*, Paul Monaco asserts that John Cassavetes provided “the best model in the American cinema for low-budget film-making, risk-taking, and innovation in feature film production pushed toward the edges of what was recognized by serious critics as genuine ‘art film’” (174). *Shadows* was created by the actors in Cassavetes’s improvisation class, completely unscripted, and was produced for under \$40,000.

Influenced by the British Free Cinema Movement, and shot with a handheld camera, its unique look and content made *Shadows* a film which was not distributed in America until 1959, when the British company Lion International gave Cassavetes funds to shoot additional scenes, and provided distribution. *Shadows* also features an unlikely heroine, Lelia, who confronts the morals of conventional society. *Shadows* takes the issue of race in 1950’s America as its main topic, but its strong-willed and avant-garde character, Leila, occupies much of the central action to provide a foil to both Hollywood narrative and traditional subject matter.

The main characters of *Shadows* are Ben, Lelia, and Hugh, three siblings who live together in New York City at the end of the 1950's. These very different individuals are each victims of a self-created persona. Ben and Lelia are light-skinned African-Americans, while their brother Hugh is darker in skin tone. Ben and Lelia "pass" as white, but not in the company of their brother. In documentary style, *Shadows* follows the daily lives of these three siblings. By creating a collage of juxtaposed scenes, Cassavetes is able to convey that their friendships and choice of social milieu reflect Ben, Leila, and Hugh's internal conflicts.

Shadows also mirrors Beat Generation New York City with a sound track informed by the rhythms of jazz music. Charles Mingus's score identifies the film as outside the Hollywood mainstream, as the music insinuates itself instead of providing a backdrop to the film's action. Cassavetes's hand-held camera techniques, night filming of cityscapes, and multiple party and club scenes all reflect urban Cold War era motifs. The camera lingers on its subjects' ennui and indecision, chases them through parks, and bluntly focuses on moments of seduction and brutality. Instead of establishing a traditional storyline, the scenes render a collage motif of narration that Cassavetes is known for. Some scenes appear as mere vignettes; others seem more about tone than information.

One scene in particular, shot on location in a diner, contrasts a view of Ben and his two buddies with Lelia and her friend, David. While not much happens to drive the plot of *Shadows*, the character of Lelia is portrayed as smartly dressed and elegant, with an intellectual companion, while Ben seems the essence of the Beat Generation jazz musician: rumpled, dark glasses, self-conscious, and cool. Lelia chides her brother and

his friends about their lack of culture, and afterwards Ben and his pals head off to the Sculpture Garden of the Museum of Modern Art. During this scene, Ben becomes enthralled with a statue of an African mask. The image of the mask represents one of the major themes of *Shadows*. The museum caper is followed by a party scene. At the gathering, the absurdity of Lelia's intellectual crowd is revealed as yet another mask.

Through these glimpses of the siblings' lives, Cassavetes manages to create an essential sense of an era of aimlessness and change. While the three central figures who inhabit this landscape seem doomed to wander through it without much direction, by the end of *Shadows* each experiences an epiphany—and one that allows a realization that they are living as something they are not, or, in other words, “passing” as something they are not. Richard Combs addresses this quality of the film by stating:

The freshness of the performances and the looseness of the shooting style made an immediate impact; harder to categorize as “improvisation” or “documentary”, however, is the way the idiosyncratic dialogue establishes a density of character, mood and social scene without explaining anything. The main storylines jostle along in a happy serendipity which turns into a complex reflection on race and identity. (qtd. in Hiller 6)

In this manner, both the directorial technique, as well as its highly controversial topic, create a movie with unprecedented style and content.

Furthermore, the character of Lelia provides a disturbing vision of women's traditional roles in post-war America. She is an independent young woman who becomes more troubled as the film progresses. Early on, Lelia learns what happens when she decides to assert her independence and walk home from seeing her brother off at the Port

Authority. As she ventures out into Times Square, Lelia is confronted by images of women as objects and accosted by a passing man. After her romp with an admirer, Tony, ends up in seduction, Leila turns traditional narrative and the notion of classical seduction on its head by announcing, “It was awful.” During this unsettling exchange between Tony and Leila, a mask is seen hanging on the wall near the bed. Furthermore, after she has slept with Tony, Leila begins to question her position as flirt, modern young woman, and freethinker—roles that may be available to her in 1950s society since she easily “passes” as white.

Lelia’s last scene in the film (added two years after the first version was made, according to Cassavetes scholar, Ray Carney’s web site) depicts a date with a young black man, David Jones, who takes advantage of her confusion. He tries to force Lelia into a more stereotypical female version of herself by stating that he doesn’t like aggressive women. In this manner, he tries to “tame” Lelia. As they leave her apartment, Leila’s white lover Tony is lurking by the door. Later David tells her, “You know I saw the way he looked at you back there. I also saw the way he looked at me.” In other words, he challenges Leila’s ability to pass as white and points out the problems that capacity creates.

As portrayed in *Shadows*, the character of Lelia prefigures the coming of the young woman of the 1960s, caught between independence and conformity, trapped between the status of women who assert their independence and sexuality and those who choose to be protected and dominated by men. Cassavetes does not offer clues as to which path Lelia will choose. While it is obvious he highlights the two sides of Lelia to inspire conflict, he doesn’t intend to resolve it.

Cassavetes instead focuses on human interaction during a particular intersection of race relations and Beat Culture, an era in American history leading up to the Civil Rights Movement and Second Wave Feminism. Prescient for its era, *Shadows* highlights issues that would be difficult to answer in the brief period of one day and two nights, the time frame of the film. Cassavetes explores ideas about the nature of race, identity, and free will that are still currently debated. Strikingly, the character of Leila also presents controversial questions about female independence and sexuality in a manner previously unexamined in American cinema.

The following year, the 1960s dawned with Shirley MacLaine playing a woman who attempts suicide when her married boss jilts her, but it is possible to praise certain aspects of *The Apartment* (1960). MacLaine's role as a savvy, working girl garnered her an academy award nomination, while the film, directed by Billy Wilder, ultimately pushed against censorship codes with its topics of infidelity and office politics.

MacClaine's Kublick is also a far cry from the sensuality of 1950s actresses such as Marilyn Monroe and Elizabeth Taylor, or the cool blondes of the day, such as Doris Day or Hitchcock's leading ladies: Kim Novak, Tippi Hedren, or Grace Kelly.

With her short haircut, plain suits and everyday speech, MacLaine doesn't exude this kind of *to-be-looked-at-ness*. She is the forerunner of a group of 1960s actresses who became famous for their acting instead of a traditional, patriarchal-approved beauty; these include Glenda Jackson, Rita Tushingham, Barbara Streisand, and Lynn Redgrave. Fran Kublick is not overtly feminized, and in her wake came a group of women with androgynous qualities such as Vanessa Redgrave, Audrey Hepburn, Mia Farrow, Natalie Wood, and Julie Andrews. The era of exceedingly feminized and curvaceous movie

stars, as seen in the 1950s, was about to end. Echoing their sisters, the 1920s flappers, the look of 1960s female star was based on a different set of attributes than the previous generation. In other words, many stars of the 1960s were chosen for qualities other than conventional good looks. And as the decade progressed, male as well as female stars of the 1960s begin to exhibit signs of androgyny.

Fly Girls and Spy Girls: Paradox and Parody

Of course, numerous films of the 1960s did present women from the position of *to-be-looked-at-ness*, and those must be addressed as well. But often these females connoted danger and otherness with their appearance; and for every Bond girl, there was a parody to detract from her traditional feminine role. And these satires also undermined the hegemony of patriarchal values. Recently, scholars have held up the character of James Bond as a standard bearer of a different gaze, pointing out that young men used Bond as a model of narcissistic identification and that his figure was a source of *to-be-looked-at-ness* from both a female and homosexual fan base. In *The James Bond Phenomenon: A Critical Reader*, Toby Miller writes:

The James Bond books and films are routinely held up as a significant contributor to, and symptom of, imperialism, sexism, Orientalism, class hierarchy, and jingoism—even as the first form of mass pornography.

And so they are. But frequently in a chaotic manner that is more complex and contradictory than teleological accounts of a phallic, hegemonic hero will allow. (233)

Miller reads Bond as “a complex series of social texts” (234) and notes that Bond does not fit into the rubric of hyper-masculinized, male stars made popular by Hollywood cinema. He continues, “far from being the alpha of the latter-day Hollywood macho man, as per Sylvester Stallone, Bruce Willis, Arnold Schwarzenegger, and Wesley Snipes, Bond was ... commodified male beauty” (233).

I would propose that the figure of James Bond from the 1960s is not only different from later male counterparts, but also that markers of masculinity were entirely different in the 1960s, and perhaps more feminized than our current standards. A review of James Bond as the dandy of 1960s cinema bears evidence to this assertion. Sean Connery, the first James Bond of the film series, was also seen as a paradigm of male attractiveness, as evidenced by 1966 photo spreads in both *Esquire Magazine* where he modeled suits, and in *Life Magazine* where he appeared bare-chested. Sean Connery, a stand-in for the figure of Bond, exhibited *to-be-looked-at-ness* from not only the point of the view of the moviegoer, but also in other media of popular culture from magazines to posters to television appearances. In this manner, Bond was integrated into the spectacle of 1960s culture, and thus became a symbol of the “Swinging Sixties.”

In *The Neophiliacs*, Christopher Booker also associates James Bond with the world of Mod. He points out that the first issue of the *London Sunday Times* with a “color supplement” was issued in February of 1962 and featured photographs of fashion by the designer Mary Quant, modeled by Jean Shrimpton, and taken by photographer, David Bailey, all harbingers and prophets of Mod Style. The issue also featured a profile of the pop artist Peter Blake, a “photo feature” of London including jazz clubs, coffee bars, and art students, and a new James Bond story penned by Ian Fleming. Booker

states, “the first edition of the *Sunday Time*’s supplement was a perfect expression of the ‘dream image’ of the time. The revolution which it represented was far from over: in one sense, indeed, it was only just beginning” (Booker 43). Thus, the *Sunday Times* had invited Bond to join the counter-culture; he was linked to its sexual politics.

Toby Miller points out that the “new sexuality” of the Bond movies portrays both men and women as free to choose sexual standards outside the bounds of moral conservatism. This new sexuality was also seen as indicative of the decline of the Empire. As the British Empire grew smaller in the 1960s, political conservatives saw any form of individualism and libertarianism as a symptom of Britain’s political demise. Miller also links the character of James Bond to consumer culture and marketing strategies:

Bond’s gender politics are far from a functionalist world of total domination by straight, orthodox masculinity. Excoriating evaluations of women’s bodies have long been a pivotal node of consumer capitalism. Now ... the process of bodily commodification through niche targeting has identified men’s bodies as objects of desire, and gay men and straight women as consumers, while there are even signs of lesbian desire as a target. Masculinity is no longer the exclusive province of men, either as spectators, consumers, or agents of power. And Bond was an unlikely harbinger of this trend. (233)

In “Lesbian Bondage, or Why Dykes Like 007,” from *Ian Fleming & James Bond: The Cultural Politics of 007*, Jamie Hovey looks at Bond from the auspices of queer theory. She examines *Goldfinger* (1962) as a rivalry that occurs between the

equally matched Bond and his counterpart, the lesbian Pussy Galore. Clearly signified as gay in the novel, Galore is codified as gay in the film, which makes for subtle narrative shifts and word play to convey her status. This banter works well with the overall tone of the Bond films which are not only spy thrillers, but also comedic and deeply seated in the popular culture of the moment.

Like many women of the Bond films, female characters exist to be viewed, but also to serve as plot devices. Jill Masterson, an employee of Goldfinger's, whom Bond easily woos and seduces, winds up as a gold-covered corpse, entering the pantheon of pop culture iconography with *Goldfinger's* release in 1964. Tilly Masterson enters the diegesis to avenge her sister's death and is completely uninterested in Bond's masculine charms, yet expresses great pleasure in his spy skills and the high-tech car Bond uses to dispatch Goldfinger's goons. However, Tilly is also readily sacrificed to make Bond sufficiently angry to insure a personal vendetta against the movie's villain, Auric Goldfinger. And finally there is Pussy Galore—is Goldfinger's personal pilot, and the girls of her "Flying Circus," a group of efficient and well trained stunt pilots are all blonde, beautiful clones of Galore.

Hovey suggests that Galore is Bond's most interesting conquest because of their equivalence: "Indeed Pussy Galore is the hottest seduction in all of Bond precisely because she refuses to completely give in until the final moment of the film, insisting on her intellectual, physical, sexual and gender equality, and her status as foil and competitor to Bond in every endeavor, including the seduction of women" (50). As Hovey proposes women encoded as gay in the Bond films have a sexuality which "foils and entices" Bond. But in general, Bond texts resist conventional sexuality: "These queer aspects of

Bond suggest that gender and heterosexual expression in Bond novels and films are stylized to the point that they actually resist heteronormativity and respectability, constituting a recognizable queerness” (43).

Since the first three James Bond novels filmed in the 1960s were written in the 1950s, Hovey notes that the intensified symbols of gender that occur in these films are really reflections of 1950s culture. The removal from their time frame also serves to exaggerate the style and particulars of masculine and feminine markers. Hovey reads Bond as “butch,” and declares him a “social semiotic” akin to Dick Hebdige’s notion of the “form of refusal” that signifies a rebellion against social norms or the status quo:

Framed in relation to dangerous and emancipated women, these gendered gestures of refusal make up a masculinity that tends mostly to obey the outward forms of heterosexual chivalry yet signifies its unwillingness to be domesticated by those forms ... but also to masculinity and heterosexuality itself as they are dynamically configured in mainstream culture. (46)

In Hovey’s ideology, Bond’s extreme masculinity also corresponds to the “queer strategy” of imitating and overplaying gender performance. Pussy Galore reads as James Bond’s double, from their first encounter where she informs Bond that she is “immune” to his charms. He counters by explaining how the gun she holds, not only a symbol of power, but also a phallic symbol, has the potential to rip a bullet through the fuselage of the plane and cause their demise. When Goldfinger asks Galore to change into something more seductive for Bond’s benefit, Galore merely trades one pants outfit for another, with a vaguely feminine and revealing blouse. In this way, *Goldfinger* also

reads as “camp.” And much of the camp of *Goldfinger* is associated with gender. For example, in the movie’s first love scene, Bond’s lover asks him why he must always wear a gun, to which he answers, “I have a slight inferiority complex.” Having identified the gun as a phallic symbol and suggesting that she can’t control it, he adds another dimension to their banter.

Susan Sontag’s influential “Notes On Camp” first appeared in the *Partisan Review* in 1964, the same year *Goldfinger* was released. In this essay, Sontag attempts to explain the phenomenon of “Camp” which she claims is a sensibility “unmistakably modern, a variant of sophistication but hardly identical with it” (1). Sontag lists fifty-eight components and identifiers of camp to give her audience a sense of what constitutes this “sensibility.” She also gives clues to its nature, which are equally important. Sontag states, “It is not a natural mode of sensibility, if there be any such. Indeed the essence of camp is its love of the unnatural: of artifice and exaggeration. And camp is esoteric—something of a private code, a badge of identity even, among small urban cliques ... to talk about Camp is therefore to betray it” (1).

The qualities of “artifice and exaggeration” are especially salient to the Bond films, with their emphasis on hyper masculinity and femininity, violence, and decadence. Camp also gives meaning to 1960s films that would have perhaps disappeared from view without a certain essence which makes them appealing even fifty years later. Sontag states that popular music and movie criticism are part of the world of camp, and especially films that are critically inferior but enjoyable to view for the same quality, such as those which make lists like “Best Bad Movies.” These films are pleasurable because, as Sontag informs her reader, “people still go to the movies in a high-spirited

and unpretentious way” (2). This observation is a characteristic of moviegoers that the first feminist film critics overlooked. Movies of the 1960s are replete with irony and camp sensibility, which render complex and nuanced signifiers the simplistic tenets of “reflection theory” ignore. Audiences view camp films through a lens of irony that serves to defy techniques of verisimilitude.

Many of Sontag’s tenets of camp apply to films of the 1960s that feature female characters as intelligent, sexy, daring, and crafty, and most of these are done with an element of irony, camp, or wit. In 1966, the British film *Modesty Blaise* an adventure-comedy based on a popular British comic strip, presented its viewers with a female version of James Bond, and who captured the essence of Bond’s charm, sexuality, and European style. Sontag’s first note on camp states, “Camp is a certain mode of aestheticism ... That way, the way of Camp, is not in terms of beauty, but in terms of the degree of artifice, of stylization” (1). The world of *Modesty Blaise* is one of extreme stylization of Mod culture: costumes, sets, characters, and sensibilities all reflect the Mod aesthetic. Sontag continues, “Clothes, furniture, all the elements of visual décor, for instance, make up a large part of camp. For camp art is often decorative art, emphasizing texture, sensuous surface, and style at the expense of content” (2).

The interiors of *Modesty Blaise*’s world display purple and red op art wallpaper, pinball machines, fur rugs, tapestries, modern sculpture, and Scandinavian furniture. Modesty sleeps in an all-white, revolving bedroom, which is equipped with both computers and medieval weapons, where she is attended by a white-suited butler. Modesty fights crime or pulls heists, depending on her mood, decked out in black and white mini-dresses and Italian sunglasses. Like Bond, she has gadgetry and technology

at her fingertips. Her sidekick, Willie Garvin, lives in a flat with a bull's eye target the size of a wall, hanging manikins, neon, a hi-fi blaring jazz, pink and orange paintings, and a life-size Modesty Blaise poster. In *Ready, Steady, Go! The Smashing Rise and Giddy Fall of Swinging London*, Shawn Levy writes, "it was meant as an homage to and distillation of its moment: guns, a hot chick, an outrageous villain, a peppy soundtrack, the whole swinging deal" (150).

In this caper, Modesty is hired by Her Majesty's Secret Service to prevent the theft of diamonds from a sheik, Abu Tahir, whose friendship is important to the state. The villain whom Modesty must defeat is a past nemesis, Gabriel, who lives on a private island inhabited by fellow criminals, his accountant, a priest, and the psychopathic murderer, Mrs. Fothergill, who kills for fun. Gabriel also appears to be gay. In this way, *Modesty Blaise* contains a plot device similar to that of *Goldfinger*, as it mirrors Bond's dilemma of having an adversary who is immune to his sex appeal. Levy continues, "for the villain, the sexually ambiguous and frankly cracked Gabriel, Losey had hired Dick Bogarde" (150).

Gabriel, as portrayed by Bogarde, is the most interesting aspect of the film. Twinned with Modesty, he wears only black or white and changes his hair color from blonde to black, as do Modesty and Willie. Gabriel carries a parasol, drinks from a glass with a swimming goldfish, collects antiquities, kills effortlessly, and wears silk dressing gowns. Gabriel is the essence of camp, with his highly stylized world and exaggerated desires, he is a most modern villain. And what he craves is not to seduce Modesty but to convince her or force her into being an accomplice, his equal. When his accountant asks Gabriel, "Have you ever wondered about Mr. Fothergill?" Gabriel replies, "I *am* Mr.

Fothergill.” Mrs. Fothergill is always attended by a beautiful, young man; however, so is Gabriel. The encoding leads the viewer to believe theirs is a marriage of convenience.

In his article, “Camping Out,” James Francis states:

One reason why camp and homosexuality have been closely linked is because they are typically considered closeted codes that must be *outed* in order to reveal their existences ... Coding like camp, speaks a specific language that some will understand, while others will not. Although the metaphorical closet is locked, the code (camp) offers hints and a pathway into its world. (132)

The encoding of camp is somewhat like the encoding created by the Hays Code in the early 1930s; the viewer must interpret the clues to the nature of a film’s sexual undercurrents. As a woman alone on a street may be decoded as a prostitute in the world of Classical Hollywood, a man with a parasol may be construed as gay in the universe of camp.

Modesty, played by the Italian actress, Monica Vitti, is extremely feminine. Yet she displays masculine traits: she is sexually aggressive, complements men on their attractive features, eats voraciously, wields a gun and knife with great accuracy, and outwits both the British government and Gabriel. Meanwhile, Gabriel conveys traditional feminized qualities. The two primary character’s gender-bending qualities are an interesting aspect of *Modesty Blaise*. An especially significant plot detail, however, has to do with the relationship between Modesty and Abu Tahir. When the comic strip was launched in 1963 by Peter O’Donnell, Modesty’s history was revealed: she was a girl without a name who had escaped from a displaced person’s camp in Greece at the end of

World War II and roamed through the Middle East and North Africa until she met a wandering scholar who named and educated her. Eventually, Modesty became the leader of a gang of criminals in Tangier.

In the film version, it is revealed that she is the adopted “son” of Abu Tahir. When Sir Gerald, the British agent, and Modesty enter the London dwelling of the sheik, he takes them into an inner room and announces, “He is here—my son, Modesty, who is also my daughter,” to which Sir Gerald counters, “There must have been a technical problem or two?” Abu Tahir replies that when Modesty came to him she was “too fierce to be a daughter.” Modesty explains that he made her a “son” and taught her to fight like one. Interestingly enough, when the story ends and Modesty has recovered Abu Tahir’s diamonds, she is dressed in male clothes and clothed like a sheik in the midst of an Arabian camp.

Modesty Blaise allows transgression against traditional gender roles, racial stereotypes, and societal mores, but it is also camp and comedic. The Bond films cross boundaries of traditional morality while maintaining a more conventional format. It is partially the tone of this film which allows it to push against the boundaries of societal norms. Haskell and Rosen’s vision of stereotypical 1960s female characters as “whores” and “sex-starved spinsters,” is certainly not true of many of the decade’s heroines, especially those of the comic-book variety. These narratives also celebrate empowered women who do as they please and do not follow the rules of church or state.

Another camp film of the 1960s, *Barbarella: Queen of the Galaxy* (1968), pushes counter-culture narrative even further, with its liberated female astronaut who attracts both males and females in her adventures. Within the diegesis of this film, scopophilia is

both homosexual and heteronormative. And although there is no desire between Gabriel and Modesty Blaise, *every* character in *Barbarella* desires Barbarella. The film is based on a comic strip character created by Jean-Claude Forest, which appeared in the French *V-Magazine* in 1962. Forest saw Barbarella as the embodiment of the modern, sexually liberated woman. The comic was created when George Gallet, editor of *Le Rayon Fantastique*, asked him to work for his adult magazine:

One day he asked me if I wanted to do a strip for him—no holds barred! Twenty years ago, we were living in a time of complete censorship in the comics. In fact, that's why I was doing mostly illustrations and book covers. Everything was forbidden, and in particular, the female form. Fantasy was also frowned upon, because it was felt that it would corrupt the morals of children. Gallet had asked me to do a kind of female Tarzan.... It led me to come up with Barbarella.... I told her adventures, going with the flow of inspiration, without any pre-planning. (qtd. in Lofficier 36)

Two years later when Eric Losfeld published *Barbarella* as a graphic novel, it immediately sold 200,000 copies, but French censors also ruled that it could not be publicly displayed. Jean-Marc Lofficier states, “*Barbarella* was the first female hero to enter French comics since World War II and the country's first science-fiction character. Her liberated attitude gave her a fragile, yet invincible aura. She became the incarnation of the '60s budding eroticism” (36). Forest admits that *Barbarella* was patterned after American comics such as *Flash Gordon*; he also wanted the comic to have the same kind of whimsy as Louis Carroll, but with a comedic slant. The graphic novel was a

resounding success: “Dubbed the “first comic strip for grown-ups,” *Barbarella* attracted rave reviews from a varied assortment of magazines including French literary weekly *Arts* (“a modern epic”), *Newsweek* (“a mythic creature of the space age”), and *Playboy* (“the very ‘apotheosis’ of eroticism”)” (36).

In 1968, the French director Roger Vadim convinced his American wife, Jane Fonda, to star in a film version of *Barbarella*. The movie is now considered a cult classic due to its camp style and sexual content. The film version of *Barbarella* was immediately controversial due to the scantily clad or nearly naked figure of Fonda, who is placed in an ongoing series of sexual situations. The *Barbarella* comic is faithfully reenacted and interpreted by Terry Southern, who wrote the script. Responsible for many of the top counter-culture screenplays of the decade, Southern either wrote or co-wrote *Dr. Strangelove; or, How I learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb* (1964), *The Collector* (1965), *Casino Royale* (1967), *Barbarella* (1968), *Candy* (1968), *Easy Rider* (1969), and *The Magic Christian* (1970).

Terry Southern’s pop culture sensibilities were also tempered by an interest in classical literature. Nile Southern describes his father as “the bridge between the Beats and the Beatles, the link between Poe and Kubrick ... a model for the hybridized new media scribes of today” (qtd. in Tully 2). Citing Southern’s flair for combining the elements of high and low art into the zeitgeist of the day, he states, “what my father left behind was an extraordinary body of work reflecting a seriousness, depth, and world-view whose lineage of high-level Decadence, Grotesquery, and Satire has historically been marginalized—precisely because it is, at its sharpest, culturally critical” (1). *Dr. Strangelove* certainly attests to his son’s description, as no one but Terry Southern and

Stanley Kubrick could have made a text so full of humor, fear, satire, and sexual innuendo. Southern carries this texture into the script of *Barbarella*; he also emphasizes many of the sexually bizarre components of Forest's original narrative, such as the heroine sadosexually attacked by mechanical dolls with teeth, vampire children, and an evil lesbian queen. In one scene, Barbarella is placed in a glass dome with birds that attack her and flay her skin, as in Alfred Hitchcock's *The Birds* (1963). This pop culture reference, among others, creates a cinematic record of the zeitgeist of "hip" Sixties culture. Thus, *Barbarella* is also an early example of a postmodern film text.

If taken out of the context of camp, however, *Barbarella* highlights Mulvey's theory of scopophilia, or pleasure in looking. In "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," Mulvey theorizes:

The first avenue, voyeurism, on the contrary, has associations with sadism: pleasure lies in ascertaining guilt (immediately associated with castration), asserting control and subjugating the guilty person through punishment or forgiveness.... Sadism demands a story, depends on making something happen, forcing a change in another person, a battle of will and strength, victory/defeat, all occurring in a linear time with a beginning and end. (22)

Barbarella, however, thwarts Mulvey's notion, because Barbarella always triumphs over her captors and tormentors. Because she is open, innocent, and clever, she defeats everyone who seeks to control her, confronting the sadism of her captors with good will and negotiating her own terms for physical pleasure.

Terry Southern's understanding of both the decadent and the grotesque certainly informs the film, rendering a cult text in the guise of a Hollywood film. Douglas Brode writes:

Barbarella also reveals the effects of high camp.... Terry Southern—whose novel, *Candy* had set the tone for an era of intellectually acceptable satiric pornography—“camped up” *Barbarella*, giving it the same formula for success that had established the Bond films as the decade's most popular movie series: serious, kinky, even deadly scenes were played for laughs in a Grand Guignol style of arch seriousness that finally spilled over into conscious comedy. (221)

Yet, *Barbarella* was very much a product of its day. Reflecting both the sexual revolution and revolutionary chic, as evidenced by David Hemmings's absent-minded, feminized rebel who needs *Barbarella*'s help to manifest his plans. *Barbarella* also heralds a new type of cinema: “It was during the Sixties that European art films and American commercial pictures, so long considered the polar opposites of one another, would become indistinguishable” (Brode 223).

In her essay, “Bringing *Barbarella* Down to Earth,” Lisa Parks praises another dimension of the film. With women barred from the NASA's space program during the 1960s due to “the extreme unpredictability of the female body” (Parks 253), *Barbarella* symbolizes something entirely different during a year when the space race was at its height. Parks says, “While scientists and politicians positioned feminine sexuality as a threat to the scientific rational and nationalist imperatives of the American space

program, *Barbarella* represented a dangerous alternative: a female astronaut who was sexy, single and political—a highly volatile combination” (253-4).

Parks sees the character of Barbarella as representing not only a sexualized individual, but also a female with agency:

But although Barbarella’s hyperbolic sexuality might be fodder for a voyeuristic imagination, it also enables the female astronaut to assert power and control within the narrative ... whereas the film constructs the female astronaut as the object of a fetishistic gaze; Barbarella’s body is also a tool of personal pleasure and political power. (254)

Jane Fonda commented that *Barbarella* was “a kind of tongue-in-cheek satire against bourgeois morality” (qtd. in Parks 261), while Vadim deemed it “ruthless satire.”

Barbarella is certainly, however, made from the sexual revolution of its day: a melding of pop culture and camp, where the “low art” of comic book meets the capitalism of Hollywood to create an American, Italian, and French version of the Swinging Sixties set in the future. An amalgam of many contexts, *Barbarella* meets criteria for the phenomena of cult film as well. Most representations of women in cult films also defy Mulvey’s theories, as these characters represent a threat to the patriarchy, and they often appear as grotesque or murderous. These roles also invalidate the hegemony of a male privileged gaze.

“Ladies and Gentlemen, Welcome to Violence”

In the introduction to *Defining Cult Movies: The Cultural Politics of Oppositional Taste*, Mark Jancovich, Antonio Reboll, Julian Stringer, and Andy Willis argue that “oppositional taste” is the singular trait that denotes cult films. They hold that the term “cult film” cannot be reduced to a single category; it is rather, “not defined according to some single, unifying feature shared by all cult movies, but rather through a ‘subculture ideology’ In other words, ‘cult’ is largely a matter of the ways in which films are classified in consumption” (Jancovich, et al. 1). Therefore, its opposition to or defiance of classical, “mainstream” cinema defines cult film. However, mainstream film “is not a clearly defined and fixed object, but rather an undefined and vaguely imaged Other” (1). And finally, as dictated by Susan Sontag’s rules for camp, “the ‘bad movie’ is celebrated not for its artistic independence or political sophistication but for the complete failure to conform to the artistic or political ‘mainstream’” (2).

Derived from art house cinema, cult cinema eventually evolved further into a manifestation known as the “midnight movie.” In *The Cult Film Experience: Beyond All Reason*, J. P. Telotte defines this genre’s characteristics:

The typical venue for these films is the midnight showing, usually at suburban mall theaters rather than art or rerun houses. And this alternative viewing practice seems essential ... part of its true supertext. For the midnight film, like a forbidden love, apparently loses much of its appeal in a conventional or culturally sanctioned context; it is simply no longer *subculture* and other. (10)

Tellote states the differences between the cult film and midnight film is often found in their means of production. The cult film is created within the Hollywood studio system, while the midnight film is produced with considerably less money, star power, or technical expertise. Midnight films, such as George Romero's *Night of the Living Dead*:

suggest just the sort of *bricolage* that characterizes these films, a catch-as-catch can approach toward production that seems more their rule than an exception. Perhaps the forthrightly "crude" look that often results not only underscores their difference from mainstream cinema, but also their ability to play effectively at the very margins of cinematic illusion. (11)

This definition configures *Barbarella* as a cult film. An example of a midnight film, that also portrays sexualized women, but without the innocence and good will of Terry Southern's heroines, would be director Russ Meyer's *Faster Pussycat! Kill! Kill!* (1965), a low-budget exploitation film about three murderous strippers in fast sports cars who kill a young man for insulting them, kidnap his girlfriend, and try to cheat a perverse family of male hermits out of their hidden cash. Tellote sums up the essential difference between cult and midnight films with a singular definition: "While classical cult films project appealing images that speak to the contradictions in our present lives, midnight movies fashion a context of difference—of rebellion, independence, sexual freedom, gender shifting—that helps us cope with real-world conformity" (11). And of further significance, many of these films use females as agents of transgression.

While certain movies like *Barbarella* wind up with unintended cult status, others like *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* (1975) or John Water's *Pink Flamingos* (1972) set out to achieve cult status from the beginning and display a disruptive strategy. Bruce

Kawin writes that the basis of this tactic is often exuberance, an “intense pleasure” that increases the enjoyment of the spectator, while generating a cohesive group experience. This is true of *Faster Pussycat! Kill! Kill!* (1965), which also uses its protagonists as agents of transgression and disruption. Made independently from Hollywood production and financing, and like other exploitation films of its day, *Faster Pussy* was under no obligation to meet Hays Code regulations.

Harry M. Benshoff and Sean Griffin define exploitation film as “a type of film made outside (or on the edge) of Hollywood that promised to show spectators something that Hollywood films could not ... The word *promised* is an important one, for classical exploitation films still had to operate within the bounds of obscenity laws and could not represent hardcore sexuality as could stag films” (109). Benshoff and Griffin postulate that exploitation films also veered into “queer territory” as they regard topics expressly forbidden by the Hays Code: “In covering forbidden aspects of sexuality, such as nonprocreative heterosexual desire outside marriage, exploitation films underline the fact that many forms of heterosexuality were themselves unsanctioned and queer throughout the first half of the twentieth century” (109). To some degree, the Hays Code, with its underpinnings of Catholic morality, helped to convey certain traits and acts as “queer” in a way to make these topics more taboo, and thus seductive to audiences.

In, “Sexploitation as Feminine Territory,” Moya Luckett writes about the sexploitation films of female director Doris Wishman. Luckett disputes Jeffrey Sconce’s position that cult film consumption “inverts cultural hierarchies and the patriarchal tenets they embody” (142). Instead, most writings on the subject tend to eclipse “the form’s traditional affiliation with camp, homosexuality and femininity” (142). Luckett posits:

“Often latent or found in inopportune places, femininity emerges as arguably the structuring force in cult films, and, in the process, recasts cinematic interventions into sexual difference” (142). Luckett holds that even though most sexploitation films were shown to male audiences in decaying, urban areas, and in venues which carried social prohibitions against female patrons, these films primarily “focus on modern femininity” (143).

Luckett adds Russ Meyer to the list of directors who, along with Wishman and Roberta Findlay, created exploitation films with empowered females. While Wishman concentrated on “nudie” films, taking advantage of a court ruling which allowed depictions of nudist camps, beginning with *Hideout In The Sun* (1959), Meyer created soft-core pornographic material featuring women with murderous intent and sexual appetites. Both directors feature lesbian relationships as an integral factor of their plots. While it is important to note that during the 1960s women directors were active in creating sexploitation films, director Russ Meyer was making more radical texts like *Faster Pussycat*.

Prior to the opening scene of *Faster, Pussycat*, a male voice-over warns of what is to come, echoing patriarchical fears in an era of women’s liberation:

Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to Violence. The word and the act.

While violence cloaks itself in a plethora of disguises, its favorite mantle still remains: sex. Violence devours all it touches, its voracious appetite rarely fulfilled. Yet violence does not only destroy, it creates and molds as well. Let’s examine closely this dangerously evil creation; this new breed encased and contained within the supple skin of Woman. The

softness is there, the unmistakable smell of female, the surface shiny and silken, the body yielding yet wanton. But a word of caution: handle with care and don't drop your guard. This rapacious new breed prowls both alone and in packs, operating at any level, at any time, anywhere and with anybody. Who are they? One might be your secretary, your doctor's receptionist, or a dancer in a go-go club....

This warning to the audience equates violence, sexuality, and the feminine. It also posits that violence is viral, that "it creates and molds as well." The film intimates that liberated women are capable of evolving into a deadly force, since she "prowls both alone and in packs." The voice-over links women to predatory instincts, violent tendencies, and animal qualities. In other words, it empowers them with traditional male traits.

As the strippers of *Faster Pussycat*, Varla, Rosie, and Billie open the film as go-go dancers, the male audience shouts, "Go, baby, go! Wail! Harder, faster! Go, go, go!" The camera shoots the dancers from below and close up, emphasizing both their bodies and the pleasure they experience from their power over the male audience. This scene cuts to a sports car with Varla at the wheel, experiencing the same intense pleasure. She seems to feel the same ecstasy when murdering Tommy, the young "square" she challenges to a drag race, when seducing Kirk, the "good" brother of the family she attempts to rob, or when murdering his dim-witted brother by ramming him with her sports car.

The cinematic technique, ludicrous plot, and cartoon-like characters of *Faster Pussycat* all serve to distance it from Hollywood narrative, allowing the viewers to take pleasure in a diegesis they know is unreal. Russ Meyer offers a trio of "bad girls" that

delight the audience with their audacity, sexuality, and perverse pleasures. Meyer over-accentuates the breasts of the actresses, in a grotesque parody of the pin-up girl, or Playboy “bunny” of the age. Tura Sultana, the actress who plays Varla, and Haji, the actress who portrays Rosie, are also ethnic. Sultana is a biracial Japanese-American, while Haji is configured as Mediterranean. Midway through the film, they murder the blonde, Barbie-like, Billie, who is less intelligent and starts to annoy them with her seductive behavior toward the half-wit brother. Varla is also revealed to be bisexual; the audience is made aware that Rosie is her lover, but she also takes pleasure in her seduction of Kirk.

Through their qualities of otherness, these characters, while styled to fulfill the male gaze, also frustrate it. Varla, Rosie, and Billie are designed to be recipients of the gaze, yet they also spoil and destroy the pleasure it gives. In addition to signifying castration, they actually also murder, mutilate, and maim those who dare to look. In this manner, they undermine male hegemony by simultaneously offering *and* destroying desire; they symbolize a warning to those who look. Other American exploitation films of the decade, such as the “nudie cuties” made by Wishman and Findlay, or the biker and psychedelic films of Roger Corman, never reach this level of menace regarding the deadly potential of the female spectacle.

Although Roger Corman’s independent films were less aggressive and comedic than Meyer’s, they not only reached a larger audience but also challenged Barbara Rosen’s notion of the beach movie as the purveyor of American morality of the moment. In his profile of Roger Corman for *senses of cinema*, Wheeler Dixon states that Corman, like Cassavetes, “was one of the first American independent filmmakers to create work

entirely on his own terms and turf” (1). Corman was not only the cutting edge of American Independent Cinema, but he also crafted narratives from the rapidly evolving culture around him. Dixon continues, “The world he was documenting would disappear, and Corman wanted to capture as much of it on film as possible, from beatnik cafes to biker gangs, before the parade moved on” (1).

In the Sixties, Corman did a series of biker movies and also directed an LSD film, *The Trip* (1967), written by Jack Nicholson. Ostensibly a film made to show the dangers of drugs, *The Trip* also included soft-core sex scenes covered by psychedelic effects. *The Trip* was not an anti-drug film, however; it glamorized the counter-culture and for those who were curious, it made the experience seem fascinating. *The Trip* also captured an underground attitude toward psychedelic drug experimentation like no other film of the 1960s. Similar to those in the counter-culture film *Easy Rider* (1969), the women in these films are part of ambience, but never take center stage. Women may be essential, and even equal to men in Corman’s 1960s narratives, but they are never the central focus. They are the “old ladies” of the biker gangs, prostitutes who share acid trips, hippie chicks in psychedelic crash pads, integral members of communes, and co-conspirators.

Sugar and Spice and Everything Nice

One young woman who did take center stage in the Sixties, however, was the star of Stanley Kubrick’s *Lolita*, Sue Lyon. Both *Lolita* (1962) and her sister siren, *Candy* (1968), the other famous sexually active teen of the decade, were films that could never be made in today’s film culture, which takes pedophilia far more seriously. The novel,

Candy, grew out of a competition between writers Terry Southern and Mason Hoffenberg, who took turns writing ever more outrageous chapters about an innocent and sexually generous girl of sixteen. The book was acquired and published in 1958 by Olympia Press, Maurice Girodias's French publishing house, famous for avant-garde writers who chose sex as their topic. Olympia was responsible for putting the novels of William Burroughs, Samuel Beckett, and, also, Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita* into print.

Despite its literary heritage, the movie version of *Candy* is a long spectacle of exploitation and seduction of an under-age, naive girl, by the most famous male stars of the day in the guise of the patriarchy: father, teacher, general, doctor, guru. The acting and satire of the film is finely crafted, but even satire cannot save *Candy* from the fact it is soft-core pornography in the fancy dress of a Hollywood blockbuster. Roger Ebert, who bemoans that the film version lacks the "anarchy" of the novel, offers a succinct and apt review: "Candy (Ewa Aulin) caroms from one man to another like a nympho in a pinball machine, and the characters she encounters are improbable enough to establish Terry Southern's boredom with the conventions of pornography" (Ebert, Roger).

Lolita is a sophisticated rendering of Nabokov's novel, with a screenplay written by the author, and directed by Stanley Kubrick. Even in the Sixties, with the steady lessening of Hays Code regulations, and given the literary acclaim Nabokov had garnered for the novel, the task of adapting *Lolita* to the screen was a tricky one. In his book, *Stanley Kubrick, Director*, Alexander Walker attempts to fathom Kubrick's desire to film *Lolita*, which he acquired with James Harris for \$150,000 and a promise from Nabokov to write the screenplay. "The conventional love theme had so far had absolutely no appeal for Kubrick; he was basically a skeptic, not a romantic. But while exploring the

bizarre he always liked to profit from the restraining discipline of the realistic and the conventional” (24). Kubrick believed the literary “ground rules” for a love story required that it end in the separation or death of the lovers. The director also stated, “the relationship must shock society or their families. The lovers must be ostracized ... In this respect I think it is correct to say that *Lolita* may be one of the few modern love stories” (24).

Kubrick was most concerned about trying to convey the book’s “erotic wit,” in the face of Hays Code regulations and a possible Legion of Decency censorship. After the dissolution of the Hays Code, Kubrick lamented that if he had been able to reconstruct the eroticism of the book, the relationship between Humbert and Lolita would have been much more effective. As it stands, the film creates a symbiosis between two characters that seems like mere obsession on Humbert’s part, and an adolescent’s manipulation of an older man. Lolita manages to drop out of school, eat whatever she pleases, and do whatever she likes, as long as she focuses her full attention on her stepfather. Humbert appears to be a fanatical and jealous man, who cages Lolita and robs her of adolescence as he tries to prolong her time as a nymphet. Along the way, Humbert manages to stifle Lolita’s maturity until the last possible moment, when she thwarts him by escaping with another older man, Clare Quilty.

Kubrick uses humor, satire, and even an aura of surrealism, to create *Lolita*. This effect is primarily achieved by placing Peter Sellers in the role of Quilty. Sellers crafts a number of accents, guises, and strategies to win the heart of Lolita, which are outside Humbert’s realm of understanding. Humbert’s paranoia, due to his sexual relations with this underage girl, instigates him to interpret the phone calls, queries, and threats from

Quilty as intrusions from authority figures, instead of his rival. Irony is Kubrick's most successful tool for interpreting *Lolita*, given the state of censorship in 1962. But Kubrick also plays Humbert Humbert as the fool of the diegesis: he the victim of marriage to Lolita's mother, Charlotte Haze, with her high-minded ideals and provincial morality, of Lolita herself, who manipulates him until he gives her all his funds and possessions, and finally of Quilty who uses him for sport and steals the thing he loves best.

At only one moment, does Humbert stand up to a woman in *Lolita*. When berated by Charlotte for sending candy to Lolita at camp, he finally sputters, "Even in the most harmonious household, such as ours, not all decisions are taken by the female. Especially when the male partner's fulfilled his obligations beyond the line of duty ... even then I scoot along after you like an obliging, little lap dog. Oh yes, I'm happy. I'm delighted to be bossed by you, but every game has its rules." In *Lolita*, however, it is always Charlotte, and finally the nymphet, Lolita, who control Humbert's fate.

Even when female representations of the 1960s are portrayed as "Lolitas, kooks, sex-starved spinsters and psychotics" (Haskell 327), they represent a seismic undercurrent in the bedrock of society, an area of discomfort and discontent. Another example of this phenomenon is Julie Christy's *Darling* (1965), directed and co-written by John Schlesinger. *Darling* is a representation of Mod culture, postmodern culture, and is also indicative of the moral and political state of Britain during the mid-Sixties. *Darling* will be discussed further in Chapter Four for the ways it represents the postmodern spectacle, but it is also important to note the Mod significance of the film.

Christy's character Diana Scott is a fashion model, and her hairstyle, clothing, and attitude reflect Mod design. In his work, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*, Dick

Hebdige discusses the importance of dress and life style preferences among members of subcultures, including the world of Mod. These young men and women were fastidious in their dress and fashion and chose activities which asserted their independence from the previous generation: “Somewhere on the way home from school or work, the Mods went ‘missing’: they were absorbed into a ‘noonday underground’ (Wolfe, 1969) of cellar clubs, discotheques, boutiques and record shops which lay hidden beneath the ‘straight world’ against which it was ostensibly defined” (53). Mod style had begun on Carnaby Street; fashion defined it.

At the beginning of the narrative, Diana Scott dresses as a Mod, yet as she begins to move within the world of capitalism, her star rises and her fashion becomes more opulent. Diana’s impetuous nature leads her to actions such as catching the train to London in a nightgown, experiencing a sex party in Paris, listening to jazz, frequenting art galleries, and acting in a generally “madcap” and impulsive manner. The underground, the unpredictable, and the avant-garde were all distinctive Mod hallmarks.

Other British films of the 1960s featured “dolly birds” with Mod style. Slang for an attractive girl, by the mid-Sixties most London girls *were* Mod girls. Hebdige also holds that “ethnographic detail” is a marker of class and culture:

The raw material of history could be seen refracted, held and ‘handled’ in the line of a mod’s jacket, in the soles on a teddy boy’s shoes. Anxieties concerning class and sexuality, the tensions between conformity and deviance, family and school, work and leisure, were all frozen there in a form which was at once visible and opaque. (78)

By 1965, most young female characters in British film represent the presence of Mod style, and Hebdige is correct in postulating that details in costuming convey important information. These details communicate to film audiences as well. As Darling becomes famous, her style changes, and so does she.

The dolly birds of *To Sir With Love* (1967) reflect the working class version of Mod subculture. Many of the Mod movies of the day featured pop stars, and *To Sir With Love* was no exception, featuring the pop singer Lulu, the musician Michael des Barres, and the band The Mindbenders. *To Sir With Love* was a vehicle for Sidney Poitier, the African American star of several mid-Sixties films. Poitier portrays a teacher in a lower-class East End, London school who must convince the students of their worth and potential. Race is an issue in this film as Poitier's character, Mark Thacker, makes it clear he has survived racial prejudice, and his students can survive the class system. Consequently, the young women he teaches learn to demand more respect from the males in their environment and to possess greater self-confidence. The issue of surviving racism and class difference eventually binds together students and teacher. The film was released at the height of the civil rights movement in America and also features an interracial attraction between Thacker and a white female colleague.

In one scene, Thacker takes his students to the British museum to make the point that their long hair and dress, their style, is a throwback to the Victorian Age and the 1920s. The scene features still photography and pop music—“art house” techniques dropped into a Hollywood production. Columbia Pictures had no idea they were creating a film that would become so popular with American audiences. By October of 1967, four months after its release, *To Sir With Love* was the number one film in America, and the

song occupied the number one position on the Billboard charts, making Lulu famous (Harris 348). The Sixties audience had embraced the outsider figure—and Hollywood was shocked.

Stark Raving Mod

The day of the pop star in film had arrived. However, Marianne Faithfull's Mod style in *Girl On A Motorcycle* (1968), cannot camouflage the fact this the film is soft-core pornography which uses a technique similar to Roger Corman's *The Trip*; it disguises sex scenes with psychedelic overlays. Faithfull's character, Rebecca, is similar to Darling in that she wants what she wants, which is to abandon her husband and fly to her lover. In Rebecca's case, the vehicle is the motorcycle he gave her for a wedding present. Unlike Darling's infidelity, which lands her in a boring marriage to an Italian prince, Rebecca's disloyalty leads to a spectacular multi-vehicular car crash and her flaming demise. Both characters are punished with the standard penalty for infidelity: death or misery. Yet these films challenged censorship codes and created sexual, empowered female characters nonetheless.

In her autobiography, Marianne Faithfull writes, "I made a couple of terrible movies that year. *I'll Never Forget What's 'isname* (1967), with Oliver Reed in which, appropriately enough, I have the distinction of being the first person to say "fuck" in a legitimate move. And the soft porn *Girl on a Motorcycle*" (Faithfull 137). In *Sixties British Cinema*, Robert Murphy cites *I'll Never Forget What's 'isname* as one of the films that heralded a trend of skepticism toward the values of swinging London. Another 1960s

film about a philandering male fed up with the system, both movies share more with the world of camp than serious drama.

In *I'll Never Forget What's 'isname* (1968), Oliver Reid stars as Andrew Quint, an ad man who becomes disgusted by the capitalist greed and consumer hysteria of modern society. With two mistresses, and a wife at home asking for a divorce, he turns his back on all three and goes to work for a literary magazine. There he meets a genuine and independent young woman, Georgina Elben, and the two fall in love. In the end, his editor sells the magazine to Quint's original boss, Jonathon Lute, played by Orson Welles. Lute shuts down the magazine, and Quint is forced back into his original job. One night when he cannot keep a date with Georgina, she dies in a car crash and Quint falls back into the very life he had fled. Georgina, who is a virgin, symbolizes everything that Swinging London is not. When Quint loses Georgina, he also loses interest in fighting the system.

Underlying *I'll Never Forget What's 'isname* is a condemnation of capitalism and upper-class, British male mentality. Through flashbacks, the cruelty of Quint's public school classmates is shown: girls are treated as animals, effeminate boys are tracked down and beaten, headmasters are perverts, and their cruelty persists into adulthood. The film was never granted an MPA rating. A scene that suggests oral sex, as well as the expletive Faithfull utters, won the film the consternation of The Catholic Legion of Decency. Another more encoded scene shows Lute in an apartment with both a young Indian man and an Asian woman, and all three are in robes, in various stages of undress. J. Arthur Rank, a company that was not signatory to the MPA, distributed the film in America. In Britain, Faithfull's curse was partially obscured by a car horn.

Georgy Girl (1966), however, is the story of an ordinary young woman who is neither a dolly bird, nor resembles a pop star. Lynn Redgrave stars in this film about an average girl set against the moral backdrop of swinging London. Georgy is the daughter of domestic servants who work for the very rich James Leamington. Leamington has always treated Georgy as a daughter, but now he desires her sexually. Georgy is a liminal figure. She moves between the lower and upper class (Leamington has paid for her education in a Swiss boarding school), old fashion ethics and the seduction of swinging London morality, and the world of children who she teaches and the world of adults who bewilder her. Georgy shares a flat with the very beautiful and very Mod Meredith, played by Charlotte Rampling. Meredith is a concert violinist who spends her waking hours at parties and moves from man to man, except for a Cockney lover named Jos. Meredith, decked out in Mary Quant fashion, is Georgy's antithesis. Her personality, however, is portrayed as cold, selfish, and amoral.

Georgy Girl is filmed in black and white, wedding the British social realism film to the look of Mod. The opening shot which shows Georgy roaming the city is echoed by frequent night shots of Georgy running through London with Jos, and their final scene together on a tour boat has as much in common with Dick Lester's *A Hard Day's Night* (1964) as it does British New Wave. Class is an undercurrent of the film, as portrayed by Georgy's parents and Jos. Georgy sees beyond the need for such distinctions; she is a unique individual who defies categorization. Another social issue, abortion, runs throughout the film as well. When Meredith finds herself pregnant, she decides to marry Jos since she has already had several abortions. When Jos questions her, she states, "I could easily get rid of it.... Why not? I have no tender feelings about it." Jos answers

that she should not have told him about the baby if that was her intent, to which Meredith replies, “Don’t be so stupid, I’ve destroyed two of yours already.” Jos protests that he should have been told, and Meredith collapses into hysterical laughter. Jos slaps her and she slaps him back equally hard, which leads to more laughter. Meredith is clearly in control of her mind and body, while Georgy has control over neither.

Although Meredith becomes the villain of the story, giving the baby up to Georgy and Jos and immediately going back to her life as a party girl, in the end Jos does not have the maturity to raise the baby either. As the pregnant Meredith becomes angrier at her condition, Georgy and Jos become lovers. *Georgy Girl* was considered a controversial movie because of its topic of abortion and depiction of a relationship which portrays two women sexually involved with one man, who also lives with them. In the end, Georgy decides to marry Leamington to be able to keep the baby. The final scene involves the two leaving the church for their honeymoon. When Georgy decides to take the baby with them, Leamington is obviously disappointed.

Ultimately, only Georgy and Meredith, the two female leads, get what they want. Georgy wants the baby, and Meredith wants her freedom. Georgy refuses to change; she has no desire to be a dolly bird. And in the end it is she who chooses to leave the handsome Jos because of his frivolous attitude. *Georgy Girl* is not a morality tale: Leamington is as foolish as Jos, and Georgy’s parents, the domestics, are trapped in a class system with which they are comfortable. *Georgy Girl* is a text about responsibility, not ethics. In the world of *Georgy Girl*, as with many other films of the 1960s, marriage is not a happy ending. The film ends with a solemn warning about the complexity of relationships.

Shortly thereafter, Lynn Redgrave made the comedic *Smashing Time* (1967), a film with much less dignity. Starring along with Rita Tushingham, the two actresses play a couple of innocent nitwits, Yvonne and Brenda, who come down from the North to be “discovered” on Carnaby Street. Both comedy and camp, the film features slapstick scenes of food fights, over the top parties and art openings, and generalized daft behavior. The film is a satirical take on swinging London, which parodies aspects of its art, clothing, and pop music, as well as the concept of fame. The tagline for the film was, “Two Girls Go Stark Mod.”

When Brenda and Yvonne arrive in London their money is stolen, they wind up living with a “hostess,” and when Yvonne finally finds Carnaby Street she is photographed by photographer Tom Wabe, played by Michael York, as the epitome of “last season’s girl.” Their luck only changes when Yvonne and Brenda are the victims of a television show, *You Can’t Help Laughing*, which tears down their flat for an on-camera reaction and gives them 10,000 pounds as compensation. Yvonne immediately takes her funds to a record producer, who promises to make her a pop star for the money, and oddly enough the no-talent Yvonne becomes Britain’s new sensation, with her hit pop song that contains the line, “I can’t sing, but I’m young.” Brenda falls for Wabe, who makes her a top British model. In the end, the two see how false the notion of swinging London has become and head back to the North Country.

The film is replete with smart one-liners, that satirize Sixties advertising campaigns such as, “Oh well, I’ll just have to tell them I hadn’t the facilities available for the ‘new switched-on, casual look,’” or “Tom Wabe who invented the dollies, finds the ‘Out Girl’ on the ‘In Street.’” In a parody of Mod fashion, Brenda becomes the victim of

two old women in a charity shop, who dress her in clothes they can't sell, and she becomes a trendsetter. When Brenda goes to the "Bond Street switched-on Jabberwock Gallery" to confront Wabe, she enters a send-up of John Dunbar's famous Indica Gallery, complete with a ranting artist who parodies "Magic Alex," a young Greek immigrant who conned John Lennon into giving him the job of designing the electronics for the Apple recording studio. In *Smashing Time*, the gallery patrons are attacked by skeletal robots that spray them with paint, creating human sculpture.

Brenda's boss, Charlotte, at the Too Much Boutique chides her because Brenda has made the clientele buy the clothes. Charlotte tells Brenda she will have to buy everything back because her wares are too fabulous to ever collect again. *Smashing Time* is a parody of not only Mod London, but also of the dolly birds and swinging single attitudes of the time. It spoofs consumer culture, fashion trends, and the trendsetters. This postmodern send up of swinging London also includes characters that portray well-known celebrities. Tom Wabe is not only a parody of the film *Blow-Up*'s (1966) photographer, Thomas, but also the actual model for Thomas, David Bailey. Unfortunately, not only was *Smashing Time* a parody of swinging London; by its release swinging London had become a parody of itself. Lynn Redgrave said of the film, "We thought as we were making it, this will be just right. But the minute it came out people said, 'It's over. Swinging London is over'" (Levy 300).

Another "swinging singles" film that year was *Valley of the Dolls* (1967). Adapted from Jacqueline Susann's best-selling novel, this narrative was transformed from pulp fiction to Hollywood text, where it was quickly appropriated into the world of cult and camp. The film tells the story of three young women who enter and are

destroyed by the world of Hollywood, with the help of stardom, drugs (dolls), and liberalized sexuality. *Valley of the Dolls* was so stylized, overly dramatic, and exaggerated that it became part of the pantheon of cult movies which can be said to elicit the “queer gaze.” Moya Luckett observes, “Cult film’s femininity remains unexplored, figured in largely masculine terms as burlesques of female desire and/or (gutter) divas designed for the queer gaze” (142). Luckett cites *Valley of the Dolls* as one of a group of dramas made by males for the purpose of entertaining women, but that exhibit femininity in a manner that attracts the attention of gay men. She classifies *Valley of the Dolls*, along with the films of John Waters, as constituents of this genre.

In her essay, “The Masculinity of Cult,” Joanne Hollows also sees cult films as encompassing several diverse genres. “Thus, despite the frequent appearance of horror, science fiction and softcore porn within the cult pantheon (arguably ‘men’s genres’), other more feminized films such as *Valley of the Dolls* can be redeemed by processes of reclassification” (Hollows 38). Since women are now exploring and reclaiming territories once thought to be the province of the “male gaze,” it becomes apparent that the function of cult and camp films as cultural texts were misinterpreted or overlooked entirely by early feminist critics such as Rosen and Haskell.

And in both writers’ lists of filmic affronts to the female species, many Sixties films were either misconstrued or ignored: The empowering of Hellen Keller by Annie Sullivant, played by Patti Duke and Anne Bancroft in *The Miracle Worker* (1962), is completely disregarded. Suzy Hendrix, the blind woman depicted by Audrey Hepburn, who triumphs over a couple of Mafia drug dealers in *Wait Until Dark* (1967) is not engaged. The portrayal of a young Southern tomboy, Mary Badham as Scout Finch,

who fights against the tyranny of racial injustice in *To Kill A Mockingbird* (1962), is never mentioned. The radical politics and agency of Vanessa Redgrave as Isadora Duncan in *Isadora* (1968) is not considered. Sandy Dennis as novice teacher, Sylvia Barrett, in an inner city high school in *Up the Down Staircase* (1967) is also overlooked. The complexity of texts which portray lesbians such as *The Children's Hour* (1961), *The Fox* (1967), and *The Killing of Sister George* (1968) are either misread or quickly circumvented. Surely these representations are not the sole property of the male gaze? Rather, they connote otherness, not absence. And in the world of 1960s film, otherness leads directly to rebellion and change.

In 1940s films, Rosen and Haskell both write about a generation of female empowerment whose fire was quickly quenched when the men came back for their careers. The women who supported these films, however, would raise the female audience of the 1960s. And this audience would not be deterred; the women who sought agency in the 1960s affected the content of cinema by their power as a collective audience. The hegemony of the patriarchal Hollywood narrative could not control them. Not only did the producers of Hollywood provide a backlash against the Hays Code, the clout of moviegoers authorized them.

More recently, feminist critics have learned to examine film in diverse ways. In an article in *Signs* (published in 2004) entitled, "The State of Film and Media Feminism," Annette Kuhn discussed the relevance of gaze theory in modern feminist film studies. She stated, "The task of theory is to illuminate its objects, and vice versa. Film theory should help us make sense of film, and films ought to be the grounding and the inspiration for film theory...We need to take the objects, not the theory, as the starting

point for our thinking and allow ourselves to learn from them in all their specificity” (Kuhn 1222). It would seem that early feminist critics such as Rosen and Haskell often adhered to particular theses and theories without deep textual analysis of films from across multiple genres. On closer inspection, 1960s films often reveal hidden elements, encoded content, and subversive undercurrents. Early work on the relationship between the spectacle of film and the complicated nature of spectatorship was often overly simplistic and rhetorical. Now, through different means of reading film texts such as structuralism, postmodernism, women’s studies and culture studies, feminists have developed new ways of “seeing.” In the same issue of *Signs*, Kathleen McHugh commented:

Once dominated by Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis and focused on “the gaze,” “sexual difference,” “desire,” and “lack,” feminist film theory and media work have become an increasingly heterogeneous and dynamic set of concepts and practices. Scholars and artists have not only broadened their scope and objects of study...now a global perspective comparatively aligns disparate feminisms, nationalisms, and media in various locations and across class, racial, and ethnic groups throughout the world. (1205)

Therefore, it is necessary to take a fresh look at 1960s film texts in order to portray women’s roles in cinema as a relevant context to the moral, cultural, and political history of this decade. The Sixties is an era when those who were previously construed as “other” began to take center stage. Filmic portrayals of women, minorities, homosexuals, and counterculture heroes arose from this decade, censorship was

challenged, and from this point on the other would begin to inhabit the mainstream of both American and British cinema.

CHAPTER III

THE MONSTROUS FEMININE: HAGS, PREDATORS, HORROR, AND
WOMEN OF A CERTAIN AGE

When monster meets monster, one monster must give way. And it will never be me. -Alexandra Del Lago, *Sweet Bird of Youth*

But when I'm very bad and answer back and sass, then I'm Momma's little devil and Poppa says I've got the brass. -Baby Jane Hudson, *What Ever Happened to Baby Jane?*

In her work on the modern horror genre, "Horror And The Monstrous-Feminine: An Imaginary Abjection," Barbara Creed invokes the French theorist, Julia Kristeva. Basing her work on Kristeva's "Powers Of Horror: An Essay on Abjection," Creed uses the theorist's work on themes of taboo, horror, and abjection in the novel, primarily the work of Louis-Ferdinand Celine, and applies them to the texts of modern horror films. Using both theorists' ideology, along with Mikhail Bakhtin's work on carnival and the grotesque, I will examine specific women's roles from 1960s film to delineate characters who exhibit the monstrous feminine, ranging from serious drama to camp. Furthermore, I will inspect characters that feature hags, predators and women of a "certain age," in order to highlight films with female characters who undermine Laura Mulvey's theory of woman as "bearer, not maker, of meaning," and her concept of "to-be-looked-at-ness." I will show that films of the 1960s do not always exhibit the female form to be "looked-

at,” but rather to create spectacles of abjection, as these characters often transgress boundaries, break taboos, and flaunt conventional morality.

I will also investigate ways in which these particular roles transgress the patriarchy to provoke and break down standard cinematic codes. Women’s roles, which helped to degrade and destroy Hays Code and BBFC standards, will be noted. Films that break taboos, go beyond the dictates of censorship rules, or portray their characters in a ghastly or grotesque manner will be examined. I will identify reasons why these female characters, often the villains of the tale, retain the central focus of the diegesis to become the film’s most memorable character. Additionally, due to the grotesque or abject nature of their status, these characters are able to force the boundaries of society in order to corrupt particular cherished notions of the patriarchy regarding women and their position in the social order.

In his essay, “The Uncanny,” Sigmund Freud defines this concept as a sensation “undoubtedly related to what is frightening – to what arouses dread and horror; equally certainly, too, the word is not always used in a clearly definable sense, so that it tends to coincide with what excites fear in general” (Freud 193). Although the “abject” is related to the concept of the uncanny, Julia Kristeva defines the abject as the “not I.” Individuals perceive abjection as something which threatens one’s sense of order and possibly his or her very existence. The uncanny worries and degrades, but it is more than that— the abject is more violent, Kristeva states. It is the place where boundaries and pre-conceived meanings are contested:

... what is abject, on the contrary, the jettisoned object, is radically excluded and draws me toward the place where meaning collapses ... It

lies outside, beyond the set, and does not seem to agree to the latter's rules of the game. And yet from its place of banishment, the abject does not cease challenging its master. (2)

Indeed, there are reasons why particular situations and objects are abject, and both Kristeva and Creed delineate them. They range from religious taboos, which dictate the handling of bodily fluids or the corpse, to the incorporation of "maternal rules" which deal with socialization of the child and the mapping of his or her physical boundaries, to the "paternal rules" which assist with the formation of the ego and the individual's placement in society. All of these mandates, however, uphold and protect the social order.

Kristeva continues: "On the edge of non-existence and hallucination, of a reality that, if I acknowledge it, annihilates me. There, abject and abjection are my safe-guards. The primers of my culture" (2). Religious and social rituals protect the individual from that which threatens physical survival; these rules also bestow the boundaries for what is taboo, insuring the continued existence of humanity, including prohibitions against incest, murder and adultery. Instructions for what is clean or unclean are as ancient as the Book of Leviticus in the Old Testament, the original texts of Shinto, or the Egyptian Book of the Dead. Prescriptions for cleanliness and purification have been noted on the doorjambs of tombs in the pyramids of the Old and Middle Kingdoms. These rituals provide protection against disease and putrefaction.

What Kristeva and Creed concentrate upon, primarily, are taboos which apply to the feminine. By applying Kristeva's model to the horror film, Creed introduces the concept of the "archaic mother" and the "monstrous feminine." Both of these principles

relate to the power of the female to copulate, give birth, and regenerate the race. And since both of these ideas relate to the power of the female to seduce and renew, they are a threat to the patriarchy. In most of the films I will address, it is the presence of the monstrous feminine which empowers the female characters.

As Kristeva addresses the boundaries of human existence and the formation of mother-child relationships, Creed posits that it is possible to gage how “abjection, as a source of horror, works within patriarchal societies, as a means of separating the human from the non-human and the fully constituted subject from the partially formed subject” (Creed 252). In other words, abjection segregates the clean from the unclean, the normative from the abnormal and the permissible from the taboo. These regulations are ingrained within the very fabric of society. As Creed observes:

Definitions of the monstrous as constructed in the modern horror text are grounded in ancient religious and historical notions of abjection—particularly in relation to the following religious “abominations”: sexual immorality and perversion; corporeal alteration, decay and death; human sacrifice; murder; the corpse; bodily wastes; the feminine body and incest.
(252)

Therefore, central to the concept of the monstrous feminine, is the notion of the border: a boundary that is taboo, that threatens and destroys order, of both the physical and the moral universe. It is in the space between, the liminal, where stability dissolves and chaos presides. This is where the monster resides: at the margin of life and death, the natural and the supernatural, normal sexual desires and abnormal appetites, and finally “at the border which separates those who take up their proper

gender roles from those who do not” (253). This idea is central to my argument that women in the films of the 1960s do not always take up their proper gender roles, but unlike their sisters in the previous three decades of classical Hollywood narrative, they do not always perish, languish or concede defeat. Their power is the chthonic female, the primordial, mysterious presence of the Dark Mother. Kathryn Madden defines her: “As an archetype, the Dark Mother represents life, death, earth, and sexuality, and deep transformational energy” (203). In many Sixties films these female characters survive the narrative unscathed, and in some cases, they even prosper.

Take, for example, the Princess Kosmonopolis, Alexandra Del Largo. The princess originated in Tennessee Williams’s 1959 play *Sweet Bird of Youth*, which was adapted and directed by Richard Brooks in 1962, with Geraldine Page reprising her role from the original play. The story is the tale of two characters from the margins of society, caught up in a brief, symbiotic relationship of narcissism and need. Yet as the title reveals, the deep undercurrent that drives this narrative is a powerful horror of the effects of aging and lost youth.

The princess, an actress who believes her career is over due to her age, is brought in a semi-comatose state to a grand hotel in St. Cloud, Florida, by Chance Wayne, a fading playboy who left the town some years earlier to “make it big.” A career in film is Chance’s idea of success and he believes he has found his big break in the form of the princess and her connections in Hollywood. Chance left St. Cloud when the father of his lover, Heavenly Finley, informed him that he wasn’t good enough for her. In a flashback, the audience sees Boss Finley dismiss Chance with a hundred dollars and a ticket to New York City. It is unclear whether Chance has returned to insure that Heavenly is still

waiting for him, or to show off the princess, all the while attempting to blackmail her into offering him a film contract.

What ensues is one of Williams's dysfunctional Southern family dramas, with a dominating male patriarch and an effeminate or ineffectual hero. In *Hollywood's Tennessee*, R. Barton Palmer and Robert Bray examine *Sweet Bird of Youth's* failure to meet the "popular and critical success" of *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (1958), also directed by Brooks. They analyze the consequences of the film's "double, contradictory wish," Chance's desire to achieve success *and* to settle down with Heavenly. Palmer and Bray point out the problematic presence of Chance as a kept man. He is a commoditized object, whose youth and good looks are his trade:

As sexuality became increasingly conceived, in the age of Kinsey, as a natural urge to which both genders powerfully responded, the over sexualized man could be easily turned into an object of desire for women. Now valued for his physical charms alone, he could even demand money or favors for sexual services. Initially presented as a kind of playboy, Chance is quickly revealed as a hustler, a man eager to partake of the goods a powerful, successful woman has at her command. His hypermasculinity is unmasked to reveal his feminization. (183)

For Chance is a gigolo whose youth is fleeting, and his urgency regarding this situation is palpable. The princess holds the trump card that Chance needs, and he will win it any way possible. She has wealth, fame and notoriety and Chance desires all three. He is, however, no match for Del Lago, who wakes up in the hotel, wonders where she is, who Chance is, and most importantly where her drugs are. Chance, with an unsigned contract

and a tape recorder, plans to use blackmail to insure her support. Unfortunately for Chance, he is no match for Del Lago, who is his equal and perhaps superior, when it comes to getting what she wants.

Thus, the second difficulty for the commercial success of *Sweet Bird of Youth* is the empowered, worldly woman: a woman with appetites which match any man's, a transgressive female presence, amoral and predatory, the monstrous feminine. Unlike the film *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, this text does not reconcile all the problems it presents. There is no resolution, because Del Lago leaves St. Cloud when she discovers her last film, one she believed to be a failure, has rejuvenated her career. While she has been in Chance's company, blinded by drugs and alcohol, her star has re-ascended in Hollywood. Palmer and Barton write:

Sweet Bird's endorsement of conservative values is in every way more problematic because of the more forceful and compelling presence within it of the woman Chance does not choose (for she is something like his female double, destined to remain forever outside the orbit of family). Unlike any character in *Cat*, the princess embodies the persistence of the urge toward self-fashioning; the film can devise no scenario of domestication to contain her energies and desires. (185)

Even the film's opening scene gives the viewer clues to the nature of Chance and the princess's relationship. A handsome young man drives a Cadillac convertible with a middle-aged woman in the back seat. As she polishes off an entire bottle of vodka in the opening credits, the car crosses over to an island by ferry (which symbolizes the crossing over of boundaries and borders), and the characters also pass the Florida state line. The

figure of Del Lago is problematic because she and Chance display similar desires. And while both are acutely aware of the effects aging will have on their future, Del Lago has known success. For Chance this is a concept, a mirage, something on the horizon which forever disappears. While Chance is carrying the sleeping princess into the hotel, the song “Somewhere Over the Rainbow” is playing in the bar and helps to create the ambiance. Chance desires is a fairy tale, a fiction, for he wants the “princess” to make him a movie star.

When Del Lago awakes in the suite that Chance has procured, like a sleeping beauty or, perhaps more accurately, a slumbering fiend, the audience is introduced to the monstrous feminine. She is demanding, licentious, and aggressive, but she is also seductive, honest, and has a sense of humor. “I like you. You are a nice monster,” Chance Wayne tells her. To which Alexandra Del Lago replies, “Well I was born a monster. And you?” The most entertaining scenes of *Sweet Bird* are the banter and negotiation which occur between Chance and Del Lago. But, Chance turns to Heavenly and abandons the princess in the hotel parking lot during a moment of panic, and this is an act she cannot forgive.

In the end, Del Lago realizes what she and Chance are up against in the town and decides to flee. The outsider, Del Lago, realizes how dangerous Boss Finley and his mob truly are. When Chance’s call to a major Hollywood journalist comes through, Del Lago discovers that while she was drowning her sorrows with hashish, booze, “goof balls,” and sex, her latest film has become a success. Del Lago replaces her “driver,” Chance, with Boss Finley’s mistress, Miss Lucy, and the two women flee the island. In Williams’s stage version, the play ends with Chance being castrated off-stage by Tom Finley, Jr., and

his gang. The castration is seen as revenge for his sister, Heavenly, who has been forced into an abortion by her sanctimonious father. Since Heavenly's purity has been "ruined" by Chance, he must be destroyed. In the Hollywood version, Chance is severely beaten by Tom Jr., and his broken facial structure becomes the punishment for a situation his good looks instigated. Heavenly leaves with Chance, and her saintly Aunt Nonnie walks away from the house, telling Boss Finley to go to hell. The two women and Chance are finally freed from the patriarchy.

In reality, *Sweet Bird* is a love triangle, with its female counterparts each other's antithesis. Heavenly is long-suffering, patient, and wants nothing more than Chance's love. She is the essence of southern womanhood, although defiled. Both feminine and attractive, Del Lago is more masculine than most of the males in St. Cloud. And in both versions, Del Lago escapes unharmed and is, in essence, rewarded with continued fame. The male lead is punished for his vices, while the female lead is rewarded for the same traits. They are equals and equally transgressive. Early on, Del Lago tells Chance, "Boy, I have no doubt that there is no vice, either old or new, I could introduce to you." Del Lago is a drug addict, a sexual predator, and a narcissist, but she remains true to herself. She is, even in oblivion, a diva.

At the end of the film, armed with her "comeback," Alexandra Del Lago outlines the difference between her situation and Chance Wayne's: "I climbed up alone. And I will climb back alone. Back to where I belong. I will live alone and I will work alone. But you have gone past something you couldn't afford to go past... your time. Your youth, you're past it. It's all you had." Not only does Del Lago define Chance as a failure, but also she moves beyond this insult to characterize what he means to her: "Oh I

remember faces like yours. I remember young men with dreams like yours. I remember their eyes. I remember their voices. I remember their smiles. I remember their bodies, but their names... Their names are gone, they're just nameless bodies." In this passage, Williams dares to define a man in the same way that men of the era defined women. This is the playboy mentality of the day, but in *Sweet Bird*, it is ascribed to a woman, an older woman, and one who is rewarded for her attitude instead of punished.

Unlike Gloria Wondrous, Elizabeth Taylor's loose woman star of *Butterfield 8* (1960), who dies on the highway with her married lover in pursuit, *Sweet Bird*, released only two years later, constitutes a different version of femininity. Even Margot Channing, the diva of *All About Eve* (1950) decides that "More than anything I want Bill." The savvy wit of Rosalind Russell as Hildy Johnson is no match for Cary Grant's persuasive powers in *His Girl Friday* (1940), and even Katherine Hepburn as Tracy Lord in *The Philadelphia Story* (1940) cannot avoid the lure of her ex-husband, also played by Grant. The witty, independent female characters of classical Hollywood are "tamed" by the male of the species. Those who transgress the boundaries of morality must die. But not Ms. Del Lago. The Princess Kosmonopolis was a new species, and soon she would have peers which will be further delineated in this chapter.

In Britain, it would take a few more years to create this kind of bold, new female. In 1962, English film was still under the influence of the Free Cinema Movement, which incorporated the genre of social realism or Kitchen Sink Realism, a medium primarily concerned with the portrayal of the harsh realities of working class life. As a stark, black-and-white portrayal of the hardships of the post-war working class, as well as a reflection of angry youth, the female characters of this genre, with few exceptions, were

given little attention. The phrase often applied to these films—“angry young men”—gives evidence of the fact that males dominated the action. With the exception of Tony Richardson’s drama, *A Taste of Honey* (1961), based on the play by Shelagh Delaney, most of the narrative tension is occupied by the anger and sense of moral injustice of the period’s young men.

As a whole, the films of the social realist movement were based on novels of the mid-to-late 1950s, which also reflected elements of the cold war period, including a bleak post war economy and the rise of youth culture. Thus the concerns of the young, the ideas of work versus pleasure, and the feeling that film and literary narratives were as outdated and conservative as the ousted Conservative Party, affected much of British New Wave film of this period. In *Sex, Class and Realism*, John Hill writes:

Thus, while it may be argued that “the image of active sexuality” in the British “new wave” provided a “a resistance to refinement and repression”, it should also be noted that such an image is primarily masculine. Just as many of the original novels... were written in a male first person narration, most of the subsequent films assume a ‘male norm’, in their narrative organization, employment of subjective techniques and patterns of identification. (163)

An Arrangement of Light and Color

Room at the Top, written by John Braine in 1957 and adapted in 1959, resonates with a fifties attitude toward women that would begin to disappear in Britain in the early-

to-mid-1960s. The film portrays a “woman of a certain age,” Alice Aisgill, played by Simone Signoret, who is involved in an extramarital affair with a younger, success-driven male, Joe Lampton. Lampton, meanwhile, has designs on the daughter of the town’s wealthiest entrepreneur. *Room At the Top* offers a much different outcome for its female lead than *Sweet Bird of Youth*. Yet, there is a message in this film appropriate to the transgressive female figure represented by Aisgill. For even though she is older and Joe Lampton seems to have every woman in Warnley at his disposal, it is Aisgill who beguiles him. Aisgill’s figure of the “other”—the other woman, the other choice, the woman who cares nothing for money or status—begins to erode Lampton’s desire to make it to “the top.”

The opening credits of *Room at the Top* begin with typical British social realism shots: grainy, black-and-white views of the industrial Midlands from a train window. In the movie’s first scene, as Lampton arrives at his new office, he is looked up and down and appraised by every female in the front room, some of whom leer or give him a knowing nod of approval, preening seductively. Shortly thereafter, Lampton is informed by his boss that he is about to meet a “better class of people,” perhaps to spotlight the significance of class difference inherent in most social realism films. To examine *Room at the Top* from a different perspective, however, is to glimpse a more honest view of sexuality than most British films of the period. At the very onset, Joe becomes the recipient of the “gaze.” His “to-be-looked-at-ness” is inherent in the film’s diegesis. In Marxist terms, Lampton is, from the very beginning, a sexual commodity who plots to use his good looks and charm to elevate his social status. Lampton is soon torn between

his desire to succeed, as seen by his courtship of the boss's daughter, and his desire for Aisgill, the wife of another wealthy, upper class Englishman.

At its very heart, *Room at the Top* is a movie about class. Susan Brown is the object of Lampton's affection, and her father is the town of Warnley's richest man. To come anywhere near Susan's inner circle, Lampton must endure the most obvious and tiresome of class insults. Poor Susan Brown is caught in the tug of war between her upper class parents and Lampton's ambition. She is a pawn, and one that Lampton becomes bored with as soon as she succumbs sexually. Initially he is attracted by her innocence, but after his sexual escapades with Aisgill, he loses interest. *Room at the Top* is a complex drama in which no character is completely innocent or completely likable. Lampton is by turns charming and genuine, but at other times cruel and reprehensible.

Aisgill's morality is put in question from the beginning of their tryst, and her integrity becomes one of the film's primary devices to explore a "realist" view of sexuality in post war England. In this instance, not only is Aisgill punished for her sexuality with the standard narrative conclusion for women with questionable morals—death—but Lampton is also castigated for his sins, his use of others for selfish gain: He gets exactly what he thought he wanted. Alice Aisgill is the transgressive female of this story; she is older, enjoys her sexuality without a trace of guilt, and displays a more liberal sensibility toward social stratification than the other characters. Apparently, since Aisgill is French, she does not succumb as easily to class hierarchy or the conventional, priggish views of sexuality held by the rest of Warnley.

This is what makes the character of Aisgill the film's most interesting creation. If not for Aisgill, *Room at the Top* would be another dreary, predictable black and white

drama about class and hierarchy in post-war Britain. Aisgill's character pushes the boundaries of this genre. She is the only fully fleshed-out adult female in any of these films. And her character does not represent the entrapment of class, but rather the dangers of class values. The dialogue of a scene where Lampton and Aisgill call off their affair, which is later resumed, contains the film's most important message. For Aisgill is a feminist par excellent. She tells Lampton, "I own my own body and I'm not ashamed of it. And I'm not ashamed of anything I've ever done." The figure of Aisgill pushes a new morality toward the 1960s that would soon become common in British films such as *Darling* (1965), *Georgy Girl* (1966), and *Blow-Up* (1966).

In this scene, Aisgill also challenges Lampton's conservative values toward sex and women, when he becomes a conservative bully after learning that she posed nude in college for an artist. Infuriated, he puts his hands around her throat and growls, "Oh, I understand now what makes men kill women like you." This particular statement is very telling. Aisgill has done something he cannot control, and she has done it with the body which gives him pleasure. The patriarchal desire is invoked. Yet, Lampton has no right, even though he "possesses" her sexually. Even in this circumstance, she is another man's wife. Lampton is angry that she has put her body on display for others to enjoy.

And here, Aisgill commits the worst sin in Lampton's eyes; she connects his prudery to his class with a reproach: "If you'd mix with intelligent people you wouldn't be glaring at me as if I'd committed a crime." For Aisgill, class is not important. She tells Lampton this at their first meeting. It is one of her characteristics that attracts him to her. But once they are sexually engaged, the rules change. Aisgill tells Joe, "Oh you're very brave and very moral all of a sudden ... It is indecent for me to pose for an artist

who sees me as an arrangement of light and color. I suppose you see me as your own dirty post card.”

In *The British Cinema Book*, Geoff Brown states that “Simone Signoret’s casting in a role conceived in John Braine’s novel as a Yorkshirewoman reinforced the old-fashioned notion that loose, dangerous women were usually foreign and generally French” (193). There may be another reason for Signoret’s portrayal of Aisgill, however. She was already known as a star in France and had a reputation for playing prostitutes and other women with questionable morality. But her star power made the film more appealing to the censors, and her European background made her role more acceptable to the British public.

In 1958, John Trevelyan became the director of the BBFC and began the slow, complex process of liberalizing British censorship. Trevelyan negotiated the space between “changing public taste while fighting lengthy battles with writers and directors ... and at the same time deflecting criticism from vocal forces in society bitterly opposed to any relaxation of censorship” (174). In this matter, it is Alice Aisgill’s role as a “depraved female” that brought about an historical milestone in film censorship. Brown continues:

The landmark film in this process was Jack Clayton’s ... *Room at the Top* (1958). Although advertised as a “savage story of lust and ambition”, it was in fact a serious-minded, non-exploitative social realist film.

Trevelyan judged that the public was ready for a film which discussed

issues of sex and class seriously, and the popular reaction persuaded him to grant an “X” certificate to responsible films on serious adult subjects.

(174)

Then, on the heels of *Room at the Top*, came a couple of other well-known British films featuring older women with younger men, important for the fact that both also dealt with the topic of abortion. *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* (1960) is a British New Wave film directed by Karel Reisz and adapted by Alan Sillitoe from his novel. The young Albert Finney, who plays Arthur Seaton, is paired with Rachel Roberts, as Brenda. Both the subject matter and dialogue of the film, states critic Paul Fillingham, “spoke to a generation of post-war people of all classes in a manner never addressed before” (Fillingham, Paul).

Arthur Seaton’s motto, “Don’t let the Bastards grind you down,” in itself, was sufficient to shock most British audiences. Following the establishing shots of the movie, filmed in a Nottingham bicycle factory, Seaton is presented as an angry and rebellious, working class young man. His affair with an older, married woman, which ends with an unwanted pregnancy, is the primary story line.

Seaton eventually breaks off the affair with Brenda, the wife of a superior at the factory, but only after he becomes involved with a young woman from a higher-class background than his own. After Seaton’s aunt tries to initiate a miscarriage with home remedies, Brenda asks Arthur for the money for a back street abortion. Later, Brenda admits that she went for the abortion but didn’t have the nerve to carry it out. After confessing his misdeeds to Doreen, the younger woman, Seaton winds up engaged and on his way to domestication.

Rather than read this narrative as a morality tale, or as a testimony to Seaton's sexual misuse of women, it is necessary to recognize British culture's fascination with the findings of social scientists of the time. Whereas early feminist critics such as Joan Mellen make sweeping statements such as, "The governing ideas of both the so-called socialist and capitalist nations are bourgeois ... and define women in relation to the nuclear family presided over by a strong patriarch" (22), recent feminist film critics have chosen to look more closely at the social context in which a particular film was created. Furthermore, most British social realist films do not celebrate the patriarchy. In fact, most of the films which portray transgressive females also feature young men at odds with the patriarchy. Especially in British New Wave film, the angry young man strongly resents his dominating male predecessors.

In *The British Cinema Book*, published in the late 1990s, Christine Geraghty writes that the phenomenon of the "angry young man" was not so important to the zeitgeist of the 1960s as the decade wore on. Rather, the issue of sexual freedom and premarital sex became more topical, and therefore young women entered those narratives as a central figure (154). *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* reflects its moment in time in a precise, effective manner. Not only does Doreen domesticate her angry young man, she has the upper hand from the beginning. Unlike the married Brenda, who is from another generation, the younger Doreen demands respect.

Saturday Night and Sunday Morning not only reflects the ideology of youth culture, but it also addresses the monstrous feminine since it approaches the subject of abortion in an unprecedented and frank manner. By 1966, another British film, *Alfie*, would address this taboo topic, but with an abortion featured as the climax of the film.

The actual process is not seen, but a most graphic depiction of its logistics surround the act: a kitchen table, a practitioner at the ready, a woman screaming as the first contractions set in, and the protagonist facing the aftermath of the process, the aborted fetus. Only Alfie Elkins's face is shown, but this scene is shocking even by today's standards.

Alfie stars Michael Caine, in the role which made him a star. Shawn Levy, who writes about popular culture and the London scene of the 1960s in his book, *Ready, Steady, Go! The Smashing Rise and Giddy Fall of Swinging London*, describes the central character:

Alfie Elkins was a wisecracking Cockney lothario brimming with misogyny and macho confidence and, for all that, crippled by a pathetically underdeveloped sense of himself and the world; among his trespasses are stealing girls from other blokes, causing a mate's wife to have an abortion and generally treating women as sex toys to be collected, conquered and discarded. (138)

For all this, however, the film is a darkly comedic, and its main character, one of the most chauvinistic males to occupy a cinematic screen, gets his comeuppance. A number of factors made the film successful: Caine's charm, his sense of irony and his character's willingness to be genuinely mean *and* genuinely sorry for his actions. The camera lingers on the character's faces to convey their confusion and pain as they try to interpret a new morality which leaves victims in its wake. The film is based on a radio play begun in 1962, but the original text is set in the 1950s and mirrors a type of morality that was essentially outdated by 1966.

Of interest here are two facets of *Alfie* which convey the monstrous feminine, and which therefore bear examination. One is the incident involving the abortion of a friend's wife, Lily, whom Alfie has seduced on a lark after giving the woman a ride home from the sanitarium where her husband is recovering. In a later scene, the audience sees Lily's feet hesitantly mounting a staircase; when she enters Alfie's flat it becomes clear they are awaiting an abortionist. The abortionist, upon his arrival, cautions the couple about the severity of their actions, reminds them that abortion carries a seven-year jail sentence, and proceeds with Lily to the kitchen. This, the film conveys to its audience, is the payment for a moment's pleasure. During the procedure, Alfie waits in another room and turns to the audience, breaking the fourth wall as he does throughout the film, to state, "My understanding of women only goes as far as the pleasure. When it comes to the pain, I'm like every other bloke. I don't want to know." The ensuing scene begins with Lily screaming in pain after the abortionist has left and her contractions begin. She tells Alfie to leave her. On his return, he enters the kitchen to confront the remains of the child Lily has aborted.

What is unique about *Alfie* is that not only does its protagonist speak the unspoken misogyny of his class and culture, Alfie, in the kitchen, must confront the monstrous feminine, when he views the body of his aborted child. And it is there, that he will finally realize the aspect of women he has no control over: their bodies and their ability to create or destroy life. Afterwards, Alfie tells his friend Nat:

I coulda dropped on the spot with the shock. All I expected to see was ...

Well, come to think of it I don't rightly know what I expected to see. And certainly not this perfectly formed being. I half expected it to cry out ...

He'd been quite perfect. And I thought to myself, you know Alfie, you know what you've done. You murdered him.

Alfie experiences his second shock in the next scene when he arrives at Ruby's high-rise apartment. Ruby is his older, wealthy American lover, another "bird" on his weekly schedule. As Alfie waits for the elevator, however, he tells the audience, "I'm definitely going to settle down with this Ruby. I'm tired of being on the move. You know, I find that I'm not stalking these young birds anymore." But when Alfie arrives at Ruby's apartment he finds that she's not alone. In amazement, he asks what her other lover has that he doesn't. "He's younger than you are," Ruby replies. "You got it?" In this case, his overly sexed, older lover turns out to be his equal. She is the "double" of Alfie's predatory nature. Ruby does not follow the prescribed "moral codes" assigned to her sex or age, and, therefore, she is the monstrous feminine. Ruby winds up in control of Alfie, leaving him at the film's conclusion on the Embankment, wondering "what's it all about?"

Alfie bypassed the BBFC censors with an X rating, and was also released in America that year. Anthony Aldgate states that the film with its emphasis on the horror of back street abortion represented a changing public opinion regarding this issue, and that 1967 saw a liberalization in British laws regarding sexual mores: "the Abortion Act, the National Health Service (Family Planning Act), and the Sexual Offenses Act" were legislated that year (90).

Meanwhile in America, right behind Alexandra Del Lago, two other transgressive female characters entered the American film canon, where even today they remain infamous. One has no last name, and one has no first name, but they are still well known:

Elizabeth Taylor's Martha from *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf* (1966) and Anne Bancroft's Mrs. Robinson in *The Graduate* (1967), both directed by Mike Nichols. These two "women of a certain age" would additionally prove to be lethal to the Hays Code. And their portrayal of the monstrous feminine also contains the mark of the predator.

"Baby, I'm Mother Courage"

Edward Albee's play, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf* previewed on Broadway in October of 1962, just four months prior to the publication of Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique*. By the time the film version was released in 1966, Betty Friedan was already part of the cultural zeitgeist of the 1960s. Both female characters in the play, Martha and the younger professor's wife, Honey, are housewives. But obviously after a long marriage to George, a history professor, Martha is not a woman victimized by "the problem that has no name." Martha is angry, aggressive, and gleefully enumerates the woes associated with a long, difficult relationship. The younger Honey, a twenty-six year old, is part of the generation Friedan describes. She is a "happy housewife" who lives for her husband and has no goals other than to support her spouse's career and make a comfortable home for him. Honey also has a drinking problem. Her frustrations are sublimated, but they fully emerge during the course of a long evening, during which Martha and George tease out the couples' dirty little secrets and use them in a game of "Get the Guests."

Martha is anything but a happy housewife. She and George taunt and torment each other whenever they are drunk, tattling and telling their unwitting guests the darkest moments of their combined histories. Moreover, and most importantly, Albee has not feminized Martha; she is the more masculine of the couple. She curses, drinks her liquor straight and becomes a sexual aggressor as the night wears on. In fact, Martha is the most aggressive character of the narrative, which also involves two competitive men she manages to best. Her husband George, she defeats with wit and wrath, while the young professor, Nick, she defeats with a seduction that renders him impotent even though he is the epitome of the virile young man: athletic, handsome, successful and self-assured.

In *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf*, Albee has created a female predator who defies both gender roles and stereotypes. In "Competitive Masculinity in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf*?" Clare Eby discusses Martha in terms of current gender theory:

But while Martha parades her heterosexuality, Albee's characterization of her demonstrates that he conceives of gender as less about biology than about assuming certain qualities ... Martha demonstrates many masculine qualities, and her masculinity feeds off of George's emasculation. As she will later explain, "I wear the pants in the house because somebody's got to." She humiliates George by telling Nick about the time she donned boxing gloves and knocked her husband out cold. (604)

Not only is Martha a transgressive figure who defies the gender stereotypes of the day, she is also a character who represents objectives of the feminist movement. She sees herself as an equal to her husband, or perhaps, his superior. Martha contends that any success George has had in his career is the direct result of her help. And in the course of the

evening, Martha, a fifty-two year old woman, seduces Nick, a twenty-eight year old man, only to humiliate and reject him as well. She is not only a predator; she is a venomous one. And most importantly, Martha, among other talents, is the Hollywood character most responsible for the destruction of the Hays Code.

In *The Dame In The Kimono: Hollywood, Censorship, & The Production Code From The 1920s to the 1960s*, Leonard Leff and Jerold Simmons state, “Warners had been faithful to an award-winning play that only Geoff Shurlock could desecrate ... with no ratings system in place, Shurlock could only tell Warner that the screenplay remained, ‘unapprovable under Code requirements’” (250). Shurlock, the Director of the PCA after Joseph Breen, was in the process of lobbying for a ratings system. Although the Production Code had become more lenient during the late 1950s, films including *The Pawnbroker* (1966), which contained a brief view of female frontal nudity, and *Virginia Woolf*, which contained profanity, continued to force the rules. Shurlock was lobbying for a classification system which would allow restricted ratings for such films instead of an “unacceptable.” And at this point (October 1965), Mike Nichols, who had finished *Virginia Woolf*, announced to Warner Brothers that he had not shot any back up footage to substitute for the film’s most controversial scenes if it did not pass. In tandem, the play won a Tony Award, a New York Drama Critics Circle award, and Edward Albee was nominated for the Pulitzer Prize.

February 1966 saw a breakthrough for *Virginia Woolf* when the Legion of Decency approved an initial proposal for a ratings system. It would not be until late spring of 1966, however, that a confluence of events allowed *Virginia Woolf* to continue toward release: Jack Valenti, a liberal working in the Lyndon Johnson Administration,

was drafted as head of the Production Code Administration. Warner Brothers voluntarily instituted a “no one under 18 policy” for the film’s distribution, and Jack Warner engineered a meeting with the National Catholic Office, who begrudgingly approved the film uncut, but restricted for viewers under eighteen years of age. Leff and Simmons state that “The vote sent an emphatic message to Hollywood. With classification, motion pictures and free expression could co-exist” (258).

A few other factors also influenced the process. For one, the production cost of the film was 7.5 million and *Virginia Woolf* had the potential to make millions more. Secondly, the film’s two stars, Taylor and Burton, were big box office favorites, and as Leff and Simmons point out, “Money governed most Hollywood decisions, and *Virginia Woolf* could conceivably earn an exemption on dollars alone” (260). In an interview, Geoff Shurlock told *Life Magazine* that he thought *Virginia Woolf* was the major Oscar contender for the year. The Association was suddenly faced with the idea that a film without approval could win an Academy Award.

In the end, *Virginia Woolf* was granted an exemption from The Code and Martin Quigley announced in *Motion Picture Herald* that the “Code is Dead.” Within a month Jack Valenti unveiled a new Production Code, and by fall “Even *Alfie*, a Paramount import with an abortion sequence, won approval from an Association review board” (265). *Alfie*, containing an abortion scene, when the Production Code specifically forbade the topic of abortion, was given a rating of A-IV, “morally unobjectionable for adults — with reservations” (Harris 235), the precursor to the rating system’s “Suggested for Mature Audiences.” With the wheels of change in motion, Mike Nichols would have

no problem introducing his next controversial female to the American public — Mrs. Robinson.

The new Production Code was purposefully vague and stated that “Indecent or undue exposure of the human body shall not be presented” (235), but it also left plenty of room to for the Production Board to decide what constituted “indecent.” Jack Valenti, it seemed, saw the value in films that appealed to young moviegoers as they began to constitute a large audiences in the 1960s. The new Code also signaled to Mike Nichols and his screenwriter, Buck Henry, that a film they conceived of three years earlier, *The Graduate*, could now be made. In, *Pictures At A Revolution*, Mark Harris describes their process:

plans for *The Graduate* included a scene in which Mrs. Robinson, completely nude, would lock Benjamin Braddock in her daughter’s bedroom. “Shock cuts” to Mrs. Robinson’s bare breasts would have been unimaginable three years earlier.... now, for the first time, it might be possible to make the adult sex comedy that Nichols had seen in the material all along. (236)

The Graduate (1967) would be among several movies made that year with youth culture in mind. It seemed that American films could now compete with their European counterparts. As Leff and Simmons remark, “along with *Blow Up*, *Bonnie and Clyde* and *The Graduate* contributed to the first box office boom since 1946” (270). And of the two American films, *The Graduate* showcased a female adulterer who could seduce a man her daughter’s age, and *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967) featured a stylish young woman who was an outlaw, a bank robber and a murderer. Soon, transgression against the classical

Hollywood narrative marked the most popular films of the day, and by the 1967 Academy Awards, Hollywood surrendered to the counter culture narrative.

Mike Nichols was out to make a comedy but he also wanted to target the Establishment, and to Nichols that meant California. Harris quotes Nichols as saying “California is America in italics ... a parody of everything that’s most dangerous to us” (313). Nichols wanted to show the perils of capitalism, materialism and dissatisfaction. And he used as his weapons a spoiled young man and a bored, predatory middle-aged woman who grimly breaks the moral bonds of society, a wholly sardonic character.

Nichols envisioned the world of *The Graduate* as a modern, wealthy playground. Buck Henry, the screenwriter, also had an idea of what the film was to be about: “the disaffection of young people for an environment that they don’t seem in synch with” (313). The universe of *The Graduate* abounds with reflective surfaces, water and glass and mirrors, mediums that may also distort. Nichols had the idea that Benjamin should constantly be isolated by glass or water. “Nichols and Sylbert wanted Benjamin to be shot through or against clear but impenetrable surfaces as often as possible, as if he were trapped in a fishbowl” (314). Thus, the audience sees Benjamin through an aquarium, a swimming pool, and a plate glass window that shelters his cries as if he were in a vacuum.

The art director, Richard Sylbert, also had a very clear notion of how he wanted the movie to look. The Robinson and Braddock homes should seem alike, because their family structures and status were equal. Yet Sylbert wanted very different features for the individual abodes:

The Braddock home was largely in white and full of right angles—an environment for bright, sunny, square people. The Robinsons' house, by contrast, was full of shiny black surfaces and sensual curves, a nighttime lair for predatory animals, with a glassed-in, overgrown garden off the living room. Sylbert decided to literalize the idea of Mrs. Robinson as a wild beast, luring Benjamin toward his moral doom, in the appearance of Bancroft herself, down to the suggestion of a wild stripe in her hair ... her leopard underwear and her zebra-striped things and her jungle plants.

(314)

And it is indeed Mrs. Robinson who dominates the first half of the movie, as she drags Benjamin into her web of drink, sex, and postmodern ennui. It is Mrs. Robinson who defines what Benjamin seems destined to become. She steals Benjamin from the nest of his home and family, robs him of interaction with those of his own generation, and with sex she somehow infects him with a lassitude available only to the bored upper class. Additionally, both characters are “kept” by men, Benjamin by his father and Mrs. Robinson by her husband; these two men are also business partners. Together, the two men unwittingly support Ben and Mrs. Robinson's long summer of distraction.

One of the most interesting aspects of the film is a transitional section which bridges the couple's first sexual encounter in a hotel, to the scene later in the same room, with Ben and Mrs. Robinson attempting to have a conversation, only to wind up verbally berating each other. During this event, Benjamin's transformation is completed, and he winds up echoing Mrs. Robinson's initial line, her desire not to converse during their time together. In the intervening section, Nichols creates a montage of Ben's summer,

set to music instead of dialogue. The action occurs over the course of two songs performed by Simon and Garfunkel, “Sounds of Silence,” and “April Come She Will.” The camera follows Ben Braddock from swimming pool to hotel room, to a darkened TV room with his parents looking on from their bright kitchen, to his bedroom, back to the hotel room, and with a final quick cut, the leap into a glimmering swimming pool becomes an orgasm in the dark hotel room.

The camera tracks Ben from the sunlight of his parent’s home to the site of his surreptitious affair and back again, tracing the path of his post-graduate life: television, sex, beer, leisure, the narcotics of a wealthy boy with time to kill. Ben’s relationship with Mrs. Robinson is shown as passive, and thus feminized, as she passes several times in front of the camera with only her torso in view, to leave him there without a word, stranded in time. The *mise-en-scene* emphasizes black and white, from clothing to furniture to interiors, which blends the locations seamlessly as Benjamin follows the course of his emotional demise, a sordid maturity which both robs him of optimism and paralyzes him in an interim between youth and adulthood.

But why does Mrs. Robinson become the iconic figure who rules the diegesis of Nichol’s film? Why should this transgressive female character become an icon of American film? Is it because audiences found her enticing, comedic, or camp? In a critical review of the film, written for *Film Quarterly* in 1968, Stephen Farber gives superb answers to that question. Farber believes Mrs. Robinson is the most genuine and multifaceted character of the narrative, yet none of the complexities of her affair with Ben are ever addressed. Mrs. Robinson shines, Farber determines, because the character of Ben is dull, inarticulate and morally smug: “An audience eager to believe that all

young people are sensitive and alienated and that all old people are sell-outs or monsters gratefully permit Hoffman's mannerisms and Paul Simon's poetry to convince them of a depth in Ben that the part, as written, does not contain" (38). And of Ben's more active stance, later in the film, Farber posits: "But it's much too glib to turn Ben suddenly into a rebel hero—this same Ben who's spent most of the film staring blankly into his aquarium and lounging by his pool, transformed by a kiss from a sweet little coed into a fighter for his generation" (40).

Farber much prefers Mrs. Robinson to every other character in the film, and for reasons the audience must see as well:

Bancroft, a young man's deliciously provocative sexual fantasy come to life, makes us aware that there *is* something to be said for women over thirty. When she's on, Ben might just as well roll over and play dead.

Bancroft is engagingly wicked as Mrs. Robinson; she is at once supremely confident of her sexual power and mercilessly casual in the face of Ben's adolescent fear of her. Alone with him in her house, she takes calm delight in exposing her legs, while he ejaculates moral misgivings. (38)

Farber sees Ben and Elaine as standards of morality in an era of free love, and finds their wide-eyed innocence off-putting in the face of very real moral complexities of the time. For example, *The Graduate* is ostensibly about a young man attracted to both a mother and daughter. In the film it is suggested that Mrs. Robinson may not think Ben is "good enough" for her daughter when she orders him not to approach Elaine; but her outburst may instead be fueled by jealousy. Obviously, "the urgency of Ben's triangular predicament is lost because we don't know much about what goes on in the bedroom or

even in Ben's fantasies. The incestuous longing that lies beneath the surface of the relationships are too uneasily sketched to carry much force" (40). Nichols had the chance to do groundbreaking work with sexuality in *The Graduate*; however, he retreats into the trope of morality, a plot device from a more reserved era of Hollywood. It is significant to note that the monstrous feminine characters created by Tennessee Williams and Edward Albee, discussed in this chapter, are never portrayed through the lens of conventional morality Nichols uses to dissect Mrs. Robinson. It is possible that Williams and Albee's outsider status as homosexual men gives them a greater sense of sympathy for or identification with their female protagonists, who are also configured as "other."

And the problem with Mrs. Robinson, Farber believes, is the way Nichols chooses to portray her:

Most of the time Nichols insists that Mrs. Robinson is repulsive because she is sexual and Benjamin is lovable because he is not.... Apparently we are to believe ... that he deserves congratulations for his indifference; what seems an astonishing blindness to Mrs. Robinson's very real sexiness is to be taken as a moral victory. (38)

Nichols gives Mrs. Robinson the characteristics usually associated with male aggression; he chooses to have her act like a man. But she is actually a woman with complicated motives.

After Ben's relationship with Elaine blossoms, Nichols chooses to decrease Mrs. Robinson in stature and make her look less attractive. He rapidly turns a femme fatale into a witch figure. Harris writes about how Nichols lit Bancroft independently from Hoffman during the bedroom scenes, since they were actually only five years apart in age

and she had to look twice as old. By the time we see Mrs. Robinson huddled against a white wall after Ben forces his way into Elaine's bedroom to tell her the truth, the camera pans back to make Bancroft look small, wet and powerless. This transition, however, is inconsistent. For only moments earlier, when Ben and Mrs. Robinson sit in his car in the rain and she is drenched and venomous, they now look the exactly the same age; in a headband with very little makeup, she looks youthful. It would have been impossible for Nichols to light them differently in this scene, so he has to trick the viewer moments later to read her as older and shriveled. But she isn't the villain of the film at all. In many ways Mrs. Robinson is the protagonist, as she rescues the viewer from Nichols's sappy vision of puppy love between a blank, pretty co-ed and a confused young man who are both from the privileged class.

Bancroft's Mrs. Robinson is sexy, sophisticated and jaded. And her character has remained an icon of American popular culture. Nichols's main difficulty in filming both the wicked Martha and Mrs. Robinson, however, is that he engaged women in their thirties to play much older characters. Bancroft was thirty-five and Taylor was thirty-four and when they played women in their forties and fifties. But in the spectrum of the monstrous feminine, the actress that the playwright Edward Albee had wanted to play Martha, Bette Davis, *was* willing to act her age and be as monstrous as possible about it. With the release of *What Ever Happened to Baby Jane* in 1962, Bette Davis at fifty-four revived her acting career by playing a hag.

“But When She Was Bad, She Was Horrid”

In the book *Rabelais and His World*, Mikhail Bakhtin discusses the purpose and meaning of carnival in society. Furthermore, within the context of this work he examines the grotesque as it relates to the body, ritual celebration, and art. Bakhtin discusses at length how the world of the Renaissance viewed the human body, especially in the writing of Rabelais and other salient texts. Bakhtin examines these sources to uncover ways in which the body, and in this context the female body, is portrayed. Bakhtin holds that human life was viewed as far more integrated into cycles of death and renewal during this age; the body was perceived as less separate from its environment. The body was also viewed as more permeable and interactive with the natural world. The more defined boundaries between the self, the corporeal form and its environment, as experienced in modernity, began to appear later.

Bakhtin's interpretation of the way women's bodies were viewed and politicized, as well his theories of “the pregnant hag” and the “woman on top” will be utilized to look at the female grotesque and hag figures that began to appear in 1960s film. The work of Bakhtin has also recently been examined by feminist critics such as Mary Russo and Kathleen Rowe. Since Bakhtin writes of a more porous boundary between the body and its physical environment in the Renaissance, it is logical to apply his theory to the work of Kristeva and Creed who explore the transgressions associated with bodily fluids and excretions and of taboos related to the female body.

Bakhtin also discusses the female grotesque within the context of regeneration

and rebirth. During the Renaissance, the connection between the end of life and its beginning was more closely associated:

The grotesque image reflects a phenomenon in transformation, an as yet unfinished metamorphosis, of death and birth, growth and becoming. The relation to time is one determining trait of the grotesque image.... For in this image we find both poles of the transformation, the old and the new, the dying and the procreating, the beginning and the end of the metamorphosis. (24)

In medieval carnivals, the grotesque body symbolized death and rebirth. The grotesque female body represents the gateway in this cycle. Bahktin continues:

woman is essentially related to the material bodily lower stratum; she is the incarnation of this stratum that degrades and regenerates simultaneously. She is ambivalent. She debases, brings down to earth, lends a bodily substance to things, and destroys; but first of all she is the principal that gives birth ... But when this image is treated trivially ... woman's ambivalence acquires an ambiguous nature; it presents a wayward, sensual, concupiscent character of falsehood, materialism and baseness. (240)

Since Bahktin is discussing the world of carnival, he is referring to a comedic tradition as well. He emphasizes the inversions which occur during secular carnivals, as the social world is reversed; the ruling class steps back to let the lower classes rule for a day. Often carnivals featured a Fool or Lord of Misrule who is in charge. This tradition of inversion leads Bahktin to discuss the “woman on top” phenomena; during carnival the roles of

women were also overturned and they were no longer subjugated to men, but were placed in charge. This idea is the basis of Kathleen Rowe's, *The Unruly Woman: Gender and the Genres of Laughter*. Rowe discusses the "woman on top" as an unruly figure who symbolizes the overthrow of the established order.

Rowe sees Bahktin's ideas about the female grotesque as relative to views of women, such as Roseanne Barr, who are comedic and related to excess:

It is this notion of the grotesque body which bears most relevance to the unruly woman, who so often makes a spectacle of herself with her fatness, pregnancy, age or loose behavior. The grotesque body is above all the female body, the maternal body, which through menstruation, pregnancy, childbirth, and lactation, participates uniquely in the carnivalesque drama of "becoming," of inside-out, and outside-in, death-in-life and life-in-death. (34)

When addressing the female grotesque, Bahktin also illustrates the concept of the pregnant hag by mentioning a collection of terracotta figurines found in the Kerch collection. The figures are senile and pregnant, but they are also laughing. He states, "This is a typical and very strongly expressed grotesque. It is ambivalent. It is a pregnant death, a death that gives birth ... They combine a senile, decaying and deformed flesh with the flesh of new life, conceived but as yet unformed" (27). In her work, *The Female Grotesque: Risk, Excess, and Modernity*, Mary Russo addresses this concept from a feminist perspective: "for the feminist reader, this image of the pregnant hag is more than ambivalent. It is loaded with all the connotations of fear and loathing around the biological processes of reproduction and aging" (63).

The film, *What Ever Happened to Baby Jane?* is noteworthy, as Davis in the guise of Baby Jane Hudson is one of the most flagrantly grotesque characters in 1960s film. The character of Baby Jane fits most of the descriptions of the female grotesque discussed by Bahktin, Rowe, and Russo. She is a character who simpers with the excess of a spoiled child in the body of a crone. She is insane, slovenly, cruel and mean. She takes great delight in starving her sister by offering her dead vermin to eat, served on a silver tray. She murders, embezzles, and drinks. And perhaps her worse transgression is that she is hideously unkempt, fat, and sports gruesome make up which emphasizes her age. She wears the clothes of a child and acts the part as well. She is so unstable and ghastly that *Whatever Happened to Baby Jane?* becomes a parody, a farce. Davis's performance leads the film into the world of camp, and fans found it so delightful that *Baby Jane* spun an entire genre of exploitation films starring middle-aged actresses of the time.

Whatever Happened to Baby Jane? is often classified as a Grand Guignol film, after the infamous Parisian theater of Pigalle, which featured plays that shocked, splattered the audience with blood and animal parts, and featured gruesome plots with unexpected twists, usually involving murder or scandal. The tiny theater, open from 1894 until 1962, was named after the traditional French puppet Guignol. The Grand Guignol Theater, however, specialized in meticulously recreated, horrific "splatter" murders, tortures and plots involving street characters such as criminals, prostitutes, and other outsider figures. The Guignol also featured sex farces, comedies, and horror, but was especially famous for its most shocking and grisly fare.

Ironically, the year the Guignol closed its doors, Joan Crawford and Bette Davis's over-the-top performances in *Baby Jane* sparked a trend in shock and horror films which featured the macabre, and were inhabited by American actresses who had passed the "prime" age for classical Hollywood narratives. These films contained an element of camp, featuring transgressive women who murder, shock, refuse to grow up, and most importantly create a spectacle of themselves by flaunting their age in a medium destined to showcase youth and beauty. In other words, there is no aspect of "to-be-looked-at-ness" in these performances. They meet not only Bakhtin's criteria for grotesque female images, but also Rowe's description of the comedic unruly woman or woman on top, as well as Russo's description of figures who represent our fear and loathing of reproduction and aging.

In essence, they are the antithesis of the gaze; they are the monstrous feminine, which Creed links to the myth of the Medusa, a monster who turns men to stone as they gaze at her. Creed points out that "Freud links the sight of the Medusa to the equally horrifying sight of the mother's genitals, for the concept of the monstrous feminine, as constructed within/by the patriarchy and phallogocentric ideology, is related intimately to the problem of sexual difference and castration" (251-252). Therefore, the female grotesque shocks and horrifies on many levels, but again it is the antithesis of what Mulvey theorizes as "the gaze."

This particular Grand Guignol genre of films starring older actresses started with *Baby Jane* in 1962 and continued into the mid-1970s. Davis and Crawford went on to do other films in this exploitation genre, including Davis in *Dead Ringer* (1964) and *Hush*, *Hush Sweet Charlotte* (1964), also starring Olivia De Havilland and considered by the

critic Robert Sklar to be the first American splatter film, since it begins with the dismemberment of a hand, and then a beheading. Davis also stars in the British thriller, *The Nanny* (1965), produced by Hammer Studios. After *Baby Jane*, Crawford appeared in *Strait-Jacket* (1964), *I Saw What You Did* (1965), and a British version of the genre made for Hammer Films and entitled *Berserk!* (1967). Many of these films featured titles that mimicked *Baby Jane*, especially in terms of added punctuation. Tallulah Bankhead made *Die! Die! My Darling* (1965), Geraldine Page and Ruth Gordon did *Whatever Happened to Aunt Alice?* (1969), Debbie Reynolds and Shelley Winters starred in *What's the Matter With Helen?* (1971), and even Elizabeth Taylor succumbed to the genre and starred in *Night Watch* (1973).

What Ever Happened to Baby Jane?, the film that launched the genre of middle-aged actresses in horror movies, is one that abounds with images of the grotesque and the comedic. Bahktin maintains, “the most important of all human features for the grotesque is the mouth. It dominates all else. The grotesque face is actually reduced to the gaping mouth; the other features are only a frame encasing this wide-open bodily abyss” (317). Almost every scene of the film features Baby Jane singing, yawning, drinking, eating, and speaking expressively or disdainfully. The viewer’s first encounter with the film is the sound of a child crying. The screen is still darkened, as a male’s voice chides, over the crying of a child, “Want to see it again little girl? It shouldn’t frighten you.” The screen is then filled with visuals of a little girl crying and a Jack in the Box, a clown-like grotesque, which appears to be shedding real tears. The scolding voice and images of a life-size Baby Jane dolls will continue throughout, to become the main trope of the film.

Baby Jane speaks in a disdainful voice that scolds her sister, the maid, and the neighbor, all female.

The doll enters the diegesis before the actual human figure of Baby Jane, as the viewer sees the doll in the theater lobby prior to her Vaudeville performance. On stage, Baby Jane sings with her father in an exaggerated pantomime of an older, more mature girl. Her father then urges the audience to take home their very own Baby Jane doll. The idea of performance haunts the film, as the viewer will learn that Baby Jane's sister, Blanche, goes on to become a movie star while Jane remains fixed with the emotional maturity and talent of a child. In the very early scenes of the film we learn that Jane is a spoiled brat, cruel to her sister, and that Blanche seems determined on revenge. The next image presents a movie producer and director discussing Jane's lack of talent, followed by a scene with a woman gunning a car toward a figure in its headlights, as the opening credits come up over the figure of a broken Baby Jane doll. The doll signifies not only Jane's repressed maturity, but also her status as "broken."

The trope of the Baby Jane doll in the film is significant. It is an image of consumerism, as both Jane and the doll have been commodified by her father. Jane is such a prize that she is allowed to berate her family: the viewer sees her as a little monster. The doll also symbolizes Jane as a damaged entity; the "real time" narrative begins over its shattered image. The grotesque clown of the Jack in the Box presages the bizarre figure Jane will become, a devouring, childless hag who destroys and murders and eventually unearths the truth. The doll is also seen in one of the most bizarre segments of the film, the scene where Baby Jane reprises her Vaudeville role for the con man she believes to be her accompanist and perhaps love interest, Edwin Flagg.

As the movie opens in present time, we see Blanche in a wheelchair watching one of her old films. Downstairs, Jane is reading papers, now made-up like a hideous clown. She swizzles booze, yawns protractedly to show a gaping maw, and, rising, lurches toward the door. Davis never seems to walk in this film, but progresses in a desultory, wallowing shuffle. Davis, herself, appears to take great delight in the grotesque nature of this figure, as she plays her role beyond the edge of camp and past all boundaries of good taste.

Crawford's character, Blanche, is the heroine of the diegesis: dainty, entrapped, overly kind to her sister, and long suffering. Both roles encompass stereotypes from the era of the silent film: the madwoman and overtly feminine victim. The movie is shot in black and white, and captures the look of silent film; with its dark spaces and exaggerated lighting, *Baby Jane* echoes Film Noir and Expressionism. The caged female as associated with a caged bird is a literary trope appropriated by film, but even this symbol is defaced when, at the beginning of her rampage, Baby Jane serves Blanche the dead bird on a silver tray garnished with sliced tomatoes and parsley. Baby Jane is under the impression, which is correct, that her sister is about to institutionalize her and sell the house to move in with their kind, loyal, and soon to be murdered (by Jane) black maid, who is incidentally named Maidie. In a turn of events contrary to classic literature and film, and certainly contradictory to Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's famous feminist treatise on feminine characterizations in literature, *The Madwoman in the Attic*, Jane Hudson becomes the madwoman in charge.

Baby Jane is trapped between the self she was, as reflected by a perfect porcelain doll with blonde ringlets, and the hag she sees in the mirror. The two selves are the

source of her madness: the perfect, spoiled child on the stage who is a commodity, and the hag in the mirror who subsists from her crippled sister. When Jane drinks, she talks to the doll and the doll sings to her. When the adult Jane dresses in the Baby Jane costume she is a simpering, caricature of femininity; when she is her older self, Jane is in charge and murderous. As Baby Jane performs her act for her new pianist, she shows her legs and moves like the child-puppet of her former self. She lifts her skirts and opens her mouth to sing. Edwin Flagg looks amused, then disgusted, and finally horrified.

The film ends with Blanche half starved to death after Jane kills Maidie, frightens off the kindly neighbor, and continues to serve her food in the form of dead vermin. Jane publishes an advertisement for an accompanist to facilitate her “return to the stage” to reprise her vaudeville persona as Baby Jane. The ad turns up a money-hungry mooch, Flagg, who plays along until, one drunken night of “rehearsing,” he finds the nearly starved Blanche trussed up in the attic and runs screaming from the house to find the police. Jane flees, dragging Blanche with her, to wind up on a beach in plain view with all of Los Angeles searching for them. In a bizarre plot twist, Blanche informs her sister that their situation is her fault; she was paralyzed in the crash while trying to run over Jane. Jane has always thought she was the culprit.

What Ever Happened to Baby Jane? is not a critically acclaimed film, but it contains Davis’s most over-the-top performance, which helped to reinvent a film genre and which turned *Baby Jane* into a cult classic. It sits in a decade that also spawned underground film, exploitation film and camp, and although it resembles these genres, *Baby Jane* was directed by Robert Aldrich and produced and distributed by Warner Brothers, a major Hollywood director and film company. This film predates several of

the most important horror films of the decade, which also deserve note. Therefore, the last category of transgressive women I wish to focus on reflects both Kristeva and Creed's work on abjection in the form of the archaic mother in the 1960s horror film.

Something Wicked This Way Comes

Creed addresses the concept of "the archaic mother" in her essay on abjection and the monstrous feminine. She demonstrates her concept by examining modern cinematic horror texts:

One of the major concerns of the sci-fi horror film ... is the reworking of the primal scene in relation to the representation of other forms of copulation and procreation ... Behind the scene of these lurks the figure of the archaic mother, that is the image of the mother in her generative function—the mother as the origin of all life ... The concept of the parthenogenic, archaic mother adds another dimension to the maternal figure and presents us with a new way of understanding how patriarchal ideology works to deny the 'difference' of woman in her cinematic representation. (258-259)

Creed holds that the presence of an abject maternal figure often appears in the horror film. Kristeva theorizes that in during the phase of maturity in which the child strives to free him or herself from the mother's dominant position, the maternal body becomes "a site of conflicting desires" for the child, who is torn between intimacy

and autonomy (254). Societal regulations which place a “prohibition” against the mother’s body create a defense against incest. Creed mentions that both of Alfred Hitchcock’s films from the early 1960s, *Psycho* (1960) and *The Birds* (1963), contain the figure of the archaic mother and feature narratives with an absent father: “In these films the mother is constructed as the monstrous-feminine. By refusing to relinquish her hold on her child, she prevents it from taking up its proper place in relation to the Symbolic” (254),

These films contain other transgressive women as well, configured as sexualized women who present a problem to the dominant position of the mother in the life of the son. In *Psycho*, however, the dominant mother figure is constructed in the memory of the disturbed young man, Norman Bates, who incorporates her into his own physical manifestation and psyche, in the form of a dissociative identity disorder manifested by cross-dressing. Both plots additionally contain the duality of transgression, that of the archaic mother, and of the sexualized female who threatens the stability of the maternal bond and breaks the taboo which prevents sex outside the union of marriage. Creed specifically mentions the religious “abomination” of “sexual immorality and perversion.” In *Psycho*, Marion is seen in the very opening of the film wearing nothing but a slip and in bed with a man she sleeps with, who is not her husband. In *The Birds*, Melanie Daniels is constructed as a wealthy playgirl with loose morals.

In, “The Monster as Woman: Two Generations of Cat People,” Karen Hollinger proposes:

The positioning of woman as victim in the classic monster film, therefore functions as a method of masking what is really presented as monstrous

and threatening in these works. The fear that lurks behind castration anxieties and the fetishized horror monster can be seen as a fear not of the lack represented by the horror monster but of the potency of female sexuality and the power of woman's sexual difference. (299)

Although neither Marion nor Melanie is similar to the monster figures of *Psycho* and *The Birds*, they both play sexualized roles which tempt Norman Bates and Mitch Brenner to leave their mother's side, or perhaps for Bates the mother's guise, by utilizing sexual magnetism. Norman is obviously attracted to Marion and he woos her into his lair of stuffed birds with food: she provides meaningful conversation and sympathy, and therefore "mother" must dispose of her. Incidentally, Norman tells Marion that she "eats like a bird," therefore equating her with his other prey. In both of these Hitchcock films, birds are associated with different aspects of femininity, and the director appears to be using birds as a symbol of the predatory nature of seduction. The beginning of *The Birds* is more of a romantic shuffle of flirtation and banter in a pet shop than a traditional opening of a horror film, and the physical attraction between Melanie and Mitch is instant.

In her Gaze Theory, Mulvey theorizes that the female presence on the screen represents the fear of demasculinization to a male viewer by pointing out "her lack of a penis, implying a threat of castration and hence unpleasure" (64). Furthermore, "the woman as icon, displayed for the gaze and enjoyment of men, the active controllers of the look, always threatens to evoke the anxiety it originally signified" (65). Creed echoes this idea in her essay on the horror film:

The horror film's obsession with blood, particularly the bleeding body of woman, where her body is transformed into the 'gaping wound,' suggests that castration anxiety is a central concern to the horror film—particularly the slasher sub-genre. Woman's body is slashed and mutilated, not only to signify her own castrated state, but also the possibility of castration for the male. In the guise of a "madman" he enacts on her body the one act he most fears for himself, transforming her entire body into a bleeding wound. (256-257)

This is true of *Psycho* and Marion's demise in the iconic shower scene, after she is stabbed repeatedly. *Psycho* is possibly the first slasher film, or at least served to inspire later versions, which include multiple murders involving a knife (the phallic symbol) or the stand-in of an axe or other sharp implements such as those seen in *Black Christmas* (1974), *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (1974), and *Halloween* (1978). In later slasher films, to reiterate Creed's position, it is only the innocent, non-sexual girl who survives the rampage. This character is known as "the final girl."

In the case of *The Birds*, however, it is Melanie's conversion into a more sensitive, responsible woman during the ordeal of the bird attacks which saves her. By the end of the film, Melanie has comforted and protected Mitch's sister, Cathy and his mother, Lydia, and saved Cathy from the bird's attack at the school. Like the lovebirds, the topic of the film's initial segment, Marian has been domesticated to the point where she is "just right." Mitch is very specific about the "type" he wants: "I wouldn't want a pair of birds that were too demonstrative ... At the same time I wouldn't want them to be aloof either." By the end of *The Birds*, Lydia has switched her "mothering" instincts

from Mitch and Cathy to include Melanie, whom she initially disdains. As the car pulls away from the house at the end of the film, Melanie squeezes Lydia's wrist and the two women look lovingly at each other. Lydia holds Melanie tenderly and mothers her. This is notable, as the viewer has learned early that her own mother abandoned her.

One of the most interesting themes of *The Birds* is carefully maintained throughout the film. The birds come to Bodega Bay at the same time Melanie arrives, and she is the first person they attack. After the town catches fire, other women castigate her as the hysteria over the bird attacks begin to mount. When Melanie enters the restaurant after being trapped in a glass phone booth during the attack (her cage), the women stare at her viciously and accusingly: "Why are they doing this? Why are they doing this? They said when you got here the whole thing started. Who are you? What are you? Where did you come from? I think you're the cause of all this. I think you're evil. Evil!" screams a hysterical visitor to the town, who stops only when Melanie slaps her. Melanie is not only the outsider figure of the narrative, as she is literally from San Francisco, an urban landscape, but she brings with her the urban lifestyle, with its glamour and relaxed sexual mores.

This scene from *The Birds* demonstrates Hollinger's proposal that the female monster represents "potency of female sexuality" (299). In this case, it is not only the male viewer who is threatened by the "monster," but the women of the diegesis, who recognize Melanie as "other." Her only sympathetic equal is Annie Hayworth, another sophisticated woman who has moved to Bodega Bay to be near Mitch. Annie, however, falls victim to the birds early on. In *Psycho*, Marion has transgressed by being sexually

active and by criminal activity. In *The Birds*, Melanie is domesticated not only by Mitch but by his mother as well, and thus lives to carry on as part of the Brenner family.

While writing about Irena from *Cat People* (1942), who she believes to be the first female monster in film, Karen Hollinger's remarks also relate to other transgressive female figures in the horror genre. Hollinger cites Linda Williams, who discusses the affinity between the monster and the female; both are victims of "patriarchal structures of seeing." "If the woman is related to the monster in that they both are seen by patriarchy as representing sexual difference and castration fears," Williams observes, "then she is allied not to a representation of weakness but to one of power in sexual difference" (299). This is the fundamental power of the transgressive woman in 1960s horror film. She is not destroyed for the sadistic voyeuristic pleasure of the male audience, but rather for her transgression; she must be destroyed for the good of the patriarchy, just like the monster. In *Psycho*, the real monster, Norman Bates, is transgressive in more ways than one. Not only is he a serial killer, he is insane, a cross-dresser, and he crosses societal boundaries through gender appropriation.

During the 1960s, horror films continued to expand their scope and sophistication to include more daring psychological thrillers, including Roman Polanski's British film, *Repulsion* (1965), which stars Catherine Deneuve as a young woman so repulsed by sexuality, that when left alone in her apartment she falls into a psychotic state and murders her boyfriend and landlord. The protagonist, Carole, fears being touched and all things sexual repulse her. In her hallucinatory state, she believes both men are trying to rape her. The film reflects madness and decay, and, ironically enough, from Polanski's

perception, frigidity is the crime that drives one to madness, not an overabundance of sexuality.

Repulsion can be linked to another British film from the early 1960s, *The Innocents* (1961), starring Deborah Kerr as Miss Giddens, a governess procured for two small orphan children, Miles and Flora, by an absent uncle. Based on the novella by Henry James, the film is also a complex psychological drama. The young Miss Giddens begins to see visions and apparitions in the manor house where she works. The children's actions and a story told to her by Mrs. Grose, the maid, leads her to believe the children are possessed by the ghosts of their former governess, Miss Jessel and her lover, the valet Peter Quint. The underlying current of the film, which takes place in the Victorian age, is that Miss Giddens is hysterical due to the air of sexuality between the ghosts she envisions. The audience never discovers whether Miss Giddens is delusional, or the children are possessed. Although the truth is not revealed, the film is underpinned with a palpable sexuality, which infuses the narrative with suspense and tension.

To acknowledge British horror of the 1960s, it is necessary to mention the place Hammer Films occupies within this genre. Hammer Films was a British film company launched in 1934, which moved into the production of horror films in the late 1950s. Primarily dealing in gothic horror and monster genres, the company earned the title, "Hammer House of Horror." Initially supported by distribution and production deals from American companies such as Universal Studios and Columbia Pictures, by the mid-1960s Hammer also had deals with Seven Arts and Twentieth Century Fox, which encouraged the studio to churn out an amazing number of cheaply made films in the

1960s and 70s. Hammer films ran rampant with vampires, werewolves, zombies and an occasional she-devil.

David J. Skal writes in *The Monster Show*, “Although *Psycho* was an extraordinarily influential film, explicit movie gore probably owes more to the blood-soaked, Eastman-color oeuvre of England’s Hammer Films, which had begun cutting a distinctive red swath across audience retinæ” (311). Hammer films were also known for their elegant, signature stars Christopher Lee, Vincent Price, and Peter Cushing. The scripts often invoked stern warnings from the BBFC, which threatened to withhold ratings due to violent content.

The Hammer films *The Gorgon* (1964) and *She* (1965) featured monstrous women. The monster in *She* takes the form of the Goddess Ayesha, an ageless, vengeful Divinity, while *The Gorgon* features the tale of Carla Hoffman, a young, beautiful assistant to the local doctor, Namaroff, who transforms into a Medusa-figure on the full moon, turning villagers to stone in a remote German village. *The Gorgon* recapitulates the Greek myth of the Medusa, a concrete manifestation of Creed’s reference to Freud’s theory that the Medusa equates to female otherness and men’s fear of castration. In the Hammer version, however, the Gorgon indiscriminately murders both sexes.

By the late 1960s, many Hammer Films included an occasional hipster from the London scene, such as Mick Jagger’s lover, Marsha Hunt, and featured decadent plots involving drugs, psychedelic effects, and cults with depraved, upper-class youth indulging in sex rites to reanimate witches and demons. These were narratives which readily leant themselves to the concept of a “swinging London.” *Dracula* 1972 A. D. (1972) highlights drug parties, black magic, ritual sacrifice, and even an American rock

band, Stoneground. The granddaughter of the vampire slayer Van Helsing, Jessica Van Helsing unwittingly resurrects Dracula with a group of hippie friends at a “party” which is actually a Satanic ritual. Peter Cushing as Van Helsing must save the day, and, of course, his granddaughter. A similar tale, *The Crimson Alter* (1968), based on H. P. Lovecraft’s *Dreams in the Witch House*, also features psychedelics, cults, and scantily clad women, plus a monstrous female deity, Barbara Steele, wearing ram’s horns, painted blue, and attempting to reprise her power.

As horror films in the 1960s varied from psychological thriller to slasher to camp, the nature of Hammer films is exploitive, which like Grand Guignol, are now viewed as cult or camp. These follow the prescriptions of the genre, but not very seriously, as they are more concerned with exploitation and ambiance. Women transgress and are murdered, or murder. Camp horror is closer to the midnight movie, which is made as much to titillate as to frighten. Other films of the horror genre, however, are created with clear serious intent to frighten and disrupt, as is seen in Polanski’s second English speaking film, made in America, *Rosemary’s Baby* (1968). Rosemary Woodhouse is the penultimate example of an archaic mother who not only threatens the patriarchy with her ability to reproduce; she actually produces a demon.

Peter Hutchings proposes that the 1960s was the decade in which “certain horror films issued challenges to the established conventions of the horror genre” (169). One of the main conventions challenged at this time was the binary between good and evil, as well as the triumph of good over evil. “A cluster of horror films from 1968 provided yet more iconoclastic takes on horror’s sacred conventions ... Roman Polanski’s *Rosemary’s Baby* (1968) concluded with the heroine agreeing to be a mother to the recently-born

Antichrist” (169). Hutchings believes these films are relative to the rest of cinema in general, not just horror in particular. They reflect the era in which they were made.

Rosemary's Baby, however, is different from other films of the time because “it showed little interest in offering any social commentary, explicit or implicit. It probably makes more sense to view this film ... as one of his powerful studies of urban alienation” (175).

Like the characters of *Night of the Living Dead* (1968), Hutchings notes, Rosemary is trapped in a domestic space. But Rosemary's domestic space is a prison of her own making as she allows her narcissistic and dominating husband to control her.

Interestingly enough, Guy Woodhouse does not seem in control of the situation either.

His desire for fame and fortune has led him to offer his wife to Satanists. After the deed is done, he has no desire to touch her again. Both Rosemary and Guy are readily manipulated by the coven next door to the rambling apartment they have taken in the Bramford, a gothic New York apartment building with a history of witchcraft and gruesome murders.

But the coven is not all male, and Rosemary is wrangled and contained by elderly women who control her every move, even what she eats and drinks. Rosemary's would-be rescuer comes in the guise of an older male friend as well; the oppressor is not a clear-cut version of the patriarchy in this film. *Rosemary's Baby* also disproves Mulvey's belief that the woman's to-be-looked-at-ness dominates the diegesis, since for most of this film Rosemary's pregnancy has turned her into a hag, a pale skeleton, a stick figure. She looks like an ill child and is in no way overtly sexualized. Rosemary has the ability to bear a child and that is what the coven wants: a demon child. She is not valued for her sexual allure, but rather for her fecundity. Poor Rosemary is raped, drugged, tortured by

the nattering of Minnie Casavet, and locked in her apartment. However, Rosemary is also the protagonist of this narrative, the audience identifies with her, takes her point-of-view, and comes to despise Guy and the rest of the coven.

Rosemary isn't given a backstory. We know that she is Catholic and fertile; her situation is created to serve the narrative. She is merely an easily manipulated young woman, with a punch line: a mother can love even a demon. In "When the Woman Looks," Linda Williams writes about the affinity of monster and female, that each recognizes the state of otherness in their counterpart: "The destruction of the monster that concludes so many horror films could therefore be interpreted as yet another way of disavowing and mastering the castration her body represents" (64). The similarity recognized in the gaze between woman and monster is a stand off against male empowerment, the patriarchy.

Williams points out that the both monster and female are empowered in "different" ways from the male. Because of that difference they must be contained and controlled "as recognition of their similar status as potent threats to a vulnerable male power" (65). The moment of truth in the horror film occurs when the female gazes upon the body of the monster and "transforms curiosity and desire into masochistic fantasy" (64). This is not true of Rosemary Woodhouse, however, for when she gazes upon the monster, she also gazes at herself—for he is her child. When Rosemary approaches the cradle to mother the monster, this is the only moment in the film where she truly possesses power. The coven is not terrified of the monster-child; they worship it. Rosemary is no longer the fragile incubator for the demon; she has accepted her progeny and is rewarded with status: she is the mother of the Antichrist.

Each female character examined in this section is transgressive; each one fits the description of abject as delineated by Kristeva and Creed, and these films constitute narratives which are radically different from those which came before. Not even at the most empowered moment of women in the 1920s, would any director have dared to give a female character the power to birth the Antichrist, or add the plot twist of an abortion to a film. The characters from this chapter all symbolize woman as abject, as the monstrous feminine. And while men created most of these narratives, these female characters were often expressions of those who saw themselves as outsiders or representatives of the counterculture—as other.

These films also signify a society in which women were demanding more autonomy and power. These “monstrous” characters, in one way or another, reflect the cultural intersection of powerful forces which called for contemporary views of femininity. As a collective, these representations helped to destroy the Hays Code and BBFC regulations. Since these directives were written to sustain particular stereotypes of women, through their creation and expression, the female characters of this decade served to destabilize the patriarchy and to destroy its control over modern cinema.

CHAPTER IV

THE MASQUERADE: GENDER AS SPECTACLE

I always feel as if there's one more corner to turn. And I'll be there. –Diana Scott, *Darling*.

Where there was fire, we brought gasoline. –Guy Debord.

As the influence of mass media affected individuals in America and Britain on a daily basis by the 1960s, social scientists and academics began to write about its influence on mass culture and the individual psyche. By the early 1960s, society emerged as a “spectacle” often controlled and mediated by electronic images. In 1960, nine out of ten households in America owned a television set, and in Britain, by 1970, this statistic was also accurate. Televised coverage of events such as the Profumo scandal, the Cuban missile crisis, assassinations of political leaders, the Vietnam War, Ban the Bomb rallies, and other cultural events including the British Invasion, student protests and media exposure of pop stars, film stars and political leaders all helped to create a saturation of media culture in this era. As the 1960s progressed, public events in the form of “happenings,” protest marches, and rock festivals also entered the public’s consciousness through film, print media, and television. Protestors attacked by riot police at the Chicago Democratic Convention in 1968 were captured by television cameras and projected globally, shouting, “The whole world is watching.” And indeed, Western cultures were becoming rapidly assimilated by the spectacle of mass media.

The work of several theorists published during the 1960s, including the writings of Marshall McLuhan and Andy Warhol regarding the effect of media on the individual psyche, Guy Debord's "Society of the Spectacle," and Mikhail Bakhtin's theories on carnival, will help to explain the effects of this phenomenon on film narratives. Fredric Jameson's essay on "Postmodernism And Consumer Society" will be incorporated as well, in order to understand the power of consumerism and capitalism as a force in 1960s culture, and therefore its cinematic representations. Guy Debord's methods and ideology also provide a counterculture perspective regarding the "spectacle" of consumerism during this highly volatile decade.

In 1964, Marshall McLuhan published his book, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*. This work includes his influential essay, "The Medium is The Message," which observes the effects of technology upon popular culture. McLuhan theorizes that as one major technology replaces another, the lives of individuals are reshaped and the relationships of people in communities are reconfigured. The book is a series of essays about different aspects of culture as they relate to information technology, including newsprint, the telephone, mechanical reproduction, and film. Because McLuhan exhibited an awareness of popular culture, he is often defined in that context. In the final chapters of *Understanding Media*, McLuhan also addresses the effect of mass communication at a global level.

For example, McLuhan addresses the effect of Western films on Asian cultures. He cites a speech by President Sukarno of Indonesia to a group of Hollywood producers in which Sukarno stated that the citizens of his country began to experience a feeling of

“lack” after they watched American films where ordinary people possessed cars, stoves, and refrigerators. This incident led McLuhan to state:

That is another way of getting a view of the film medium as monster ad for consumer goods. In America this major aspect of film is merely subliminal ... In fact the movie is a mighty limb of the industrial giant. That it is being amputated by the TV image reflects a still greater revolution going on at the center of American life.... The movie, as much as the alphabet and the printed word, is an aggressive and imperial form that explodes outward into other cultures. (294-5)

McLuhan's ideas were original. As his writings became widely disseminated he was viewed as one of the first critical voices recognize popular culture and media technology. McLuhan wrote about the disorienting effect of the media, which is not only an unrelenting presence, but is also constantly evolving into new technologies. He claimed, “Mental breakdown of varying degrees is the very common result of uprooting and inundation with new information and endless new patterns of information” (16). And by mental breakdown, McLuhan meant the inability to resist information hurled at modern man with “electric speed,” or the subliminal messages embedded in media communications. McLuhan mistrusted advertising especially and felt it served to affect the individual's sense of identity in ways that led to compulsive consumerism.

McLuhan's statements on television were equally influential at the time, especially his theories on the nature of “hot” and “cold” media. The label depends upon the amount of interaction the form of media engenders:

There is a basic principal that distinguishes a hot medium like radio from a cool one like the telephone, or a hot medium like the movie from a cool

one like TV. A hot medium is one that extends one single sense in “high definition.” High definition is the state of being well filled with data ... speech is a cool medium of low definition, because so little is given and so much has to be filled in by the listener. On the other hand, hot media do not leave so much to be filled in or completed by the audience. Hot media are, therefore, low in participation and cool media are high in participation or completion by the audience. (22-23)

What is important in this amalgam, however, is the fact that McLuhan posits that hot media often lead its audience to distance itself from the saturation of images presented in such profusion and intensity. He states, “The effect of hot media treatment cannot include much empathy or participation at any time” (30). This effect is a double bind in which too much violence leads to a sense of numbness and too much information leads to apathy. McLuhan concludes, “When all available resources and energies have been played up in an organism or in any structure there is some kind of reversal of pattern ... The price of eternal vigilance is indifference” (30). This theory is valuable when examining a sense of numbness and disconnection that begins to emerge in certain characters of Sixties film.

In “The Life, After Death, of Postmodern Emotions,” Steven Shapiro discusses statements made by Andy Warhol in, *The Philosophy of Andy Warhol: From A to B and Back Again* (1975). Shapiro posits that Andy Warhol strongly exhibits a postmodern condition in which the individual becomes distanced from and finally resistant to emotion. Since Warhol’s Factory literally manufactured popular culture, he is considered a worthy example of postmodernism. Shapiro states, “I do this, however, not by

generalizing from Warhol as a particular case but by looking at him closely as possible, in his singularity (which also means his queerness), and by constructing a narrative about how that singularity has become for us, today, a cultural ‘universal’” (Shapiro 125).

Shapiro, therefore, deduces that statements made by Warhol which may have seemed peculiar at the time are now an aspect of a general postmodern condition that Shapiro terms “the death of emotions.” Of this period, for example, Warhol states:

During the 60s, I think, people forgot what emotions were supposed to be. And I don’t think they’ve ever remembered. I think that once you see emotions from a certain angle you can never think of them as real again. That’s what more or less has happened to me. I don’t really know if I was ever capable of love, but after the 60s I never thought in terms of “love” again. (27)

Warhol actually describes this process to his reader. It began when he went to see a psychiatrist because he felt that the problems of his friends were spreading onto him “like germs.” On the way home from the psychiatrist, Warhol went into Macy’s and bought a television. He states:

and right away I forgot all about the psychiatrist. I kept the TV on all the time, especially while people were telling me their problems, and the television I found to be just diverting enough so the problems people told me didn’t really affect me anymore. It was like some kind of magic. (24)

Concurrently, Warhol began to reproduce the artifacts of culture that he observed on the television and other media into mass-produced art created from images of advertisements, cultural icons and celebrities. Warhol removed the copy from the original likeness in

much the same way his television removed emotion from the original feeling. In “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” Walter Benjamin discusses the evolution of art from its original function as a ceremonial object or religious icon to its status as an article of exhibition. “With the different methods of technical reproduction of a work of art, its fitness for exhibition increased to such an extent that the quantitative shift between its two poles turned into a qualitative transformation of its nature” (Benjamin 34). This is especially true of Warhol’s pop art— his mass-produced images which elevate the ordinary or demystify star status with our ability to possess its representation.

Warhol also states, “When I got my first TV set, I stopped caring so much about having close relationships with other people” (24), and he jokes about how his tape recorder became “his wife,” because they were always together. “The acquisition of my tape recorder really finished whatever emotional life I might have had, but I was glad to see it go” (27). Warhol’s ironic discussion of the tape recorder leads to a final important statement about the sense of detachment created by technology:

Nothing was ever a problem again because it just meant a good tape....

Everybody knew that and performed for the tape. You couldn’t tell which problems were real and which problems were exaggerated for the tape.

Better yet, the people telling you the problems couldn’t decide anymore if they were really having the problems or if they were just performing. (27)

This quality is another aspect of the postmodern condition. The distance between action and performance became smaller; action became spectacle when recorded or observed. The difference between a “hot” and “cold” medium also plays into Warhol’s

description of his tape recorder. It is a “cool” medium that led Warhol’s friends to distill their personal dramas into “performances” for the machine. Film is a “hot” medium, full of dense information with little interactive potential, until it is viewed on television. This practice also originated in the 1960s, changing the way we interact with film texts as well.

Steven Shapiro, in writing about the death of postmodern emotions, summarizes the cultural effect of the postmodern:

Universal commodity fetishism has colonized lived experience. The real has been murdered by its representations. Every object has been absorbed into its own image. Subjectivity has broken into multiple fragments and the high modernist endeavor to totalize these fragments, to redeem them, to bring them back together again is a futile and meaningless exercise.

The death of emotion is concomitant with all these other losses. (126)

It is this final symptom of postmodernism that becomes most important when looking at films of the 1960s which affect the spectacle and which also create modern protagonists who appear to be devoid of feeling. Because this postmodern trait is so closely linked with consumerism, it is also valuable to consider Fredric Jameson’s work, “Postmodernism and Consumer Society.”

Jameson relates postmodern culture to the historical period of “that newly emergent social order of late capitalism” (1962). One of the hallmarks Jameson uses to define postmodernism is pastiche, which he defines as:

the imitation of a peculiar or unique style, the wearing of a stylistic mask, speech in a dead language: but it is a neutral practice of such mimicry,

without parody's ulterior motive, without the satirical impulse, without laughter ... Pastiche is a blank parody, parody that has lost its sense of humor. (1963)

Jamison also refers to this effect as "blank irony." This is another reason to consider some of the highly ironic scenes in certain Sixties film texts, as these are endemic of the style and culture of the moment and are often misinterpreted by critics.

Jameson defines the postmodern age by the consumer practices of its inhabitants: "For one thing, commodity production and in particular our clothing, furniture, buildings and other artifacts are now intimately tied in with styling changes which derive from artistic experimentation; our advertising, for example, is fed by postmodernism in all the arts and inconceivable without it" (1973). He also holds that postmodernism contains the properties of "new types of consumption; planned obsolescence; an ever more rapid rhythm of fashion and styling changes; the penetration of advertising, television and the media generally to a hitherto unparalleled degree through society" (1974). Jameson ends by stating that "postmodernism replicates or reproduces—reinforces—the logic of consumer capitalism" (1974). Therefore it is safe to say that Jameson equates consumer culture with postmodernism.

"I Thought You Were in Paris. I *Am* in Paris."

No film of the 1960s addresses and explicates art, artifice, and consumer society like Michelangelo Antonioni's 1966 British film, *Blow-Up*. Additionally, *Blow-Up* was one of the principal films to defy censorship laws in both Britain and the United States.

The film was an international collaboration between the Italian director, British production, and American distribution, which also reflects the globalization of postmodern culture. Moreover, the protagonist of *Blow-Up* is a photographer. He makes art through the reproduction of images. Moreover, he is a fashion photographer, the medium which advertising employs to create consumer culture. The ambiance of *Blow-Up* reflects the “death of emotion” and consumerism through its enigmatic narrative about a photographer who believes he witnessed a murder, but cannot provide concrete proof of his suspicions. By the end of the film the photographer questions his perceptions, as both his evidence and his reality have become fragmented, a pastiche of fact and experience.

Blow-Up is many texts; it is the story of a photographer who is obsessed with possessions, a murder mystery, a meditation on the bounds of perception and reality, and a slice of *cinema verite*. In particular scenes, *Blow-Up* captures the underground scene of swinging London as no other film has done, while presenting an enigmatic murder in Maryon Park, an enchanted, pastoral landscape in the middle of urban London. *Blow-Up* sets up binaries and oppositions; the film creates an ambiance of mystery, and then reads as a documentary. And while Antonioni’s Italian Neo-Realist background is evident in his cinematography, the texture of *Blow-Up* conveys a world that is exaggerated and decadent. For *Blow-Up*, Antonioni manipulated the environment he filmed, much as the photographer sets the stage for his photo shoots and manipulates the emotions of his models. As Shawn Levy remarks:

Wherever the filmmakers went, they left a subtle imprint on the landscape.

A park in Woolwich acquired an ambiguous neon billboard; streets were

painted true black and pigeons were dyed; fire hydrants and doorways and the fronts of houses were repainted into bold primary hues. “He literally painted the town his colors,” reflected critic Alexander Walker. “And he found a metaphor for the way people were exchanging reality for playtime.” (162)

The mystery of *Blow-Up* begins in the park in Woolwich. After the photographer visits an antiques shop he wants to purchase, he impetuously enters the park, follows a woman and her lover, and captures on film what is possibly a murder. Antonioni also styled aspects of Maryon Park, with the added neon sign which mysteriously cuts off at the end of the film as daybreak approaches and the photographer returns to the scene of the crime to photograph a body which is now missing. As the light goes off over his head, he realizes he has lost the thread of his quest. Like Odysseus, he has been interrupted on his journey by too many diversions: women, drugs, and parties. His easily distracted nature has destroyed the fragile thread of his logic. As the park is the scene of the photographer’s epiphany, Antonioni has manipulated it as well, but in a manner to conscript the mystery of nature as a power far greater than the urban landscape the photographer both haunts and records.

From the moment the photographer enters the park by accident, the landscape is conveyed as charmed. Don McCullin, who took the still photography for the film, writes that Antonioni also painted sections of grass and pathways to create the stunning visual contrasts. David Hemmings, as the photographer, wears white pants to demarcate his presence because Antonioni’s cinematography favors long shots to capture the action between the lovers and the photographer while he stalks them. Additionally, whenever

the photographer enters the park, once in daylight, once at night, and once at the liminal moment of dawn, there is always the sound of wind.

Aside from a brief conversation with the woman in the park, all the scenes there are produced without dialogue or soundtrack; there is only the sound of wind, and in the final scene, the sound of a ball, which is not actually there, hitting the pavement of a tennis court. The sound of wind signals the presence of the mystery in the park and is also heard during the scene when the photographer begins the process of “blow-up,” enlarging the photos to unravel their mystery. In an interview with Bert Cardullo, Antonioni stated:

We know that under the image revealed there is another which is truer to reality and under this image still another and yet again still another under this last one, right down to the true image of that reality, absolute, mysterious, which no one will ever see or perhaps right down to the decomposition of any image, of any reality. (90)

It is only by the manipulation of the photographic image that this enigma may be unraveled. But in the end, the photographer is left with nothing but a pointillistic vision that could be a body or a play of black and white, shadow and light, a representation of nothing.

Blow-Up attempts to capture the heart of swinging London through the character of the photographer, who is based on David Bailey. Bailey is renowned for capturing swinging London’s Mod celebrities. *Blow-Up* uses several distinct techniques to capture the essence of Mod London. There is, for example, the mime troop who open and close the film, an example of the narrative trope of “book-ending.” Scenes of spectacle

abound, including the Ban the Bomb rally, the mime troupe, and the nightclub location, which culminates in a riot. These scenes create a binary between the public and private spheres experienced by the photographer. His studio is a world over which he has absolute dominion, while the park and the nightclub signify the expanse of chance encounters and the unpredictable force of nature.

The film begins with the photographer emerging from a doss house where he has posed as a homeless man in order to record the inhabitants surreptitiously, yet he leaves and drives away in an expensive Mercedes convertible, and into the riot of mime revelers. The revelers pass two nuns in white and a soldier in a British guard uniform, signifying individuality versus uniformity, and chaos versus the rigidity of church and state. This theme will present itself throughout the film to pose a binary of control versus chance.

The photographer also connotes the “death of emotions” in postmodern society. He is detached, ironic, practical, and even occasionally heartless; yet the photographer also represents Jameson’s “blank irony” and Warhol’s statements about emotion. While many critics find the photographer reprehensible and sexist, this judgment is simplistic. He barks orders at the fashion models and appears exasperated with their “talent,” yet he is also reacting to the mechanical maneuvers of a group of women who are overly made-up, starved, and vapid representations of the fashion industry. Ironically, the artist who sleeps in a doss house in order to capture the harsh realities of swinging London is also the agent of consumerism who helps to create this impossible look as a standard of beauty.

A familiar critique of *Blow-Up* stems from a scene where the photographer has sex with two girls in his studio, only to become disinterested immediately after. Many

critics see this incidence as a seduction of underage girls, but Jane Birkin was twenty years old, and Gillian Hill was twenty-two when they portrayed these characters. Also, this is no chance encounter. It is the two girls who seduce him out of their desire to be famous. Another interaction in which the photographer appears unfeeling occurs when the woman in the park, played by Vanessa Redgrave, requests the film he has shot of her and her older lover.

The woman in the park is associated with the 1963 Profumo scandal, which undermined the Conservative Party when it was revealed that Christine Keeler, the mistress of a Russian spy, was also involved sexually with Minister of War, John Profumo (Geraghty 157). In *Blow-Up* this scandal is taken a step further, as the photographer begins to realize the woman in the park has brought her lover there to be murdered. When the woman sees they have been recorded, she accosts the photographer by stating, “Stop it. Give me those pictures. You can’t photograph people like that,” to which he replies, “I’m only doing my job,” and remains indifferent. What may be taken as cruelty on the part of the photographer also presages the modern world of paparazzi and information technology. Actions of the photographer also characterize the mannerisms of a man who refuses chivalry and treats women as peers, not entities to be tolerated, coddled, or protected.

When the young woman from the park shows up at the photographer’s studio, the two meet as equals. This is a private space, and their interactions are different. She offers sex to the photographer and removes her shirt, but this time he will not be bribed. He gives her a fake roll of film and asks her to put her clothes on. In this scene, the photographer discusses his private life for the first and only time with this stranger. He

confesses, “But even the beautiful girls you look at them and that’s that ... well I’m stuck with them all day long,” to which she casually replies, “It would be the same with men.”

The photographer interacts with two other women— a model, and a friend who lives next door, Patricia, the wife of an abstract painter. The photographer seems close to the couple, and after his studio is looted and the photographs which prove the murder are stolen, he goes next door to confide his experience. Instead, he walks in on the couple having sex. Patricia makes eye contact with the photographer as he stands above her, and signals for him to stay. It is this particular scene that robbed *Blow-Up* of an MPAA rating. When Patricia later appears in his studio, their conversation intercuts one another’s as Patricia communicates the frustration with her marriage and the photographer tells of his adventure. Yet, their situations are merely equated and left unsolved.

The other interaction occurs in a photo shoot with the model Veruschka. The photographer approaches the model seductively, talks to her, nuzzles her, and straddles her to get his shot. When he is done, the photographer abruptly stands, walks away, and does not look back. In both scenes, the one in which he observes sex, and the one in which he simulates it, the photographer “reads” as a dispassionate observer. Antonioni notes this indifference: “Sexual freedom also means freedom from feelings, and that means I don’t know whether young people can live ever love again the way my generation loved. They must suffer I guess ... They have taken leave of all norms, all traditions, and there is a price to pay for that” (Cardullo 147). This disconnection also references Andy Warhol’s essay about his inability to experience love.

Images of consumer culture and consumption also haunt *Blow-Up*, along with its characters' collective indifference. The photographer is the very image of the obsessed consumer: he wants to buy his neighbor's new painting on the spot, he must possess the antique shop at any cost, he buys an airplane propeller on impulse and cannot get it home, he must possess the pictures from the park even though he is being stalked and threatened. Objects fill his studio—antiquities, art and trendy furniture. He owns jazz records, a Mercedes, and tailored clothes. The photographer creates conspicuous consumption; he enacts it as well. And the apex of *Blow-Up* is a scene in which indifference and consumerism collide.

After the photographer's studio is ransacked, he goes to look for his manager, Ron, to witness the body in the park. As the photographer parks his car on Regent Street, he believes he sees the woman from the park; he darts back and forth trying to find her, and winds his way through shop fronts, high-priced goods, and window shoppers, all signaling consumption. As the photographer turns down a dark alley toward a club, the wail of high-pitched guitars greets him. Inside, the photographer transverses a black and white hall decorated with cartoon posters; the interior of the Ricky-Tick is also black and white, and filled with hundreds of fans in complete stasis as the music of The Yardbirds blasts. The photographer wanders through the crowd of men and women in mod dress as the music builds, but everyone in the audience appears frozen, bored, or stoned.

Every human figure is in a state of stasis: sitting, standing, and or draped over the furnishings, as if in a trance. An interracial couple dances, the only movement in the scene, other than the photographer, who weaves stealthily toward the stage. Suddenly, the guitarist's amplifier malfunctions and he begins to strike it violently with his guitar.

When a roadie cannot repair it, in a fit of rage the guitarist destroys his instrument. Disengaging the neck, he holds it aloft before throwing it into the audience. At this moment, the crowd comes to life and begins to riot and fight for the object. Bodies are hurled into each other and into the stage in a moment of total mayhem, as the band continues to play. Fighting the others, the photographer manages to grab the object and flee the club, knocking down passers by. When the photographer exits the club, however, the object he has fought for and won is suddenly meaningless. Outside the Ricky-Tick, the object has lost its contextual meaning. When gained and owned, it is of little value.

Acknowledging the futility of his conquest, the photographer drops the guitar neck to the ground. Immediately, another person picks up the fragment of the guitar. Now further removed from its context, he too quickly discards it. This scene is Antonioni's metaphor for modern life. Like the photographer, the entire audience appears disaffected, bored, satiated, but when the moment arrives to vie for a prize, there is violence and competition. Once the photographer has the representation he wants, he quickly abandons the original. Removed from the actual context, or blown up, the meaning dissolves, and the object is worthless.

When the photographer finds his manager at a hedonistic party in a mansion along the Thames, Ron is too stoned to be a reliable witness. As the photographer speaks to Ron, the model Veruschka enters. "I thought you were in Paris?" he asks, to which the model replies, "I *am* in Paris." Veruschka's response is another indication of the layers of fantasy in *Blow-Up*. In frustration, the photographer succumbs to the temptation and decadence of the party, and when he awakens and returns to the park, it is too late, the body is removed—if it ever existed. As the photographer encounters the mimes for the

final time, they play a pretend game of tennis, and he begins to hear the sound of the imaginary ball. A look of understanding crosses his face: everything is an illusion.

A film with many similarities to *Blow Up*, including the idea of desire and illusion, is Julie Christie's 1965 *Darling*. *Darling* features a female version of the photographer, Diana Scott, who is a fashion model with the world at her feet and various men at her beck and call. A comment from Antonioni regarding *Blow Up* also applies to *Darling*:

The young people among whom *Blow Up* is situated live in a world that has finally broken down all barriers between one individual and another ... *Blow Up*'s generation, and the generations to follow, have sought a certain aimless freedom from restrictions of all kinds. And to be sure the pursuit of such freedom can give man his most exciting moments. But once it is achieved, once all discipline is discarded, then you have decadence. (Cardullo 146)

Darling is the story of a young woman who rises into fame and descends into decadence; it is a cautionary tale about infidelity and celebrity. And in the world of *Darling*, epiphanies also come too late. The narrative of *Darling* is told as a voice-over by Diana Scott after her rise to fame, but the truth is found in the film text which portrays her as a social climber and a selfish young woman determined to have everything she desires. Somewhere between these two alternatives is the truth of this character. And as the photographer is Antonioni's stand-in for consumer culture and "aimless freedom," Diana Scott is also seen a stand in for the nation state, for Britain, and for the morals embodied by youth culture and swinging London.

Diana's story is her rise to fame, marked by the men she loves and discards. She marries her husband Tony Bridges while too young to fathom her own desires, and leaves him for the married man, Robert Gold, a respectable and intellectual television journalist, who stops her on the street for an interview. Robert eventually abandons his children and spouse, to live with her. When Diana finds herself pregnant *and* an up-and-coming fashion model, she has an abortion to avoid ruining her figure and the responsibility of a child.

She and Robert briefly separate and reunite, until Diana meets Miles Brand, the advertising executive who makes her the "Honeyglow Girl" and mediates her celebrity status. Miles is as much as an opportunist as Diana, and he completes her evolution into decadence when the two visit Paris. Gold deduces they have played the same trick on him that he and Diana played on his wife, and they separate for good. Aimless, Diana takes up with a homosexual friend, swears off romance, and goes with him to Capri. With Malcolm, Diana finally has a relationship based on affection and equality, and they even share the same "rent boy."

However, back in London with no more worlds to conquer, Diana takes up Catholicism and returns to marry Prince Cesare della Romita, who proposed to her after a one-day encounter. The Prince quickly ensconces Diane in the care of his seven children, makes her a trophy wife, and begins to cheat on her. Diana has literally become the princess locked in a tower, bored, angry and miserable. In search of her happy ending Diana returns to Gold, who seduces and then rejects her. As he drives Diana to the airport to return her to her unhappy marriage, he is cruel to her, but it also clear that Robert is the only man to have actually loved her.

The plot trajectory of *Darling* is important to note, as Diana goes from husband to lover, to lover, to gay friend, to husband. *Darling* makes illogical choices, which are the choices of the film's director, John Schlesinger, who helped to conceive the film. In, *The LGBTQ Encyclopedia Today*, Patricia Smith writes that Schlesinger, who became prominent during the British new wave, lived openly with his partner in the 1960s and officially "came out" in 1991. Schlesinger, therefore, provides an interesting and unique observation of sexuality in the mid-Sixties from the position of a man who "never made a secret of his homosexuality" (Smith, Patricia). The fact that Schlesinger is looking at a female protagonist through the lens of his own sexuality and status as "other," as well as the film's defiance of censorship rules, make *Darling* worthy of a second look almost five decades later.

In, "Women and Sixties British Cinema: The Development of the 'Darling' Girl," Christine Geraghty posits that publicity surrounding the Profumo scandal in 1963 created an association of young women with sexual power. Geraghty finds similarities between the plot of *Darling* and the Profumo affair. For one, Diana's sexuality soon becomes associated with desire rather than innocence, making it difficult to gauge whether she is interested in Miles merely as a lover or as a means to success. Diana negotiates different levels of British society, from the world of Establishment politics to the avant garde of art galleries and intellectuals. "Diana (like Keeler) mixes in the crossover world between politics, business and showbiz; the orgies, masks and sexual games which Diana is drawn into by Miles have the seedy flavour of the 'rumours' investigated in the Denning Report" (158).

Although the Diana Scott character was unpopular with critics, Geraghy finds positive aspects of *Darling*. She takes as an example the scene in which Miles and Darling enter his boardroom after a late night party:

the changes in the register of her voice as she teases Miles, the transformation of the board table into a catwalk ... refer us to the character's ambition but the star's naturalness and integrity transform this into a display of femininity which she controls even in the seat of big business. Thus Christie's image and performance call the narrative into question by suggesting that feminine discourses of beauty and fashion are not the property of the Establishment but a way of claiming a feminine identity which can be used as a mode of self-expression, particularly around sexuality. (159-160)

In other words, Christie informs Diana with enough charm to make the audience question the narrative she has been hired to represent. Alexander Walker also states that the ending of *Darling*, her punishment for being a sexually liberated woman, marriage to the older, conservative Prince della Romita, is unbelievable:

all this appeared as implausible as it was modish. And it was very modish. A girl of 'Darling's' temperament would hardly have comprehended the notion that loneliness is to be her particular hell, any more than she would have tolerated her 'imprisonment.' Within five minutes of the film's ending, one feels, she would have had the spare Ferrari on the road to Rome to have herself a little *dolce vita*. (174)

Walker also posits that the men of *Darling* tell more about British society than its singular female character. Borgarde's Robert is the "average sensual man" torn between integrity and his need to make a living, bored by family life and responsibility. Lawrence Harvey as Miles is the "bitchy, aimless voyeur" who has been an ad man for so long that even a Paris orgy does not excite him. And Roland Curram's Malcolm is the "cuddly homosexual" who was one of the first overtly gay characters in British film.

Darling, as the model, the mod, and the princess, symbolize consumer culture, and *Darling* symbolizes the state of Britain. In the preface of his book, *Nation and Narration*, Homi Bhabha addresses nation building as a process which includes narrative texts as a means to define the nation-state. As nations are in flux, their narrations often change during defining cultural shifts; these texts are a means of creating boundaries and delineating norms and mores. He states, "Nations, like narratives, lose their origins in the myths of time and only fully realize their horizons in the mind's eye ... it is from those traditions of political thought and literary language that the nation emerges as a powerful historical idea in the west" (Bhabha 2). The critic Elspeth Probyn writes that the nation-state is based upon the concept of "women as trope," used to create narratives which homogenize rather than individualize. Thus "woman" is confined to a particular set of strategies which also signify the nation. Therefore "by creating a static image of femininity, these texts may also deny the history from which they arose" (qtd. in Kaplan 5).

Since *Darling* comes from an era in which cultural scripts were in flux, Diana Scott represents fears about the destabilization of the British Empire. She is also symbolic of anxieties regarding the sexuality of British women; furthermore, she is

associated with different aspects of British culture as she moves between levels of society. *Darling* opens with the visual of a billboard ad for Diana's interview in "Ideal Woman," entitled *My Story*, which is being pasted over an ad for the World Hunger Fund. As the viewer watches, the starving African children are replaced with Diana's "Aryan beauty." The camera lingers on each emaciated child as fragmented aspects of Diana's face covers them. John Hill observes, "Diana (Julie Christie) functions as the metaphor for the trivial and shallow values of the consumer society, its slavish devotion to appearance rather than substance" (Hill 157). The opening also brings to mind fears from Conservatives regarding the dissolution of the British Empire during the 1960s. Diana's visage represents a modern Britain in which individual desire overrides sacrifice for the good of the nation.

Diana's foray into British society with Miles is also noteworthy. At the World Hunger Draw, a charity raffle, the beginning image of the movie is revisited. The room is populated by the wealthy and titled, and these characters are portrayed as ugly and aged. At one point, a woman wins a trip to the Bahamas and remarks, "But I've only just come back." Circulating throughout the crowd are adolescent black boys, dressed in white powdered wigs and Edwardian costumes. They pass through the crowd in silence with large boxes of chocolates. When the announcer thanks the crowd for helping those of every race and creed to overcome "the humiliation, degradation, and shame of the agonies of malnutrition and hunger," an obese woman with a plate of sandwiches continues to chew languidly. As Miles escorts Diana upstairs past a large portrait of the young Queen Elizabeth, Miles tells the story of "her ladyship" they have just met, whose

grandmother slept with every member of the cabinet, “except for those who were afraid they were her father.” These images create two very different sides of the royal coin.

At the top of the stairs, Lord Grant, who is seated with a young man half his age, says to Miles, “I like your blacks boys, John ... I don’t suppose I could try to wrap one up and take him home.” To which Miles replies, “I shouldn’t try, they’re all numbered.” Not only is Lord Grant encoded as gay, but also as a pedophile; he refers to Miles as “John” even though he knows his name. That the young black boys are “numbered” marks them as objects, and, worse yet, commodities to be traded. In this incident, they are there to remind the guests of the once vast reaches of the British Empire. This scene also depicts the upper class as decadent, selfish and depraved.

Its counterpart occurs in Paris, when Miles take Diana to a sex party. In her voice-over, Darling states, “They were astonishing people, terribly sophisticated and sort of emotionally ... inquisitive.” Miles has taken Diana to a party where the main attraction is watching two people have sex. However, Schlesinger edited the scene under pressure from the BBFC (Walker 175). What is viewed is very unclear, except that the woman seated on the bed is wearing a white plastic raincoat, and, after the edit, Diana is wearing the coat. *In Sex in the Movies*, Alexander Walker explains what is missing:

Everyone is obviously waiting for something to happen. What happens is that footsteps are heard running down the corridor, in bursts a young man already stripping off his clothes and apologizing profusely in French ... *‘Le parking est affreux’* ... the scene fades out, having made its ironic point that even those who indulge rich voyeurs have to account mundane matters like parking restrictions. (175).

According to Walker, “The brothel scene in the censor’s view told one nothing new about the characters, emphasized nothing that had not already been clear; and to a censor already perturbed by *Darling’s* blurred morality it seemed artistic self-indulgence to stage a sequence like it simply for the sake of an ironic pay-off” (176). Walker, however, is wrong. The scene does not occur in a brothel; it appears to take place in someone’s apartment. And the sex scene is not the primary focus; that is what comes after— a game, “a truth game” as Miles tells Diana, which is referred to as a “*bien joue*.” After Miles hands Diana over to an older lesbian woman, the entire party crowd begins to dance in a circle, the host refers to what is about to conspire as “real life *cinema verite*,” and a film projector’s light is cast upon a blank wall.

As the crowd moves in a circle past the light, they begin to remove their clothes and hand them to other players, until at the end, everyone in the circle is cross-dressed. When the music stops, the person in the light must assume the identity of another person. A black man in a blonde wig becomes Diana, and Diana becomes Miles, and so on. This scene in *Darling* is more than ironic; it addresses intersections of gender, race, sexuality, and transvestitism. Later in the film, when Robert discovers Diana’s affair with Miles, she takes up with Malcolm. In a scene in the stuffy British delicacy store, Fortnum & Mason’s, an exclusive tea and delicacy store, Diana and Miles shoplift hundreds of pounds worth of food, in plain sight, by placing them in Darling’s handbag and a large bundle of paper-wrapped flowers.

When they return to Darling’s house they gorge themselves. They also pour food and drink into the fish bowl Diana brought with her when taking up housekeeping with Robert. When the fish are dead the following morning, Diana’s freedom is complete.

The two fish in their glass prison, which symbolized her relationship with Robert, are gone. In Capri with Malcolm, Diana suggests that they buy a house together and live like brother and sister. When Malcolm takes up with a local rent boy, Diana in a fit of jealousy must have him too. They appear to share everything. Diana's caper with Malcolm is *Darling* at her happiest, but even this relationship cannot satisfy.

Darling was not popular with critics, yet the film was a hit in both Britain and America and Christie won Best Actress that year at the Academy Awards. Christie says this of her character:

Here was a woman who didn't want to get married, didn't want to have children like those other kitchen-sink heroines; no, Darling wanted to have everything. Of course at the time, this was seen as greedy promiscuity and she had to be punished for it. But there was an element of possibility for women, of a new way of living, which is why the film was a success. (qtd. in Murphy 124).

Both *Darling* and *Blow Up* take up many aspects of modern sexuality never before addressed in British or American film. Thus both were beset with censorship issues. Walker states that not only were cuts made in the Paris scene, *Darling* had trouble with American codes due to Christie's "fleeting nudity." "Nudity, partial or complete, tends to be treated more tolerantly in Britain, though again it must be justified by the context, the skill or reputation of the film and its maker"(176). *Blow Up* was another matter entirely. It did pass the British censorship board, but only because of Antonioni's reputation as a filmmaker. According to Tom Mathews, "an aesthetic slide rule would now be applied by the Board in its treatment of the notorious ground-breaking sexual

scenes from the late Sixties cinema. The first famed example, from a BBFC report dated 13 January 1967... examined Michelangelo Antonioni's distant, elegiac fable of swinging London, *Blow-Up*" (175).

The examination determined that "because of the general nature of this particular piece, we would be justified in passing it uncut. There is the consideration of a certain hullabaloo if we do make cuts also" (175). The BBFC was worried that the film was too risqué, especially the ménage à trios scene, but it also feared being criticized for making edits in a film by Antonioni. John Davis, the Chairman of the Cinematograph Exhibitors Association wrote to Trevelyan, "the films of Antonioni are always of interest to highbrow critics.... At the present time the anticensorship pressures have increased, and we have to be particularly careful not to lay ourselves open to attacks on points of censorship that we cannot fully defend" (176). American censors, however, outright refused to pass the film.

Mark Harris says that the *ménage à trois* was bad enough, but to make it even worse there was nudity in the scene and American censors did not like nudity. Moreover, the scene in which photographer stands over Sara Miles and makes eye contact with her as she has sex with her husband was completely unacceptable. At the beginning of the filming, Geoffrey Shurlock had warned MGM that the two scenes "verge on the pornographic" (264). Even Jack Valenti who had helped the same company to get a rating for *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, would not defend *Blow Up*. Shurlock and Valenti ultimately decided that *Blow Up* was an art house film which would generally be ignored. MGM countered by creating a company just to distribute the film, Premier

Production Company, Inc., and did not seek the approval of the National Catholic Office for Motion Pictures.

Blow Up, however, was a box office hit, and was shown across America unrated. *Blow Up* was the litmus test which destroyed the Hays Code: a film could now be exhibited anywhere without a rating and become a major success. Palmer and Bray also report that *Blow-Up* was the first mainstream film shown in America since 1934 to feature full frontal nudity. It is essential to note that *Blow Up* heralded the intersection of art house film and blockbuster as well. A new generation had made its presence known, and the Hays Code was outdated. Or, as Harris states, “*Blow Up* began 1967 by throwing a stick of dynamite into the middle of the movie business” (265).

Blow Up, along with *Darling*, signified a major change in the nation state narrative of not one but two countries. Homi Bhabha writes that change may arise from “recesses of the national culture from which alternative constituencies of people and oppositional analytic capacities may emerge—youth, the everyday, nostalgia, new ‘ethnicities’, new social movements, ‘the politics of difference’. They assign new meanings and different directions to the process of historical change” (Bhabha 4). And at that moment, historical change was evident in both Britain and America. Film texts such as *Darling* and *Blow-Up* also demonstrate that women’s demands for equality were, at least, partially responsible for the liberation of sexual mores in both cultures. It is also evident that directors such as Antonioni and Schlesinger used female characters in their texts to challenge censorship regulations and to reconfigure national identities.

Blow Up and *Darling*, along with several other Sixties films, may also be examined through the lens of Michel Bakhtin’s theories of the carnivalesque. As

previously discussed, Bakhtin's *Rabelais and His World*, explores the effect carnivals have through their capacity to reverse social and societal norms. Moreover, "it does not acknowledge any distinction between actors and spectators" (Bakhtin 7). The history of carnival goes back to Roman Saturnalias and has much in common with agrarian rituals which celebrate "renewal and rebirth." For Bakhtin, "Carnival is not a spectacle seen by the people; they live in it ... While carnival lasts, there is no other life outside it. During carnival time, life is subject only to its laws, that is, the laws of its own freedom. It has a universal spirit; it is a special condition of the entire world, of the world's revival and renewal, in which all take part" (7). Bakhtin states that during the Middle Ages there were official feasts established by the church or state to celebrate the status quo; "Unlike the earlier and purer feast, the official feast asserted all that was stable, unchanging, perennial: the existing hierarchy, the existing religious, political and moral values, norms and prohibitions" (9).

Feasts, however, were related to the cycles of nature; these occurred after harvest seasons or to mark an annual recurring event. "Moreover, through all the stages of historic development feasts were linked to moments of crisis, of breaking points in the cycle of nature or in the life of society and man. Moments of death and revival, of change and renewal always led to a festive perception of the world" (9). Bakhtin's concepts are particularly important when marking certain aspects of 1960s film, which also recorded a culture in flux, overthrow of hierarchies, and a true atmosphere of carnival. While much of youth culture was attempting to overthrow established norms and filmmakers fought to oust censorship codes, many films of the Sixties exemplify Bakhtin's theories regarding carnival:

As opposed to the official feast, one might say that carnival celebrated temporary liberation from the prevailing truth and from the established order; it marked the suspension of all hierarchical rank, privileges, norms, and prohibitions. Carnival was the true feast of time, the feast of becoming, change, and renewal. It was hostile to all that was immortalized and completed. (10)

While Bakhtin saw carnival as a temporary suspension, many films of the 1960s present this display as an integral part of historical moment they encapsulate. Carnival and spectacle became necessary to the process of change during this era, to the point that many of the tactical methods of change such as the protest march, the rock festival, the art “happening,” and other major events of the times, were based on public spectacle and reflect Bakhtin’s “world inside out.” Consequently, his “woman on top” theories regarding carnival time also become more normative in society and this phenomenon is also reflected in films of the 1960s.

Both *Blow-Up* and *Darling* reflect Bakhtin’s ideas about carnival. In *Blow-Up*, mimes invade Bond Street, transgressing the territory of the commercial and the conservative. The mimes also signify clowns with their whiteface and mod, fantastical clothes. In his discussion of the “feast of fools” Bakhtin relates that in this particular festival the fool or jester is made the ruler for a day:

From the wearing of clothes turned inside out and trousers slipped over the head to the election of mock kings and popes the same topographical logic is put to work: shifting from top to bottom, casting the high and the old, the finished and completed into the material bodily lower stratum for

death and rebirth. These changes were placed into an essential relation with time and with social and historical change. (81-82)

Bakhtin also discusses the work of H. Reich, who uses the figure of the mime as the symbol for this historical figure. The Ban the Bomb rally which the photographer must drive through, and the final scene of the film, in which the reality of mimes' tennis game becomes an epiphany, can be construed as elements of carnival. For *Darling*, Diana and Malcolm's comedic heist in Fortnum & Mason's constitutes carnival, as they are stealing delicacy items from under the nose of the managers and in plain view of upper class matrons who are shocked by their audacity. The sex party which Diana and Miles attend is carnivalesque as well, as the patrons disrobe and don each other's clothes to assume alternative identities and gender.

The French theorist Guy Debord's text on consumer society, *The Society of the Spectacle* (1967) is also relevant to an examination of Sixties film texts. Debord was a member of an avant garde group of artists and theorists, the Letterist International, which evolved into the Situationist International in 1957 when Debord managed to gain control of the group and began to emphasize its political components. The Letterist International performed activities which can be viewed as precursors of 1960s "happenings." The LI participated in *detournement*, a practice in which art or literature was reconfigured into alternative works with revolutionary meaning.

In the 1950s, it also began writing and distributing tracts that decried work of any kind. The members of the LI were young people who drifted around Paris, creating art, discussing revolution, writing pamphlets and frequenting bars. Besides *detournement*, the group practiced a technique referred to as *psychogeography*. According to Andrew

Hussey, “The most important ‘*psychogeographical*’ technique was the practice of *derive*, or ‘drift’, in the course of which members of the LI would float across Paris in the pursuit of anarchy, play, poetry: ‘Paris without spectacle’” (91). The drift, in the words of LI member, Michele Bernstein, would lead to “salutary states of awe, melancholy, joy or terror” (91). In this way, the LI were akin to the Beat Generation writers in their praise of drifting or aimless movement in order to avoid conventional life.

In 1957, the LI evolved into the Situationist International and was comprised of members in Italy, Germany, Denmark and Belgium. By 1963, the group was centered in France and became primarily political in tactics and methodology. The SI played a large part in the May 1968 student revolts in Paris. Members of the group made up the lion’s share of the Occupation Committee of the Sorbonne, and phrases and slogans from Debord’s *The Society of the Spectacle* were painted on walls of Paris and surrounding cities during this period of revolt.

The Society of the Spectacle is a collection of two hundred and twenty-one tenets organized into nine chapters, which refer to different aspects of the Spectacle. The book is based on the work of Karl Marx, although Debord calls for the reexamination of *Das Kapital* in the light of modern consumer culture. Debord begins by stating, “In societies where modern conditions of production prevail, all of life presents itself as an immense accumulation of spectacles. Everything that was directly lived has moved away into a representation” (1). Furthermore, the spectacle is not only signified by commodity culture, it manifests itself as representations of commodities, creating an overwhelming visual universe which seduces the individual away from true pleasure, and into a

destructive cycle of toil created by the endless production of goods and the need to possess them.

Debord continues, “As a part of society it [the spectacle] is specifically the sector which concentrates all gazing and all consciousness” [3], and “All community and all critical sense are dissolved during this movement in which the forces that could grow by separating are not yet reunited” [25]. In other words, in the later phases of capitalism, consumerism affects the individual’s consciousness, perception, and critical thinking. As the consumer is infected by the spectacle, he or she lives only to produce and consume. Furthermore, the spectacle disconnects individuals and destroys communication. “Accompanying the progress of accumulation of separate products and the concentration of the productive process, unity and communication become the exclusive attribute of the system’s management” [26].

Debord also postulates, “The technology is based on isolation and the technical process isolates in turn. From the automobile to television, all the goods selected by the spectacular system are also its weapons for the constant reinforcement of the conditions of isolation of “lonely crowds” [28]. The spectacle, Debord holds, manufactures alienation. “The spectacle is capital to such a degree of accumulation that it becomes an image” [34]. Therefore, reality is supplanted with its representation. In the spectacle, images created by media become more real than the actual life of the individual.

Debord recommends the practice of anarchy and revolutionary activity to defeat the spectacle. Furthermore, the SI also created “constructed situations” which are utilized to defeat the spectacle:

A situation is also an integrated ensemble of behavior in time. It is composed of actions contained in a transitory décor. These actions are the product of the décor and of themselves, and they in their turn produce other decors and other actions ... This alone can lead to the further clarification of these simple basic desires, and to the confused emergence of new desires whose material roots will be precisely the *new reality* engendered by situationist constructions. (49)

Andrew Hussey states that Debord created the “situation” as a means to create a conflict in society. “He would later define it as a precise moment in life, ‘concretely and deliberately constructed’. This moment of passionate, realized intensity was revolutionary because it had the potential to disrupt and transform the mediocre nature of everyday life; the practices of ‘*derive*’, ‘*psychogeography*’ and ‘*detournement*’ were proof of this” (114).

In writing about the evolution of the “situation,” Hussey also defines Debord’s ideology quite succinctly:

Most importantly, the “constructed situation”, which was a moment of pure subjectivity, also had the potential to subvert the hypnotizing power of the “spectacle”, another term which Debord was now using confidently as a metaphor for the way in which the forces of state, capital and media denied the individual control or participation in his or her daily life. Hitherto, this term had been used by Debord and the Situationists mainly to describe the false representation of life which took the form of the urban spectacle of consumerism and capital. It was now taking on a fuller

political force as a way of describing how modern life reduced individuals to a state of passivity in which they lost all sense of full human potential and became spectators of their own lives. (114)

The work of Debord is a reflection of the post war ideology of not only France, but also England and America in the 1960s. The idea that “forces of state, capital and media had denied the individual control” (114) was prevalent to some extent in many film texts of this decade. Bakhtin’s theories of carnival parallel Debord’s idea of creating “situations” to defeat the spectacle in that a particular happening or event may function to overturn the existing order for a short period of time. Debord holds that the event, in turn, may create a more permanent effect on participants and observers. Thus the student riots in Paris in May of 1968 helped to bring about a worker’s strike two weeks later, which involved ten million people across France and paralyzed the country.

“She’s a Drag. A Well-Known Drag.”

Throughout the 1960s, films appeared in which public events reached the level of spectacle or carnival, sometimes in conjunction with music or art. By their widespread dissemination, they also conveyed certain ideas of Mod culture to a young audience regarding style and attitude. One of the first of these was Richard Lester’s *A Hard Day’s Night* (1964), which portrayed a day in the lives of the pop group, the Beatles. The action of *A Hard Day’s Night* contrasts mod culture against the stuffy, class-bound attitudes of an older generation. *A Hard Day’s Night* follows the band through a twenty-four hour period as they are chased by hysterical fans in the public sphere, which creates an air of

carnival, and at the same time, negotiate their private lives which are being “handled” in a manner to preserve their cache as commodities

Although the film is a comedy, particular scenes reflect generational conflict, such as the incident when a businessman enters a train compartment where the younger men attempt to play a portable radio and have a window open. The man wears a bowler hat, the emblem of success in upper class Britain. The businessman states, “An elementary knowledge of the Railway Acts would tell you that I’m perfectly within my rights,” to which Paul McCartney counters, “Yeah but we want to hear it, and there’s more of us than you. We’re a community, like, a majority vote. Up the workers and all that stuff!” John Lennon merely puts his face up to the man’s and says, “Give us a kiss.” It is obvious the older man views the four as specimens of perversion, from glances exchanged after he enters the compartment. *A Hard Day’s Night* therefore reflects a transformation in the style of young men of the 1960s as evidenced by the Beatles’ longer hair, dress, and relaxed attitude toward social hierarchies. The Mod “look” is more feminized than the previous generation’s rigid dress code as well. The Beatles not only exhibit Mod style, but also the politics of Mod culture. When the man on the train counters, “Don’t take that tone with me young man. I fought the war for your sort,” he is told, “I bet you’re sorry you won.”

The film is famous for one-line statements, often repeated during the Beatles’ rise to fame, which also give the film a cult following even today. Most of these lines reflect a mod or counterculture attitude. Representatives of the Establishment are told, “There you go, hiding behind a smokescreen of bourgeois clichés,” or “The older generation’s leading our nation in a state of galloping ruin!” During a brief escape from authority, the

four run about in a field and allow Lester's camera to reflect the French New Wave techniques of hand held camera, jump cuts, natural settings, and aerial point of view to create visuals which reflect both youthful exuberance and British New Wave style drawn from documentary techniques. When told, "This is private property, you know," their response is "Sorry we hurt your field." Social hierarchies, sexual orientation, bourgeois culture, the older generation, class, and even private ownership are suspect to scrutiny in *A Hard Day's Night*.

A scene that reflects the commoditization of youth culture occurs when George Harrison wanders into an office and is mistaken as someone hired to give his support to a television show which manufactures youth "style." When the secretary calls Simon Marshall, the producer, she states, "I've got one. Yes he can talk." Marshall and the secretary discuss the fact that, "Oh my god, he's a natural. Well I did tell them not to send us real ones. They ought to know by now the phonies are much easier to handle." Marshall then asks the Harrison his opinion on some "clothes for teenagers." When Harrison remarks that he would not be caught dead in a particular shirt, he is told that if he doesn't cooperate he cannot meet Susan, their "resident" teenager. Harrison asks if she's the "posh bird who gets everything wrong." Marshall replies, "She's a trendsetter. It's her profession." Harrison tells him that he and his friends enjoy ridiculing her, and "She's a drag. A well-known drag. We turn the sound down on her and say rude things." Marshall is horrified and begins to scream, "Get him out of here."

The message sent by this interchange is that George Harrison is a true trendsetter, and from the streets of working class Liverpool. He is a member of a famous musical group, wears clothes designed by a German art student, and is not only a representative of

mod, he is a founder of the style. He is not a phony. However, while Harrison is decrying the manipulation of British youth, he is also a representation of Debord's spectacle; his image is reproduced, sold, and commodified. Consequently, he has lost his freedom, which is also a symptom of the spectacle. The balance between celebrity and individuality is the essence of *A Hard Day's Night*.

Lester's second film *The Knack...and How to Get It* (1965) and the Beatles' *Help!* (1965) also display aspects of the carnevalesque nature of swinging London. Both of these films, however, involve a female character that is integral to the narrative. The character Ahme, played by Eleanor Bron in *Help!*, is an assistant of the evil Clang, a high priest who demands a subject be sacrificed each day after wearing a sacrificial ring for twenty-four hours. When Ringo Starr receives the ring from a fan it becomes stuck on his finger. The plot is based upon various ways Clang tries to paint him red and sacrifice him to the god, Kieli. Ahme eventually leads the Beatles to evade Clang and makes him the object of the sacrifice. Filmed in London, Austria, and the Bahamas, the film also spoofs James Bond, with its mysterious female and nefarious villains, including a couple of British scientists looking for fame.

Much is implied in this film about British colonialism. Stereotypes are set up and broken down. Ahme is beautiful; she is costumed as Far Eastern, and is beyond a doubt the most intelligent member of the sect. One scene is located in an Indian restaurant and much of the humor has to do with cultural difference. As *A Hard Day's Night* creates a parody of British culture, *Help!* satirizes the colonial nature of the British Empire and its preconceived notions of "other." The film begins with a sacrifice to an evil goddess, "[W]hose name is the terrible, whose name is baleful, whose name is inaccessible, whose

name is the black mother of darkness." But the sacrifice cannot be consummated because the ring is missing, most probably orchestrated by Ahme. And although she is a high priestess of the religion, Ahme is against the practice of ritual sacrifice to the mother goddess. In the final scene of *Help!*, she both saves the four young men and foils the patriarchal figurehead of her religion.

The Knack...and How to Get It, Lester's other film of 1965, also employs the carnival nature of swinging London and features an innocent girl who has just arrived, Nancy Jones, played by Rita Tushingham. The film is an examination of modern sexual mores. The plot involves a naïve schoolteacher, Colin, who rents a room to a sexist, mod seducer named Toliver, who has great success with women and attempts to teach Colin the "knack." The film begins with Colin's imaginary view of a long line of women in identical dress, shoes, haircut, and even the same pendent necklace, all waiting for Toliver's sexual attention. They spray perfume, eat oysters, adjust make up, and are received one by one. They exist only in the imagination of the schoolteacher, all alike in the name of something he can only imagine.

As Nancy drifts toward the boarding house, in search of the YWCA, she also encounters the new sexuality of London: a woman who enters a photo booth and hands out her clothes to a companion to be photographed naked, men chatting her up from the windows of a gymnasium shower room, a clothing store where the male salesman seduces every woman who enters with the same lines to sell them dresses, mixing sex and commerce: "I must please you and I think I can. Don't fail me now or I shall never trust myself with a woman ever again. I know absolutely, surely I can please you. Wait for me." Meanwhile, everything Colin observes is also sexual, from middle-aged men on the

street watching girls play in his schoolyard, to the women Colin brings into his house. In search of a lodger who is less seductive, Colin puts a sign in the window and returns home to find Tom painting the downstairs of his house white, a symbol of mod culture and indicative of a fresh start.

The centerpiece of *The Knack...and How to Get It* occurs when Colin decides a larger bed will help him to seduce women. After buying a huge metal bed in a junk yard, Tom and Colin collide with Nancy and bring her along; the three take turns pushing and riding the bed through the streets of London, down a canal, and tied to the back of a car through the countryside. As the bed is the ultimate metaphor for swinging London, it is used as a vehicle for entertainment, much to the consternation of observers.

Throughout the film, the young characters of *The Knack...and How to Get It* are stared at and spoken about by older Londoners on the streets. As they lament the state of London's morality, their voice-overs become a Greek chorus of the older generation. When Toliver tries to seduce Nancy in a park, however, she takes the upper hand and begins to scream "rape," rendering the three young men completely powerless and accountable for their views toward women. At the end of the film, Colin and Nancy decide they are attracted to each other and move in together, while Toliver, who is jealous, joins the chorus of critical voices. The movie takes a neutral view toward the sexuality of the era, but the two innocents wind up the happiest. Both the bed scene and the "rape" scene are carnivalesque romps through London, the first reminiscent of Lester's Beatles films while the second, Nancy's public revenge, counters Colin and Toliver's view toward women as mere conquests.

Another British film, Peter Watkins's *Privilege* (1967), takes the idea of spectacle to the ultimate conclusion of Debord's theories, as it portrays a rock star who is used by the British government to control youth, provide a scapegoat for society's aggression, and sell whatever product is necessary for the economy to survive. Watkins creates a dystopian England where the rock star Steven Shorter is beaten for mass entertainment one moment and used for commercial gain the next. Spectacle follows spectacle in this film, each used as a more outrageous device to criticize consumer culture, government, and religion. A voice over which connects the scenes states at the beginning: "The reason given for the extreme violence of the stage act you are about to see is that it provides the public with a release from all the nervous tension caused by the state of the world outside ... and so successful has this violent act become that Steven Shorter now finds himself the most desperately loved entertainer in the world." The pop star is then thrown onto a stage and thrashed by police while fans scream hysterically.

Subsequently, the voice over relates that throughout England are chains of combination discos and department stores, in which Shorter's image is used to sell goods. The viewer may observe that the pop star, who releases public tension and sells everything from dog food to apples, also displays the affect of a catatonic. As a narrative device, the painter Vanessa Ritchie is commissioned by the state to paint Shorter's portrait. She finds herself interested in the pop star: "It was the way he looked in the midst of all those people. There was a strange sort of emptiness and I just wanted to paint him." Unfortunately for his handlers, Shorter begins to experience feeling with Ritchie, which leads to rebellion. When told his next performance will align the church and state to "subdue the critical elements of today's youth," Shorter begins to doubt his

role. The final spectacle of *Privilege*, presided over by the British clergy, is based, Watkins states, on Leni Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will*. Eventually, when the pop star comes to life and announces that he hates his fans, Vanessa Ritchie is blamed. Vanessa is told that she has created more damage than she can possibly imagine. In the end, her principals bring down an entire commercial venture. She is the ultimate hero of the film. It is interesting to note that Vanessa is not portrayed as a mere love interest, but a professional female with ethics and empathy who counteracts the patriarchal greed and ruthlessness of the male characters. In the final voice over, the audience is told that all images of Shorter have been erased from British culture. This ending also decries the capricious nature of a public told what to buy and how to feel.

Watkins states that much of the documentary technique is used to “deconstruct the Hollywood narrative model” (11). He also reveals, “we are using the fictional character of Steven Shorter, and the world around him, as an extended metaphor for the insanity and dangers of unchecked capitalism and the consumer society” (12). Therefore, *Privilege* also addresses the spectacle from Debord's perspective. As with other films of the day, Watkins employed pop icons; he used the musician Paul Jones and the model Jean Shrimpton to convey his anti-Establishment message. And as the decade progressed, however, the lines between the rock star as musician, actor, representation, and finally representative of his generation began to blur.

“War, Children, It’s Just A Shot Away”

Other films of the 1960s depicted rock stars in actual documentaries, portraying themselves, while rock festivals became the ultimate carnival experience. D. A. Pennebaker’s documentary of Bob Dylan, *Don’t Look Back* (1967) catalogs his concerts, lovers, skirmishes with the press, and meetings with other pop celebrities such as Donovan, Allen Ginsberg and the Beatles. Dylan’s cruel send up of a BBC reporter has remained an iconic moment in the pastiche of Sixties popular culture. The film *Woodstock* (1970), a documentary of the famous 1969 festival in New York State, is a chronicle of the three-day rock concert which became a carnivalesque celebration of the “Peace and Love Generation.” Combining music, dancing, and drug-fueled ecstasy, *Woodstock* reflected a change in the culture and morals of American society. Yet a film with an entirely different message followed *Woodstock* that year. *Gimme Shelter* (1970) seemed to herald the death of the Peace and Love Generation.

Gimme Shelter details a concert by The Rolling Stones in Altamont, California, and features footage of interviews with the four musicians as they attempt to fathom the results of the mayhem they created. At the film’s apex, a camera records an extremely feminized Mick Jagger losing control of the crowd after a young man steps forward with a gun and is consequently beaten to death by the motorcycle gang, the Hells Angels, who were hired to keep the peace. Jean-Luc Godard’s *Sympathy for the Devil* (1970) also features Rolling Stones’ recording sessions inter-cut with interviews with Black Panther luminaries spoken over haunting, surrealist landscapes such as junkyards. Godard’s piece is yet another view of the decade, drawing to an unpredictable end.

A narrative American film, *Sympathy for the Devil* (1970), directed by Arthur Penn, also served to reflect the unrest of the Sixties, with its underlying text of rebellion and violence. Based on the true story of Clyde Barrow and Bonnie Parker, a small-time gangster and a beautiful girl who meet during the depression and go on a crime spree, the film takes their story one step further to make the killers sympathetic protagonists. In doing so, their progressively violent story becomes a spectacle followed by the media, and cheered on by victims of the depression. The film was directed by Arthur Penn after Francois Truffaut eventually passed on the project to direct *Fahrenheit 451* (1966), in England. Truffaut was involved long enough that he met with the writers David Newman and Robert Benton and helped them with ideas for the script. Mark Harris states, “Truffaut also let them know that, as much as they thought their idea was indebted to the French, they needed to look deeper into film history, particularly at some of the neglected American crime drama that had inspired the directors of the Nouvelle Vague in the first place” (37). When Warren Beatty became involved with the project, both as a producer and star, he also wanted aspects of the film to reflect the French New Wave style and technique.

Arthur Penn then set out to create an American Sixties film which reflected the Nouvelle Vague and was set in the depression era America. *Bonnie and Clyde* was also a landmark film as it had a beautiful female criminal in a lead role, that was also an integral part of the film’s violence. With Faye Dunaway as Bonnie Parker, the role also became highly charged with the actress’s sexuality. Penn intended to make the film reflect the current state of America, and he used specific scenes to accomplish this task:

He pushed Robert Towne to rewrite, again and again, a scene in which the Barrow gang traps Frank Hamer, the lawman who is tracking them, and Bonnie humiliates him by kissing him on the mouth. They had to seem not like just a group of criminals tormenting a Texas Ranger, but like a band of antiauthority counterculture kids flipping off the Establishment. Penn liked the notion of Bonnie and Clyde as agrarian Robin Hoods who rob banks but not farmers, a notion made explicit in a couple of the film's stickup scenes. (252)

In another scene, Bonnie and Clyde also encourage a farmer and his black hired hand to shoot out windows of their house, which has been recently foreclosed by a local bank. After the duo pair up with Clyde's brother Buck Barrow, his wife Blanche, and the mechanic C. W. Moss, their reputation grows as media phenomena. The group begins to record their exploits with photography, their image begins to appear in newspapers, and when they arrive to rob a bank, the gang is often recognized and treated as heroes. The spectacle of violence in *Bonnie and Clyde* reflects both the turbulence of the 1960s and the power of the media to create public images. By the end of the film, one of Bonnie's poems is also widely published in newspapers.

Faithful to its French New Wave inspirations, many scenes of the film are shot with available light and hand held cameras. Toward the end, much of the action is filmed outdoors as well, giving the film a sunlit beauty which balances the violence. In one scene, as Clyde chases Bonnie through a field of corn, there are multiple lighting shifts due to the movement of clouds. According to Penn, the final scene which captures the death of the duo was influenced by Kurosawa's *The Seven Samurai* (1954), the Anthony

Zapruder film of John Kennedy's assassination, and Godard's *Breathless* (1960). This scene also balances the splendor of a verdant landscape against the horrific act which ensues. Harris contends:

The summer's riots were on his mind; so was the war in Vietnam, which in the two months that Bonnie and Clyde had been shooting had become the subject of increasing pessimism in the nation's press and of major public protests.... Penn wanted as much political resonance in the scene as it could comfortably contain. (256)

Bonnie and Clyde's final scene is a spectacle of violence with sixty different camera shots in less than a minute, captured by four camera angles. Penn choreographed the scene with the actors in advance; he attached a prosthetic piece of scalp to Beatty's head which would be blown in a way to evoke the Kennedy assassination, and Dunaway's leg was tied to the gearshift so that she could fall out of the car and placed on display. Penn's spectacle of brutality was a comment on the state of turmoil in America. *Bonnie and Clyde* both attracted and repelled its audience, but it was an original film which reflected its generation and became a major box office draw.

Haskell Wexler's *Medium Cool* (1970), is a unique text which reflects the violence of the late 1960s by incorporating actual documentary footage shot by Wexler, combined with narrative filmmaking to create a story which revolves around the 1968 riots at the Democratic convention in Chicago. The film's name is a reference to Marshal McLuhan's work on hot and cool media, with television being a "cool" medium. Much of the film conveys the effect of television footage, as it was shot with hand-held cameras

in a documentary style. *Medium Cool* also uses actors to create a narrative film constructed during an actual media event, as it occurred in real time.

The film is a comment on the particular moment in America when it was created, an indictment of the media in general. The movie begins with its protagonist, Robert Forster, filming a car accident. He is careful to capture every detail from the broken glass and rubble to the unconscious body in the car. Yet only after he has his footage does he ask his assistant to call an ambulance. The second scene involves a cocktail party where various intellectuals discuss the morality of such media techniques. Forster is another Sixties film character who appears to suffer from the postmodern death of emotions; nothing seems to shock him in the world he records. As it is Forster's job to cover the national scene of 1968, the film is interspersed with footage of the Poor People's March on Washington, as well as the violence surrounding the Democratic National Convention.

Douglas Brode notes, "Ultimately, though, the great value of *Medium Cool* is the way Wexler, working as both writer and director, attempted to create an organic film changing the direction of his storyline to fit events as they happened" (281). The film rises to its climax as the protagonist's girlfriend Eileen's young son, Gus, runs away from home after seeing the two kissing. Afterwards, she attempts to find him in the midst of the demonstrations. As Eileen wanders through the crowd of protestors and soldiers, people are beaten, tear gas canisters are exploded, and screaming and chanting surround her. Although the actress Verna Bloom wanders through the violence, oddly enough no one approaches or disturbs her, as she appears both docile and frantic in the midst of the conflict. At one point in the film a voice can be heard to shout, "Look out Haskell. It's real!"

Medium Cool is the ultimate spectacle of Sixties film as it contains footage of rebellion and hostility. Wexler was also able to obtain footage of the convention, where delegates are calling for an end to “police brutality,” and he includes Mayor Daley’s announcement of police intervention. Another scene in which Foster’s character interviews a group of black militants provides a rare, authentic look at the extent of racial tension in America. The result is a pastiche of fiction and reality that documents an era and calls into question the nature of media representations. In the final scene of the film, Forster and Eileen are traveling in his car when Foster loses control and strikes a tree; as another car drives by, ironically, a young man leans out and documents the wreckage with a camera. Paul Monaco states, “probably no film, either fiction or nonfiction, better expresses the exceptionally raw political, generational, and racial tensions in American society at the end of the 1960s film than *Medium Cool*” (177).

While Haskell Wexler crafted the political unrest of American’s public sphere into film text, conversely Andy Warhol used the private sphere of his social circle to create his films. Much of his shorter work, filmed in The Factory, Warhol’s space on Union Square, or often in friends’ apartments in the Chelsea Hotel, lack plot and are merely a stylistic record of ambiance and personalities. Geoff King posits, “The films of Andy Warhol are among the most obvious examples of cinema built around either a complete absence of narrative development or its reduction to vestigial status” (King 68). While Warhol’s first film is an eight-hour shot of the Empire State Building from a static camera, and his second is a five hour film of poet John Giorno sleeping, later feature length films such as *Kiss* (1963), which features interracial and same sex couples kissing,

Couch (1964), which contains explicit sex scenes, and *Flesh* (1969), a narrative about a hustler and his pregnant wife, border on the pornographic.

More interesting are Warhol's screen tests, which capture members of his Factory set including Edie Sedgwick, Gerard Malanga, and Joe Dallesandro, as well as pop and film stars such as Bob Dylan, Nico, and Dennis Hopper. Warhol's camera focuses on the faces of these luminaries with unflinching focus. Other films made with Sedgwick such as *Kitchen*, *Poor Little Rich Girl* and *Beauty No. 2* are considered classic underground Warhol. *Beauty No. 2*, features Sedgwick in bed with a young man while a voice off camera asks vicious and pointed questions of the girl. *Kitchen* features Sedgwick speaking in a Chelsea Hotel kitchen and *Poor Little Rich Girl* involves her dressing for an evening out. King continues, "Many of Warhol's films can be understood as close to documentary portraits of the world occupied by a recurring group of performers, mostly playing themselves or performed versions of the self" (69).

Geoff's statement leads back to Warhol's original premise about his television and the death of his emotions. "You couldn't tell which problems were real and which problems were exaggerated for the tape. Better yet, the people telling you the problems couldn't decide anymore if they were really having the problems or if they were just performing" (Warhol 27). While Wexler documents real events to create narrative, Warhol concocted narratives of real life events, barely concealed as anything else. The character Eileen is central to the action of *Medium Cool*, as she wanders through the riots; Edie Sedgwick is also essential to many of Warhol's films, as her beauty and style are sufficient to fulfill Warhol's ambition, the documentation of his everyday life. In both

films, the question is whether the actors are performing or caught up in an actual experience, and which is more real to the performer, and in turn, the audience.

Bahktin's idea of the spectacle is an event which turns normative rules upside down, while Debord's spectacle is a society where the representation proves more real than actual life. Jameson's view of postmodernism also consists of representations, pastiche, and intertextuality created by a mass media which globalizes the personal and personalizes the global. The films discussed in this chapter were born from different artistic ideas regarding the power of media, consumer culture, and representations of various types of style and morality. But for each character there is also a longing, the final corner that Diana Scott longs to turn, the mystery of reality the photographer struggles to interpret, the freedom longed for by those whose celebrity has been appropriated and utilized by the spectacle.

The women of these films are given unusual and groundbreaking roles, whether they search for meaning in lives affected by the spectacle, or they utilize spectacle to appropriate what they desire. Bonnie Parker symbolizes outlaw culture, while Diana Scott represents the final precursor to female characters who can assert what they need and not be labeled. Nancy Jones takes the upper hand in swinging London and Ahme defeats the priest of a patriarchal religion who appropriates a mother goddess. The sight of Elaine wandering through the grounds of the 1968 Democratic Convention through unchecked violence reflects the anxiety of an entire generation. Films of the Sixties represent many forms of spectacle as they are crafted in a time of cultural upheaval. This decade was an era in which movies were given female leads able to appropriate modes of

carnival, comedy, and rebellion to push against male domination, to defy censorship, and finally, to create new modes of representation.

CHAPTER V

ONE IS NOT BORN A WOMAN: GENDER TROUBLE ON THE
SILVER SCREEN

The great triumph of the Sixties was to dramatize just how arbitrary and constructed the seeming normality of the fifties had been. –Edmund White

Pherber: “Did you ever have a female feel?” Chas: “No, never! I feel like a man. A man all the time.” Pherber: “That’s awful! That’s what’s wrong with you.”
–*Performance*

At the dawn of the 1960s, a more tolerant attitude towards sexuality was becoming apparent in both British and American cinema. Topics arose which had not been portrayed since before the days of the Hays Code, and public sympathy toward characters in controversial films also served to chisel away censorship regulations in both cultures. Narratives that dealt with issues such as extramarital affairs, premarital sex, and homosexuality began to emerge in plays and cinema of the decade. These films would consequently open the door for texts in which representations of gender became more fluid and unstable.

In this chapter, the work of Judith Butler and Michel Foucault will be used to examine gender representation and sexual mores, while critics who deal directly with queer theory and film, including Brett Farmer, Harry Benshoff, and Sean Griffin, will be cited. I will note early films of the 1960s in which female characters undermine social norms of the era, as well as later films which continue the work of “gender slippage” as

the decade draws to a close. I will also examine films where strong female characters are paired with more feminized males, essentially switching characteristics that society uses to “mark” gender normativity.

In *The History of Sexuality*, Michel Foucault discusses the relationship between sexuality and law by stating his belief that “the objective is to analyze a certain form of knowledge regarding sex, not in terms of repression or law, but in terms of power” (92). Foucault theorizes about the way hegemonic practices take dominance over social bodies. He holds that power does not come from the law, but rather those groups who gain power create laws to maintain their control. Laws are the culmination of power struggles by differing extensions of church or state:

It seems to me that power must be understood in the first instance as the multiplicity of force relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate and which constitute their own organization; as the process which, through ceaseless struggles and confrontations, transforms, strengthens, or reverses them ... whose general design or institutional crystallization is embodied in the state apparatus, in the formulation of the law, in the various social hegemonies. (92-3)

Groups in power support laws which uphold their authority; laws control particular aspects of society. Hegemony is predicated upon regulations that are devised to maintain the authority of those who gain dominance.

On sexuality, Foucault holds, “If sexuality was constituted as an area of investigation, this was only because relations of power had established it as a possible target” (98). In terms of cinema, the 1960s began with major production companies in

control of film narratives. During this era, the production companies were exclusively owned by men, and the PCA was in control of the production companies. In effect, the patriarchy was in control. What Foucault proposes, however, is that change comes through discourse. He suggests:

We must not imagine a world of discourse divided between accepted discourse and excluded discourse, or between the dominant discourse and the dominated one; but as a multiplicity of discursive elements that can come into play in various strategies. It is this distribution that we must reconstruct, with the things said and those concealed, the enunciations required and those forbidden ... We must make allowance for the complex and unstable process whereby discourse can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling-block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy. (101-02)

Foucault's theory may be applied to the dominant cinema of the 1960s, which was most certainly at the mercy of censorship regulations. The Hays Code was established as the direct result of pressure from religious groups and government. These censorship regulations were not dismantled until sites of resistance were created by narratives, or discourses, which examined the topic of sexuality.

The lessening of censorship regulations began in the late 1950s when subjects once considered taboo became permitted within specified frameworks. In Britain, during September of 1957, Sir John Wolfenden's Report of the Committee on Homosexuality and Prostitution was released. The committee was founded in the wake of anxiety regarding the supposed breakdown of morality and family life due to an increasing

divorce rate in the United Kingdom. The Wolfenden Report, however, called for the decriminalization of homosexuality and a more lenient attitude toward prostitution. John Hill discusses the “double taxonomy” this finding recommended. The Report called for “greater freedom and leniency combined with stricter penalty and control” (19). The committee stated that homosexuality could not be controlled by state intervention and thus recommended it be dealt with in the private sector, i.e., through psychiatry, medicine, or social research. Homosexuality was still viewed as a perversion; the Report merely called for decriminalization.

The Committee advocated that prostitution should be viewed with greater leniency, but that prostitutes who met their clients publicly should be the recipients of harsher penalties. Hill believes that the Committee ultimately stated that an individual should have the right to make his or her own moral decisions unless another party was harmed or actions took place in public. Consequently, a few months later, the Lord Chamberlain lifted the ban on the topic of homosexuality in stage plays, providing specific conditions were met. Therefore, Shelagh Delaney’s *A Taste of Honey*, directed by Joan Littlewood, was the test case for the new leniency, and after much debate and some revision, it opened in May of 1958.

In Queer Images: A History of Gay and Lesbian Film in America, Harry Benshoff and Sean Griffin argue that the battle of censorship over issues of homosexuality in American film started as early as 1951 with Tennessee Williams’s *A Streetcar Named Desire*. Williams’s play took on the topics of prostitution, homosexuality, and rape, and both the Production Code Administration and the Catholic Legion of Decency demanded numerous changes to the script. However, since *A Streetcar Named Desire* was a Pulitzer

Prize winning play as well as a Broadway success, Elia Kazan, the director, had more bargaining power. Palmer and Bray state, “If the adaptation process, perhaps inevitably, modified what Williams had written for the stage, the code itself was reshaped by the encounter, bending to accommodate an innovative form of dramatic presentation” (64). Despite their modifications to meet Hays Code rules, films originally penned by Tennessee Williams foreshadowed what was to come in the following decade.

By the late 1950s, even Doris Day’s *Pillow Talk* (1959) refers to “mama’s boys” and “decorators” as symbols for homosexuals. Of *Psycho* (1960), Benshoff and Griffin state, “In discussing the monstrously queer figure of cross-dressing, knife-wielding, boy-next-door Norman Bates (Anthony Perkins), the police refer to him as a ‘transvestite’ before a psychiatrist refutes the label” (93). Images such as these forced change from the censors. “With Hollywood films increasingly mentioning the unmentionable, the Production Code Administration had to rethink its strategy, and in the fall of 1961, the Code was amended to allow for the ‘sensitive’ representation of homosexuality, if treated with “care, discretion, and restraint” (93).

The first film shown in America to deal with homosexual issues and win a Code seal of approval was also, *A Taste of Honey* (1961). However, Benshoff and Griffin consider the homosexual, Geoff, “a sad, slightly pathetic male homosexual character” (94). Another British film from the same year, *Victim*, portrays a closeted barrister dealing with blackmail in a sympathetic light and provides a viable argument for the repeal of sodomy laws; however, *Victim* was banned. The Production Code Administration apparently did not want to approve a film with a sympathetic homosexual

character. Yet *A Taste of Honey* opened the way for American films on the subject and was an example of cultural exchange and dialogue between the two nations.

Anthony Aldgate writes that in 1960, two years after the ban on homosexuality in theater was lifted, John Trevelyan, head of the BBFC, was given scripts for both *A Taste of Honey* and *Victim* for approval. Both films underwent extensive editing as well as widespread debate about content. For *A Taste of Honey*, the presentation of a romance between a white girl and a black West Indian boy was not a problem for the censors; it was the matter of Geoff's homosexuality and many of the rude remarks made by Jo's mother Helen's new husband, Peter Sterling. Trevelyan felt the film *Victim* presented "a sympathetic perspective and responsible discussion of a real problem" (Aldgate 134). However, Trevelyan also noted that the BBFC was entering into unknown territory:

We have never banned the subject of homosexuality from the screen but we have not until recently had very much censorship trouble with it, partially because American film producers were prevented from dealing with the subject by the inflexible ruling of the Code ... In these circumstances a film-maker dealing with this subject is treading on dangerous ground and will have to proceed with caution. (134-35)

In another report, BBFC concerns go back to the singular idea of the effects of certain topics on the viewing public. Trevelyan asked for cuts of scenes that were passed for the stage version. He was worried about the film's reception in the United States where the Hays Code strictly forbade "sex perversion," and felt that theater audiences were more sophisticated than moviegoers. Trevelyan wanted references to Geoff's homosexuality toned down. Of the most "offensive" lines, Jo's "I've always wanted to

know about people like you. I want to know what you do. I want to know why you do it?” were left in, while Helen’s reference to Geoff as “that pansified little freak” was taken out.

The plot of *A Taste of Honey* makes clear that Jo’s mother doesn’t work, moves from boarding house to boarding house when she cannot afford rent, and drags her daughter from school to school in the process. Helen is social; she spends her time in pubs and dance halls, and takes up with a man who is ten years younger. She eventually ditches Jo for marriage and a home. While Helen is in the process of courting Peter Sterling, Jo begins a romance with a ship’s cook, Jimmy, and spends the night with him before his ship leaves. Afterwards, Jo takes a job and meets Geoff. Geoff moves in with Jo and begins to take care of her when she learns she is pregnant by Jimmy. What is most interesting about *A Taste of Honey* is the alternative family these two young people create in the face of society’s scorn.

Since the BBFC was worried about Geoff’s status as a homosexual, the audience is made to understand his proclivities when he tells Jo he lost his room when his landlady caught him with another boy. Yet Geoff is still strongly “encoded” as homosexual by his appearance and actions. Geoff decorates their flat with curtains and artwork, cooks, mends clothes, and is fastidious in his dress and housekeeping. Yet while Geoff appears and acts feminized, Jo also exhibits traits of masculinity. Unlike her mother Helen, Jo never primps, fixes her hair, or dresses in a feminine fashion; she is also independent, speaks her mind, and counters her mother’s selfish behavior with aggression and braggadocio. If gender is demarcated by masculine and feminine qualities, and as Bulter postulates, performance, then Geoff takes on the traditional female responsibilities of the

household and Jo, the masculine. Jo earns the money while Geoff takes the role of housekeeper and goes to school. And if Geoff is sad and “slightly pathetic,” so is Jo; they are both outsiders. Geoff is a homosexual, while Jo is a pregnant, unmarried teen about to give birth to a biracial child.

Christine Geraghty states that in the late 1950s and 1960s social scientists in England shifted their focus “from delinquency to pre-marital sex and the figure of the young woman came into greater prominence. Sociologists such as Michael Schofield began to argue for a greater sympathy for young people’s position” (Geraghty 154-55). Schofield was careful to report that the phenomenon of sexually active teens was not attached to class and his research found that “sexually experienced girls were strongly associated with ‘a desire for freedom and independence’” (155). Tony Richardson’s *A Taste of Honey* is, therefore, a British New Wave film of its moment, as it deals with themes of family. Geraghty also maintains, “While they could be critical of their youthful protagonists, the ‘new wave’ films suggested that problems with their behavior lay with society rather than in the innate delinquency of youth or the failure of their individual families” (155-56). *A Taste of Honey* is unique, however, as it features a female protagonist and focuses on the concept of family.

Jo does not become sexually active until Helen’s lover sends her home from a holiday to Blackpool; it is Geraghty’s position that Jo’s loneliness and anger lead her to seek affection and support through sexual intimacy: “the association with innocence and loss is underlined by the children’s songs which accompany Jo and Jimmy as they walk along together and the long leave-taking scene in which Jo watches the deserted boat

depart through the empty industrial landscape of the canal” (156). Gerahty does not focus on her relationship with Geoff, which serves to create an alternative family.

Jo and Geoff meet when Geoff buys a pair of stylish shoes where she works and the two see each other a few days later at a parade and go to a fair together. Jo returns home with a fish Geoff has won for her, and, as in *Darling*, the fish in the bowl symbolizes the domesticity. When Jo invites Geoff to live with her, she states with wry humor, “You’re just like a big sister to me.” What Geoff and Jo have in common is not only their outsider status, but also their youth and enthusiasm. When Geoff goes to find Jo one day, the local children tell him she is “at the Arches,” an architectural feature under the Manchester viaduct. In this stunning setting, dwarfed in shadow under an enormous brick arch, and filmed against the daylight of a smoky urban background, Jo tells Geoff she is pregnant. Geoff reacts calmly and states, “Yes, I thought so ... You’re just feeling a bit depressed that’s all. You’ll be your usual self once you get used to the idea.” To which Jo answers, “And what is usual self. My usual self is a very unusual self. And don’t you forget that Geoffry Ingram. I’m an extraordinary person. There’s only one of me like there’s only one of you.”

As they race back into the daylight, with clouds moving against a sunlit sky, the two shout, “We’re unique! Young! Unrivaled! Smashing! We’re bloody marvelous!” This scene sums up their relationship and reflects the youth culture of Britain in the early Sixties. Geoff and Jo celebrate their diversity together; they are united by their “unique” status, and also by youth and enthusiasm. When Jo becomes pregnant and uncertain, it is Geoff who comforts and supports her, yet she often berates him about his sexuality and devotion to her. As Jo begins to question herself, she also questions Geoff. When Geoff

feels threatened that he will lose the domestic situation he has created (he is even seen making baby clothes), he begs Jo to marry him.

But Geoff isn't really a "big sister" to Jo; he is the mother who abandoned her. He even goes to a National Health office to procure materials for Jo regarding baby care, and the camera lingers over the pregnant women regarding a homosexual man with great trepidation and even scorn. This scene also portrays how outrageous it is for a man to be involved in a woman's pregnancy in the early 1960s. Yet with this action, Geoffrey challenges the gender norms of an older generation. The audience of *A Taste of Honey* is meant to feel sympathy for Geoff. Despite his position as someone scorned by society, his kindness toward Jo is by no means pathetic; he is merely the feminized half of the duo. It may be noted that the character, Jimmy, is also caring, gentle and devoted to Jo. Thus, in *A Taste of Honey*, the male figures are both configured as outsiders, yet both supply Jo with the nurturing and love that her mother refuses to provide.

The gloomy landscape of Manchester, shot in black and white, creates an ambiance which also underscores the film's air of melancholy. Jo's walks along the canal indicate a feeling of transience as the ships come and go; the smoky industrial wastelands of the inner city provide an urban dreamscape through which the moody Jo wanders aimlessly, adrift from purpose. These scenes are countered with children's songs, a parade, a fair, and at the end when Jo's childish face is lit by a sparkler during a Guy Fawkes celebration near her flat. *A Taste of Honey* does not end happily; it delivers one final conflict. Geoff visits Helen and asks her to see Jo before the baby is born. Helen's visit proves disastrous as Peter, who is drunk, insults both Geoff and Jo and

drags Helen away. Still, just as Jo and Geoff seem to have settled into domesticity, Helen appears with her possessions. Peter has thrown her over for a younger woman.

Even though Jo makes it clear to Helen that it is Geoff she wants, Helen easily drives him away, and he packs up and leaves with nowhere to go. The final scene of the film intercuts Jo's face with the sparkler and Geoff's hesitancy, and, finally, his creeping away into the darkness. There is no happy ending for anyone; the more traditional version of family is reestablished. However, it is difficult to imagine that Jo and her mother will be able to live in peace for long. Jo has matured, experienced love with Jimmy, nurturing with Geoff, and is now facing the dilemma of motherhood. One does not feel she will move away from her relationship with Geoff as easily as the one with Jimmy. At first Jo tells Geoff that the father of the baby was "a black prince," but later by the canal she states, "It's only a dream I had ... no, it was Jimmy."

Geoff offers to marry Jo one final time by stating "you need someone to love you while you're looking for someone to love," but the independent Jo prefers her freedom. This preference foreshadows the liberation that would come to young women of the day. Jo doesn't need marriage to justify her pregnancy or her relationship with Geoff. *A Taste of Honey* seems to end *in medias res*; one can only imagine the conclusion of this narrative. And given the direction that films of the 1960s began to take, it is easy to imagine a different resolution to *A Taste of Honey* if it had been made a decade later.

The first American produced film to deal with homosexuality and receive a Production Code Seal was *The Children's Hour* (1961), based on the play by Lillian Hellmann. *The Children's Hour* is a story of two teachers, played by Audrey Hepburn

and Shirley MacLaine, who own a private school. When an angry child accuses the couple of being lovers, the school is closed as parents quickly remove their children.

The implication of this threat is made visible when the couple is taunted by angry men from the neighborhood, Karen's fiancé is fired from his job, and Martha winds up admitting to Karen that she has feelings for her, just prior to committing suicide. And although the ending encodes Martha's symbolic punishment for being lesbian, director William Wyler did choose an open ending. The final shot is a close up of Karen's face. Karen possesses a look of realization which is not interpreted for the audience; neither is there a final reconciliation with her fiancé after their relationship is concluded. The audience is not given a finale which serves to reinforce heterosexuality, nor is Martha portrayed as a deviant. The film also acknowledges homosexuality when Karen tells Martha, "other people haven't been destroyed by it."

Benshoff and Griffin acknowledge the importance of another film, Billy Wilder's *Some Like It Hot* (1959), a gender-bending comedy that portrays both its male leads in drag. "The film queerly points out the performative nature of all gender roles: Tony Curtis's character impersonates both a woman and a man (a millionaire with a Cary Grant accent no less) with equal ease" (93). While Anthony Perkins in *Psycho* is not a woman when he commits murder, he *is* dressed in the guise of his mother. Jack Lemmon in drag is attractive enough to attract the attention of another man who makes a pass at him, and still appears interested when Lemmon removes a wig to reveal his male identity. Yet, which of these characters is closer to being a woman while in drag, the character who believes he is a woman or the character who others believe to be a woman? The work of critic Judith Butler relates to this theoretical question.

In “Gender Is Burning: Questions Of Appropriation And Subversion,” Butler looks at literature and film in the light of poststructural criticism to create the concept that what is different or “queer” may be utilized to undermine concepts of “normativity.” She states, “It is this constitutive failure of the performative, this slippage between discursive command and its appropriated effect, which provides the linguistic occasion and index for a consequential disobedience” (337). Therefore, “the reworking of ‘queer’ from abjection to politicized affiliation will interrogate similar sites of ambivalence produced at the limits of discursive legitimacy” (337). Butler contends that the intersections, points of ambivalence and degradation, in essence, the liminal space between law and action, provides

the non-space of cultural collision, in which the demand to resignify or repeat the very terms which constitute the ‘we’ cannot be summarily refused, but neither can they be followed in strict obedience. It is the space of this ambivalence which opens up the possibility of a reworking of the very terms by which subjectivation proceeds — and fails to proceed.
(338)

Butler observes the subaltern characters of the documentary film *Paris Is Burning* (1990), in order to discover how the film “produces occasional spaces in which those annihilating norms, those killing ideals of gender and race, are mimed, reworked, resignified” (338). The primary emphasis of Butler’s examination is the recognition that drag, or the performance of gender, is a site of “ambivalence.” Butler therefore posits that gender is performative. If the individual is recognized or the “self” is constituted by the way he or she performs gender, “heterosexual gender norms” may be called into

question and thus reconstituted. Thus, “To claim that all gender is like drag, or is drag, is to suggest that “imitation” is at the heart of the heterosexual project and its gender binarism ... hegemonic heterosexuality is itself a constant and repeated effort to imitate its own idealizations” (338). This contention reflects the thinking of Simone De Beauvoir:

One is not born, but rather becomes a woman. No biological, psychological, or economic fate determines the figure that the human female presents in society; it is civilization as a whole that produces this creature, intermediate between male and eunuch, which is described as feminine. Only the intervention of someone else can establish an individual as an *Other*. (267)

The Pink Cotton Penitentiary

Both De Beauvoir and Butler’s work on gender deals with the displacement of hegemonic gender norms, the fact that “female” constitutes a behavior as much as a physical form. Butler’s work came thirty years after the dawn of the Sixties, but her premise that drag constitutes a subversion of gender “laws” readily lends itself to film texts of a decade where rebellion against dominant ideologies was used to undermine the rigid directives of church and state, and therefore the patriarchy. I will appropriate Butler’s assumption that performing gender “reflects on the imitative structure by which hegemonic gender is itself produced and disputes heterosexuality’s claim on naturalness and originality” (339) as a device to facilitate an original reading of Sixties film texts. As

will be shown, female characters of 1960s films subverted gender norms by their appearance, actions, and ideology. And by questioning markers of gender normativity, these characters subverted other patriarchal agendas as well.

One of the most beloved American films of the last century is a text which questions the boundaries of normativity through a central figure that is a tomboy, a boy who is a sissy, a closeted madman, and a town in turmoil. The film also binds together issues of race, class, and gender, as seen through the lens of childhood and memory. *To Kill A Mockingbird* (1962), features a six year-old tomboy known by the name of “Scout.” Jean Louise Finch is constantly in trouble for acting and dressing like a boy. And in Harper Lee’s literary version, Scout’s dress and actions are a grave moral dilemma to her Aunt Alexandra, a character who is absent from the movie. Scout is also the daughter of Atticus Finch, an attorney who is called upon to represent a young black man, Tom Robinson, unjustly accused of rape.

The novel is a *bildungsroman* in which Scout and her brother Jem become aware of a violent and racist undercurrent that exists in their hometown of Maycomb, Alabama. Since the film’s action occurs from the point of view of children, the narrative of *To Kill A Mockingbird* gives an innocent rendition of the unfair nature of life in the Depression South. Issues of gender, class, and race are addressed in both the film and Harper Lee’s Pulitzer prize-winning novel of 1960. And it is generally recognized that in the world of Maycomb, gender anxiety and racism go hand in hand.

Scout does much to defend her position as a tomboy, but she is at constant odds with her aunt in a gender war over markers of femininity:

Aunt Alexandra was fanatical on the subject of my attire. I could not possibly hope to be a lady if I wore breeches; when I said I could do nothing in a dress, she said I wasn't supposed to be doing things that required pants. Aunt Alexandra's vision of my deportment involved playing with small stoves, tea sets, and wearing the Add-A-Pearl necklace she gave me when I was born; furthermore, I should be a ray of sunshine in my father's lonely life. I suggested that one could be a ray of sunshine in pants just as well.... (108)

Scout's problem worsens when her father begins to defend Tom Robinson and she constantly stands up for her father by fighting boys at school who insult him. "My fists were clenched and I was ready to let fly. Atticus had promised me he would wear me out if he ever heard of me fighting any more; I was far too old and too big for such childish things ... I soon forgot. Cecil Jacobs made me forget. He announced in the schoolyard the day before that Scout Finch's daddy defended niggers" (99).

Not only does prejudice cause Scout to rebel, even when she is unsure of its nature, the actions of her Aunt Alexandra are always tied to prejudice. And Aunt Alexandra is Scout's nemesis. Later, to Scout's consternation, Aunt Alexandra comes to live with the Finches to help smooth out Scout's masculine qualities: "We decided it would be best for you to have some feminine influence" (170), she is told. Scout doesn't understand why Alexandra must take up residence in their house, because "Cal's a girl." Her second reaction is, "I felt the starched walls of a pink cotton penitentiary closing in on me" (182). Obviously, Scout equates femininity with prison, and Lee equates those

who force gender roles with prejudice. Aunt Alexandra is also not only racist, but also overtly religious and haughty about class background.

Issues that bind gender and race together are not so closely tied in director Robert Mulligan's film version, as the character of the children's conservative aunt is missing. But they do exist within the film text. In both versions, Scout is portrayed as an outsider figure, and as such she is twined with Dill Harris, the boy who comes to visit his Aunt Rachel, the Finchs' neighbor, during the summer. Dill is portrayed as highly feminized, a "sissy," which is also encoding for "gay." The first time Dill is seen, as he emerges from a cabbage patch, Jem tells him, "You look right puny for going on seven." Dill also tells Jem and Scout during this encounter that he "doesn't have a daddy," and that his father isn't dead, implying that his mother may not have been married. Both of these facts, plus Dill's tendency for telling lies to cover issues which bring him shame, configure him as an outsider.

Scout and Dill also have nicknames which liberate them from gender appropriate appellations. Scout is configured as a tomboy by her clothing and tendency to fight, and Dill is feminized by his size, his manner and his mode of dress, a white linen shirt and shorts, in comparison to Jem and Scout's overalls. He is also labeled by descriptions as "puny" and "runt." As the film assimilates Bob Robinson's trial earlier than the novel, less is made of Scout's tomboy tendencies. However, in two scenes, when forced to wear a dress her first day of school, and when she loses her dress at the fall festival, perhaps on purpose, Scout maintains her hatred of feminine attire. Mulligan's version of *To Kill A Mockingbird*, however, is also populated by outsider figures: Scout, Dill, Tom Robinson, and, finally, the mysterious Boo Radley, who emerges from the shadows only long

enough to prove that those who are feared and misunderstood may be heroes as well.

Although we know little about Radley, except for rumor, he is a certainly a “closeted figure;” it is not his sexuality that is in question, but his sanity.

Dill and Scout are more readily accepted for their differences because they are children, and both Lee and Mulligan use this trope to gain sympathy for the adult figures who are woven into the children’s world: the black population of Maycomb, the poor white farmers of the depression, the wrongly accused man, the recluse everyone gossips about, and the lawyer who risks everything for his principles. During Tom Robinson’s trial, the camera focuses on the faces of Dill, Scout, and Jem as they sit in the “colored balcony” with Reverend Sykes absorbing the spectacle below. The viewer sees as they see; the viewer feels as they feel. The audience is tied to Scout, and through her eyes assumes her point of view. Tom Robinson, Boo Radley, and Atticus Finch are *made into* outsider figures by society, the narrative communicates. They did not choose to be shunned; they do not carry the same “queer” attributes as Dill and Scout, who occupy a space of difference relating to their gender performance.

Scout Finch, while an unlikely heroine, is also an sympathetic figure. Scout is a child, but she is a character who is seeking identity, navigating an adult world she often cannot comprehend. R. Barton Palmer states, “The novel offers readers an outsider’s view from the inside of a culture split by its related obsessions with racial difference and sexual ‘normality,’ protocols whose inevitable conflict with prevailing myths of homogeneity and ideological seamlessness Lee so affectingly dramatizes” (Palmer 108). Sutured into Scout’s journey are others with fewer choices, those who are victims of a social stratification informed and aligned by race and class, but her difference informs

theirs as well, making the audience more available to those who exhibit characteristics of otherness.

In *Spectacular Passions: Cinema, Fantasy, Gay Male Spectatorships*, Brett Farmer discusses the general terminology used in research of gay issues: “I use *homosexual* to refer to mainstream representations, *gay* to refer to politicized, self-identified representations, and *queer* to refer to everything that exceeds these two” (Farmer 15). Farmer uses “queer to refer to wider notions of antiheteronormative desire”:

I think queer is at its most valuable ... when it is seen not as an alternative to gay or lesbian – as a wider umbrella-term that incorporates these categories – but as an adjunct to them, an additional way to reconceive and extend the terms of gay and lesbian sensibilities and identities that still respects and upholds the organizational force and political primacy of these terms. (15)

He takes as his touchstone Eve Sedgwick, who says the word queer “can never and must never stand outside of the province of gay and lesbian meanings from which it arises” (qtd. in Farmer 16). Therefore, I will use the term *queer* to define those individuals, or characters, who stand outside hegemonic definitions of heteronormativity, the patriarchal, binary gender script of male/female, or the essentialist trappings that follow those prescribed “roles,” as grounded by cultural meanings of homosexuality and otherness.

The duo of the film *Breakfast at Tiffany's* (1961), therefore, also portray a pair of “queer” figures whose sexuality was beyond the comfort zone of Hollywood narrative at the time. The unnamed writer who narrates Truman Capote’s 1950 novella, the one character immune to Holly Golightly’s sexual charms, is gay, while the female

protagonist, Holly, is said to practice “the oldest profession.” In the film version, however, Holly Golightly is a sophisticated party girl played by Audrey Hepburn, who is configured as “kooky,” not kinky, even though she manages to persuade her admirers to give her fifty dollars for the powder room and fifty dollars for cab fare on any given date.

In the novella, Capote describes Holly’s qualities as “the ragbag colors of her boy’s hair, tawny streaks, strands of albino blond and yellow, caught in hall light ... her mouth was large, her nose upturned. A pair of dark glasses blotted out her eyes. It was a face beyond childhood, yet this side of belonging to a woman” (Capote 12). He listens to her singing in “the hoarse, breaking tones of a boy’s adolescent voice”(16). Joe Bell, the bartender, states, “I see pieces of her all the time, a flat little bottom, any girl that walks fast and straight—“ (5). Capote configures her as a siren but also a liminal figure between adolescent and adult, and with boyish qualities. During their first interaction the narrator reads Holly a story he has just written about two lesbians, and Holly states that lesbians make wonderful roommates. She continues, “Of course people couldn’t help but think I must be a bit of a dyke myself. And of course I am. Everyone is: a bit. So what?” (15).

In *Fifth Avenue, 5 A. M.: Audrey Hepburn, Breakfast At Tiffany’s, And The Dawn of the Modern Woman*, Sam Wasson argues that the casting choice of Audrey Hepburn as Golightly, costumed by Hubert de Givenchy, gave American women an innovative and unprecedented female style to emulate: “Audrey in the part of “not-so-good” call girl Holly Golightly rerouted the course of women in the movies, giving voice to what was then a still-unspoken shift in the 1950s gender plan” (Wasson xvii). Hepburn, who had always taken on safe projects, such as *Roman Holiday* (1953) and *Sabrina* (1954), now

ventured into new, uncharted territory with this film based on a controversial work.

Hepburn, by working with the French clothing designer Givenchy, instead of Hollywood costuming diva Edith Head, also chose style over camouflage and gave her audience “permission” to wear the “perfect black dress” instead of clothes designed to create a look that played to male desire.

While Head had sought to conceal Hepburn’s flat chest, tiny waist and boney shoulder blades in *Roman Holiday*, Givenchy accepted the attributes of her androgynous body, clothed her for elegance, and used a color not commonly worn by women in the early 1960s. The character of Holly Golightly gave American women permission to have more freedom and independence, as well as to live as they liked. Wasson also writes about the struggle to create such a film under Hays Code regulations and with conservative 1950s morals still in place:

In fact, from the moment Marty Jurow and Richard Shepherd, the film’s producers, got the rights to Capote’s novel, getting *Tiffany’s* off the ground looked downright impossible. Not only did they have a highly flammable protagonist on their hands, but Jurow and Shepherd hadn’t the faintest idea how the hell they were going to take a novel with no second act, a nameless gay protagonist, a motiveless drama, and an unhappy ending, and turn it into a Hollywood movie. (xix)

One of the ways this undertaking was accomplished was to hire a very heterosexual actor, George Peppard, make him a gigolo who is “kept” by an older woman—and to decorate his apartment in a very campy version of Louis XIV style. Not only was it necessary to create a non-gay character as the male lead of the film, the writer, George Axelrod, also

knew much negotiation would be necessary to get the film passed by the PCA and its head, Geoffrey Shurlock. Shurlock, who had replaced Hays in 1954, was slowly liberalizing elements of The Code, but the plot of *Breakfast At Tiffany's* in its literary incarnation was unthinkable. Wasson discusses the fact that many Hollywood scriptwriters of the era “booby-trapped” their work, adding elements they never planned to film in order to negotiate for the script they wanted. Axelrod decided to draw Shurlock away from the figure of Holly Golightly by focusing on Paul Varjac’s sexual activities.

In *Breakfast at Tiffany's*, money *does* change hands; the character called “2-E” that supports Paul for sexual favors is very open about this exchange. There is also a moment where Holly watches their sexual activity from the fire escape. All of these elements were toned down and some were removed. Axelrod argued, “Most sex comedies involve men cheating on their wives.... Well, I’m striking a blow against the double standard” (Wasson 89). Axelrod not only struck a blow for sexual equality, Jurow and Shepard’s defense to the PCA was predicated upon the need to make their male lead resoundingly heterosexual in terms of the their own rules. Therefore, “the producers could argue that, in the face of Capote’s homosexual rendering of the narrator, it was essential they take certain pains to maintain the viewer’s sense of Paul’s ‘red-blooded’ heterosexuality. Otherwise, they would leave themselves vulnerable to sexual deviance of another kind” (94).

Step by step, Axelrod proposed and Shurlock countered. There could be no physical affair between Holly and Paul; they could only fall in love. Paul would have to break off the immoral relationship with 2-E by the end of the narrative, Holly and Doc’s

marriage must have been legally annulled, Holly's pregnancy and miscarriage must not be mentioned, and literally hundreds of lines would have to be cut. Yet, by overshooting his design, Axelrod won a major victory against the PCA. Holly was encoded as a prostitute, but Paul Varjac acted as one. In the scene where Holly climbs the fire escape to Paul's apartment to flee an unruly date, she observes 2-E dressing, leaving money on Paul's table, a rumpled bed with Paul in it, and a farewell kiss. Holly states upon entering the room, "Golly, she works late hours for a decorator." Also, in another scene, Paul and Holly shoplift in a dime store for fun. Four years later in *Darling*, Diana Scott and her friend, Malcolm, would repeat this escapade in Fortnum & Mason, and it symbolizes the same youthful rebellion against authority.

With *Breakfast At Tiffany's*, *The Apartment* (1960) and *Splendor In The Grass* (1961), sexuality would become a vital component of American cinema. And not only was *Breakfast At Tiffany's* a text which pushed against PCA guidelines, it was also a film that portrayed a boyish female actress and an actor who is feminized by his status as a gigolo. Paul is controlled by 2-E, a very strong-willed older woman; she determines his schedule, his décor, and she also speaks to him as if he is her possession. Paul Varjac's masculinity is obviously compromised by 2-E's stronger masculine qualities.

The film also contains a scene where Paul and Holly go for drinks in a strip club. The duo is filmed while gazing at a stripper, who is reflected in a mirror behind the pair's heads. As Paul and Holly watch, the film's audience does as well. "Do you think she's talented, deeply and importantly talented?" Holly asks, "Do you think she's handsomely paid?" Holly lowers her glasses in a look of mock shock, much the same way she does when Paul's "decorator" arrives in front of their apartment, steps out of the cab, and

begins to caress him. In this shot, Paul and Holly, and the bar's patrons, both women and men, watch the stripper, as does the audience. Not only does this scene counter Laura Mulvey's idea of the male gaze, it also configures Holly as "queer," or at least curious. Audrey as Holly is dressed in a tweed skirt and plain black top; with her hair pulled back she looks androgynous, especially in comparison to the ball gown the stripper wears.

Although the plot of *Breakfast at Tiffany's* is completely restructured, elements of the original still emerge in its diegesis. Axelrod captured much of Holly's longing for a place to live, which is as calm as Tiffany's, but not a cage. He also infuses Holly with a sense of the restless movement of the Beat Generation and its disdain for possessions. Holly is somewhere between a glamour girl and a beatnik in her little black dress. And there is something unique about the film, something "different" that attracted women of the time. Letty Pogrebin, who co-founded *Ms.* magazine, declares:

In those years, I really considered myself an alter ego of Holly Golightly.

First of all it was because she was so unlike the usual Hollywood caricature of a woman. She was a woman you wanted to be.... the fact that she was living on her own at a time when women simply weren't, was very validating to me. It was very affirming. Here was this incredibly glamorous, quirky, slightly bizarre woman who wasn't convinced that she had to live with a man. She was a single girl living life on her own, and she could have an active sex life that wasn't morally questionable. I had never seen that before. (qtd. in Wasson 190).

For many women that year, Holly Golightly became a role model. Audrey Hepburn imbued her with an androgynous beauty and style which rivaled the stars of the 1950s.

Breakfast At Tiffany's also broke through Hays Code restrictions and opened the door for other empowered female roles. Throughout the decade, women characters in Sixties films became increasingly liberated, claimed qualities previously reserved for males, and pushed the boundaries of Hays Code representations of gender and sexuality.

And by 1968, when Anita Pallenberg co-wrote and starred in *Performance* as Pherber, her character would challenge sexual mores in ways previously unexplored in cinema. In fact, *Performance* produced spaces where “annihilating norms, those killing ideals of gender and race, are mimed, reworked, resignified” (Butler 338).

Vice. And Versa. Gender in *Performance*

The movie *Performance* was shot in 1968; however, it would not be released until 1970 due to its content. By the time *Performance* was shown in theaters, the era of the Hays Code had passed, but as the film dealt with issues of homosexuality, gender, drug use, and violence in such a frank manner, Warner Brothers refused to distribute the film until it had gone through numerous edits. The studio invested money on a production they thought would be a major success, as it starred the rock icon, Mick Jagger. However, no one from Hollywood thought to supervise the London-based film production, and what they received was a gender bending film based on director Donald Cammell's knowledge of and experiences with the occult, art, literature, hallucinogenic drugs, South End London's homosexual criminals, swinging London, the music of the Rolling Stones, and *ménage a trois*.

Benshoff and Griffin state, “there were a few other Hollywood films from the era that were definitely queer in not just content but also in style, undermining the centrality of heterosexuality in favor of a more diverse queer perspective ... They shocked, confused, and ultimately angered many mainstream viewers. Critic John Simon labeled them “Loathsome Films” (141). *Secret Ceremony* (1968), *Beyond the Valley of the Dolls* (1970), *Myra Breckinridge* (1970), and *Performance* (1970) are notable examples of this genre. They continue, “most of them are in some way about the performative roles—racialized, sexualized, classed—that each of us have been conditioned to play. Their storylines explicitly examine the nature of identity, or they employ campy posturing that ruptures and questions Hollywood form” (141). In his frequently cited review for the *New York Times*, John Simon wrote, “you do not have to be a drug addict, pederast, sado-masochist or nitwit to enjoy *Performance*, but being one or more of those things would help” (qtd. in Benshoff and Griffin 144).

Benshoff and Griffin also agree that this bold type of film disappeared shortly after the end of the radical 1960s and did not return until the advent of New Queer Cinema in the 1990s:

As part of the larger mainstream backlash to countercultural ideals, the campaign to smear Loathsome Films was mostly a successful one. Stylistic experimentation and queer content would ebb from Hollywood filmmaking throughout the 1970s and 1980s ... [and] contribute to Hollywood’s avoidance of complex queer character and styles throughout the 1970s. Simplistic queer stereotypes, however, continued to thrive. (145)

The intricate elements that constitute the characters of *Performance*, are inextricably tied to its creators and actors, several of whom were intimately linked as friends or lovers. Yet without the influence of its writer and co-director, Donald Cammell, the film would not exist. Cammell shared the director's title with Nicholas Roeg, who had worked as a cinematographer on *Fahrenheit 451* (1966) and *Far From the Madding Crowd* (1967), but he was keen to direct, and *Performance* was his first film in that capacity. Cammell, who wrote the screenplay, also credits Anita Pallenberg for plot development and dialogue. Roeg kept to the technical aspects of directing the film, while Cammell proved to be its mastermind.

Without question, Donald Cammell's experiences in the 1960s helped to form *Performance*. He was a London-based painter, born in Scotland. His father, Charles Cammell, wrote one of the first biographies of Aleister Crowley, a famous practitioner of black magic. In London, Cammell attended the Royal Academy of Arts, but after a disappointing exhibit in New York he gave up painting and moved to Paris with his lover, Deborah Dixon. Dixon was a fashion model who supported them both in high style; she is also credited as the costume designer for the *Performance*. The couple met the Italian Pallenberg, who had worked in experimental theater in New York until she was discovered by a modeling agency and sent to Paris. It was there she met Deborah Dixon in 1964, and, through her, Cammell. Shortly thereafter, Pallenberg took up with musician Brian Jones, whom she met at a concert in Germany.

Consequently, Cammell and Jones developed a strong bond: Cammell brought him to Morocco, where he introduced Jones to his friends, the Beat Generation writers William S. Burroughs and Brion Gysin, who influenced the work of both men. Jones was

also the prototype of the hermetic, retired rock star, Turner in *Performance*. By 1966, Jones and Pallenberg had set up housekeeping in Chelsea, and their residence was not only the inspiration for Turner's mansion, it was the center of a bohemian social circle. Turner's home, with its Moroccan fabrics and antiques, as well as the party scene in *Blow-Up*, were both fashioned by decorator Christopher Gibbs, a member of this set. However, by the time the film began shooting in April of 1968, Pallenberg had moved on from the increasingly reclusive and abusive Jones and taken up with another member of the Rolling Stones, guitarist Keith Richards.

In his book *Performance*, Colin MacCabe asserts that Cammell was involved with both Pallenberg and Breton at different times: "According to Marianne Faithfull, he and Deborah Dixon were to have scenes [relationships] with both Anita Pallenberg and Michele Breton and from this perspective, Turner can be understood as a self-portrait" (MacCabe 17). Consequently, the "living theater" that Cammell created on set was a highly unstable environment by all reports. Not only was Cammell directing two women with whom he had been sexually involved, he was shooting highly sexual scenes between Jagger and his best friend's lover, Pallenberg. In *Performance*, Cammell also creates an on-screen relationship between actors Pallenberg, Breton, and Jagger, and these scenes of queer sexuality begin as soon as the three enter the diegesis. One of the moments Warner Brothers executives found most offensive is an extended scene of the three bathing naked together.

In her autobiography, *Faithfull*, Mick Jagger's partner during the filming, writes: "In a sense most of the people in *Performance* weren't acting at all. They were exhibiting themselves. Real gangsters, real rock stars, real drug addicts, real sirens."

(151). At its very heart, however, *Performance* is a meditation on identity, especially when viewed through the lens of gender performance. In the first half of the narrative, Cammell tells the story of a stylish criminal from the South End of London, Chas, played by James Fox, who works as a “frightener” or “performer.” In the second half, Chas’s story intersects with Turner, played by Jagger, a reclusive rock musician, an ex-performer, who is secluded in a decaying mansion in Notting Hill with his partner, Pherber, played by Pallenberg, and a young French woman, Lucy, Michele Breton, in a *ménage a trois*.

The film is comprised of two very discrete sections, the world of Chas and the world of Turner. Chas has to go underground when he kills the wrong person and his boss, Harry Flowers, decides he is beginning to enjoy his job too much. Flowers and his gang decide that like a mad dog, Chas must be “put to sleep.” Chas realizes he must flee. In Paddington Station, he overhears a musician, Noel, telling his mother that Turner is going to sublet his room while he goes on tour. Noel and his mother provide one of the film’s first statements on the curious nature of identity, as Noel is black and his mother is white. After Chas eavesdrops, he learns the address of the available room, finds a taxi, and heads to Notting Hill Gate. Cammell chose this location because it was an interracial neighborhood, and he wanted to configure Turner as an outsider. Chas is unsure of the neighborhood, but what he encounters when he enters 81 Powis Square, is a way of life he finds impossible to tolerate. Yet Chas cannot leave once he enters the hermetic and decadent space Turner inhabits; he is trapped there.

When Chas enters Pherber, she immediately begins to taunt and demean him. Pherber is completely unlike the women Chas knows, who are either frightened wives,

the office workers of his victims, or his highly feminine, passive girlfriends. Pherber is the most empowered character at Powis Square, and since she holds Chas's fate in her hands, he has to be respectful. When Pherber and Turner realize that Chas is a criminal avoiding capture, they use him for their purposes. Turner has lost his powers of performance, and Chas is at his height. As Mick Brown observes:

Everything about Turner suggests a man whose life is an act. He masks himself in the make-up of an artiste (applied by his willing accomplice Pherber) ... His life has lost purpose. Each man functions as a distorted mirror of what the other either suppresses or desires. For Chas, Turner is what he has never had but what may save him. For Turner, Chas embodies what he had lost and hopes to regain. (165)

Not only is *Performance* a reflection of the decadence, crime, and unconventional sexuality of the late 1960s, many elements of the plot, both direct and encoded, are also a result of Cammell's interests in literature, art, drug-related states of transcendence, sexuality, and the occult. The essence of *Performance* is its topic of merger: of male and female, of the criminal world and the art world, and eventually, of the two characters, Chas and Turner. Only two forms of sexuality mark the criminal world that Chas inhabits: the rough sex with his girlfriends, and the homosexual sex which Harry Flowers and his gang render through magazines and innuendo. However, when Chas enters Turner's home at 81 Powis Square, an entire spectrum of sexuality comes into play.

There, the *ménage a trois* comprised of the effeminate Turner, the liminal boyish-girl Lucy, and the bisexual Pherber, becomes the catalyst for the merger between the two male entities. In the mansion on Powis Square, Pherber is also the most aggressive, self-

assured character, and “masculine” member of the threesome. There is also Lorraine, the daughter of the housekeeper, Mrs. Gibbs. Lorraine is a little girl who appears so androgynous that she is often taken as a boy. In her first encounter with Chas, she is also wearing a moustache. The three female characters in the house on Powis Square—Lorraine, Lucy and Pherber, are a queer, androgynous trio that signifies different ages and gender performances. Lorraine “reads” as a boy, Lucy “reads” as androgynous, and Pherber “reads” as female, yet each performs both masculine and feminine attributes.

Queer sensibilities occur in both sections of the film. In the first half there is Harry Flowers and the several members of his gang who are homosexual. In the second half, the sexual relationship between Pherber and Lucy and the hint of sexuality between Turner and Chas are also examined. In *Performance*, Colin MacCabe states, “It cannot be too long either before somebody recognizes *Performance* as the first ‘queer’ film” (MacCabe 83). MacCabe also points out many of the conflicts that Cammell generated on set to infuse the actors’ work with tension and intensity.

Cammell’s knowledge of the world of rock music and art, and his research into London’s underworld infuse the film. The character of Harry Flowers is based on the homosexual, Ronald Kray, one of the infamous Kray Twins, gangsters who owned a West End nightclub frequented by such celebrities as Judy Garland and Frank Sinatra. Reginald and Ronald were also a part of the swinging London scene. Cammell learned about this intersection from David Litvinoff. In *Mick Brown on Performance*, Brown calls Litvinoff “a ubiquitous presence who glided easily between the worlds of crime and bohemianism” (124). Brown also describes him as a mercurial figure that traveled with artists, celebrities and gangsters:

Like a character out of Genet ('Lit was rampantly homosexual,' said Donald Cammell), Litvinoff flitted between the worlds of the artist and the criminal, as mysterious as he was familiar to the habitués of Chelsea's Bohemia, the drinkers in the Colony Room club and those tough East End boys whose overtly macho behavior disguised other sexual predilections. (125)

Cammell spent two months shadowing Litvinoff, prior to writing the screenplay for *Performance*. And it was Litvinoff who arranged for James Fox to visit the Thomas A' Beckett pub, where he met Johnny Shannon, who would tutor him in boxing and dialect and eventually play Flowers. Brown relates that Shannon was halfway through the filming of *Performance* before he realized his character was gay.

Cammell's knowledge of literature influences *Performance*, and just as the work of Jorge Luis Borges, in particular, informs its structure. Pictures of Borges appear three times in the film. The first incidence occurs when Rosebloom, waiting in the car for Chas, is reading *Labyrinths*. The second time, Turner is seen reading "The Enigma of Edward Fitzgerald" to Pherber and Lucy, and Borges's picture adorns the book jacket. And finally, at the end of the film when Chas shoots Turner, the bullet enters his head, shatters a picture of Borges, and then, a mirror. This is the film's ultimate climax: the merger of Turner and Chas.

"The Enigma of Edward Fitzgerald" is a story by Borges about the poet who lived in the early nineteenth century and translated *The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*. Fitzgerald felt his connection with the eleventh-century astronomer so strongly that he believed he was the reincarnation of Khayyam. In the story, Borges suggests that the

spirit of the two men live in one body for the translation to occur. This idea is echoed at the end of *Performance* when the entities of Turner and Chas have merged. The term “merger” foreshadows the film’s ending and is used twice in the first half, once when a barrister states, “I say merger, gentlemen, not takeover – words still having meanings even in our days of the computer.” Later Harry Flowers states to the man Chas will eventually kill, “Took over? No, Joey, the word is ... merged. You was merged my son.”

Also it is important to recognize the metaphorical concept of alchemy, a process that merges male and female elements through the catalyst of fire in order to achieve a more perfect substance. The process of alchemy is suggested by the merger of Turner and Chas. The feminized Turner and the overtly macho Chas will therefore fuse into the perfect performer, a harmonized blend of masculine and feminine. This process begins when Pherber feeds Chas an *Amanita Muscaria* mushroom. During the hallucinatory state, his resistance to Turner and Pherber begins to erode. This particular kind of hallucinogenic was used by the Druids and also Siberian shamans to create a revelatory experience. The mushroom and Pherber are the catalysts that facilitate Chas’s change. She goads and teases Chas, alters his mental capacities, and deconstructs his identity until he breaks down emotionally.

Pherber is the heat of the alchemical process; she is a witch figure. This scene also uses the trope of mirrors throughout to reflect changes in representation and identity. Therefore, gender becomes performance. Chas needs a passport photo to flee the country and must change his true identity for the photograph. This is an excuse for Pherber to dress Chas. She feminizes him with a caftan and puts a wig on him. In the meantime, Turner performs a Robert Johnson song with the line, “Hello, Satan, I believe it’s time to

go” (MacCabe 94), which foreshadows his death but also shows that as Chas becomes feminized Turner recovers his ability to perform.

This process is finalized when Pherber “dismantles” Chas during the powerful hallucinogenic experience. Pherber not only feminizes Chas’s appearance, she also becomes sexual with him. She and Turner taunt Chas; they disrupt his sensibilities to the point where he no longer has a clear idea of his real identity. Brown states, “Turner’s motive in dismantling Chas is to discover what is missing in himself. ‘He wants to know,’ Pherber tells Chas, ‘why your show is a bigger turn-on than his ever was’” (Brown 165). And there is another component of this transformation: “Sexually, too, each contains what the other needs. Chas denies the female aspect of his sexuality through displays of crude machismo. Turner’s masculinity is suffocated by the female cocoon he wraps himself in. Together, there is the possibility of balance” (165).

When Chas realizes he is under the spell of a hallucinogen, he becomes despondent. Turner states, “You see the blood of this vegetable is boring a hole. This second hole is penetrating the hole in your face. The bone of your skull. I just want to get right in there. Do you know what I mean? And root around there like mandragora.” Mandragora refers to the Mandrake root, a plant of interest to alchemists. In mythology, Mandrake is said to grow where the semen of a hanged man entered the earth and thus connects to the scene where Chas calls Flowers and is shown drawing a figure of a “hanged man.” Mandrake is also the potion or medium used by a *magnus* or witch to cast his or her will into the body of another. The Hanged Man is a tarot card that denotes transformation.

Pherber assures Chas, “We just dismantled you a little bit, that’s all. Just to see how you function. We sat through your act and now you’re going to sit through ours.” Finally, Turner states, “Nothing is True. Everything is permitted.” This remark references the story of the Persian cult of the *al-Hassan*, the Old Man of the Mountain, who trains young assassins by promising them admission into Paradise. Brown states, “Central to the legend of the Old Man of the Mountain is the suggestion that the potion with which al-Hassan would drug his young murders was hashish, giving rise to the belief that the word ‘assassin’ derives from the Arabic word *haschisin*, meaning hashish user” (156). This statement foreshadows Turner’s death; Turner knows Chas is his assassin.

After Pherber has dressed Chas as a woman, she states, “I’ve got two angles, one male and one female. Just like a triangle see? Did you notice? Do you ever have a female feel?” Chas replies, “No, never. I feel like a man. A man all the time.” Pherber declares, “That’s awful! That’s what’s wrong with you.” Pherber takes a hand mirror and holds it up to his chest, reflecting her breast onto his torso. She moves the mirror to his face and creates an image that is half Chas’s face and half her own, half male and half female. The scene ends when Pherber asks Chas how he thinks it feels to be Turner, and when Chas replies, “He’s weird. And you’re weird. You’re kinky,” Pherber shouts, “He’s a man. A male and female man. And he feels like me!” Pherber explains that Turner has lost his demon, his creativity, his beautiful beast, and Chas must help him to find it. And when Chas wakes up the next morning, he is in bed with Turner. When Turner begins to kiss Chas, he becomes Lucy.

The film's conclusion arrives when Chas has experienced his female side. After he makes love to the androgynous Lucy, he also becomes tender, gentle, and softens. At this moment, Flowers's gang shows up at Powis Square to take Chas away to his doom. Before this is accomplished, Chas goes upstairs to Turner and Pherber's bed and awakens them. Chas says that he must "shoot off," and Turner answers, "I might come with you then." Chas states, "You don't know where I'm going, Pal." Turner insists, "I do." Chas echoes him, "Yeah, you do," pulls out a gun, removes the safety, and shoots him in one quick motion. Afterwards, we see Pherber hiding from Rosebloom, who finds Turner's body stashed in a closet with empty picture frames, again suggesting his loss of identity. But when Chas is put into Harry Flowers's white Rolls Royce and it pulls away, it is Turner we see inside, wearing Chas's wig.

Performance offers a walk through a hall of mirrors. Identities are reflected, shattered and exchanged. Sexual identities are rendered as fluid and changing. Marianne Faithfull relates that in some ways Cammell's techniques were brilliant, as he switched the class backgrounds of Jagger and Fox in the film. He made Jagger the upper class, decadent Turner, while the upper class Fox played the lower class criminal, Chas, helping to fuse their individuality (152). In the BBC documentary, *Donald Cammell: The Ultimate Performance*, Mick Jagger states, "It's about, you know, if you get completely lost, and you're on the edge ... and whether it's in any kind of performance, any kind of art form, people will be riveted by that because they want to see the performer's transcendent state."

In this film, performance is a transcendent state; performance transmogrifies the actors until boundaries of class, race, and gender appear to blend and bleed together.

Performance is also about the end of the 1960s, the death of swinging London. And in many ways, the transmutation of the bohemian Turner into the criminal Chas, the merger of art and violence, was an apt metaphor for the decade, which was passing. However—two decades would pass before characters as “queer” as Pherber, Lucy and Turner would again emerge in the cinema—or perhaps these three have never been matched.

Another “Loathsome Film” created at the end of the decade, but one that predicated its existence on camp, would also be released that year. The adventures of the transsexual Myra Breckinridge is certainly unrivaled in both queer and camp sensibilities. Based on the best selling novel published in 1968 by Gore Vidal, *Myra Breckinridge* (1970) shocked Hollywood. The recipient of a sex change, the character of Myra in Vidal’s book functions as a woman. Myra, formerly Myron, is a fan of films from the age of Classical Hollywood and goes to the Academy for Aspiring Young Actors and Actresses, owned by her former self’s uncle, Buck Loner. There, Myra begins to teach classes in Posture and Empathy and to carry out her true mission, which is “the destruction of the last vestigial traces of traditional manhood in the race in order to realign the sexes, thus reducing the population while increasing human happiness and preparing humanity for its next stage” (41).

By working at the Academy, Myra seeks to subliminally assert her mission by training actors and actresses; she also gains dominance over Buck, the school and a young aspiring actor, Rusty Godowsky, whom she eventually ties down and rapes with a sexual device in the school infirmary. Unfortunately, Myra falls in love with Rusty’s girlfriend Mary-Ann, but as she has been transformed into a female, Mary-Ann Pringle is loath to become involved. In the end, Myra is injured in a car crash, has to have her

breast implants removed, can no longer obtain the hormones necessary to complete the sex change, and becomes a eunuch. However, s/he ends up living with Mary-Ann.

A subplot of the book involves the predatory female talent scout, Leticia Van Allen, who is played in the film by Mae West, in her seventies. Allen still uses the casting couch method to discover her male “talent” in a parody of the sexually predatory male producers and directors of Classical Hollywood. The presence of West adds a further camp dimension to the film. West and John Huston as Buck Loner symbolize the age of Hollywood that Myra so admires. And in the film Myra, played by Raquel Welch, is costumed in 1930s and 1940s style throughout. In fact in Vidal’s novel, and in the film, Myra states, “In the decade between 1935 and 1945, no irrelevant film was made in the United States” (15). This is certainly an odd passion for the transsexual Myra to have, as the age of Classical Hollywood is also the highest moment of Hays Code control over the narrative of American cinema—and a character like Myra/ Myron would certainly not exist.

Myra Breckinridge is overtly campy in its use of costuming, which exaggerates the characters’ gender performance (Huston in cowboy clothes, West configured as a drag queen, and Welch, who dresses from another era), its exaggerated decor, and the presence of West and Huston who lend an over-the-top acting style to every scene. In *Gore Vidal’s American*, Dennis Altman states that Myra’s journey to Hollywood is especially significant as Hollywood signified the “homosexual center” of America for many decades. Hollywood “manufactures” traditional gender norms through narrative, so Myra’s goal to subvert the movie industry is a well-placed blow against the patriarchy. The film accomplishes this tactic as well, as director Michael Sarne intercuts clips from

classic Hollywood films into *Myra Breckinridge*, which subverts their original meaning into a subversive pastiche.

The film opens with Myron's (Rex Reid) sex change surgery, which is essentially an operative castration. In the opening credits, Myron and Myra dance down Hollywood Boulevard to Shirley Temple singing, "Smile." Myra and Myron are dressed in white and dance in the manor of the Hollywood musical, to end up on the roof of the Chateau Marmont, the decadent Los Angeles Hotel where Vidal wrote the novel. Brett Farmer posits that the transgressive figure of West provoked disgust among male critics because of the combined factors of her age and her character's lust. He quotes Joseph Morgenstern who called the film "'a ghastly travesty of the travesty of womanhood she once played'; she has a Mae West face pointed on the front of her head and moves to and fro like the Imperial Hotel during the 1923 Tokyo earthquake" (qtd. in Farmer 126).

But West in all her glory is also a manifestation of camp, and for gay critics, camp is inextricably tied to gay culture: "For Michael Bronski, camp readings of gender as masquerade are an 'essential part of gay male living'" (Farmer 115). The camp sensibility West exudes is also a blow against hegemonic gender norms. Male critics found West revolting not only because she transgressed patriarchal notions of age and sexuality, but she also displays a figure who is ultimately "queer."

Farmer also reads the anxiety created by *Myra Breckinridge* as the displacement of male/ female gender roles. Myra/Myron's rape of Rusty Godowsky is a two-fold insult to heterosexual norms. First, it is the rape of a male by a transsexual woman, and, second, it is the rape of a male by a homosexual male. Farmer states, "According to the logic of (hetero)sexual difference, in which masculinity and femininity are bound to an

active/passive division, to be fucked is to be placed in the despised position of femininity and, thus, to lose one's claim to manhood" (206). Thus Myra/Myron's act of "sexual terrorism" is doubly disturbing as it feminizes Rusty in a way no other act could.

Afterward, Myra even says to him, "Well aren't you going to thank me for all the trouble I've taken?" To which Rusty replies, "Thank you, 'mam.'" This is the ultimate insult to his masculinity. Oddly enough, with her hair down, this scene is the only time Raquel Welch appears to resemble the female sexual icon she represented at the time, further confusing the gender configuration of this character, since she is a well-known actress who is performing as a transsexual. Welch is a female, portraying a male who has been castrated to become a female.

According to Altman, Vidal's biographer, "It is tempting to argue that Vidal said more to subvert the dominant rules on sex and gender in *Myra* than is contained in a shelf of queer theory treatises" (131). It is also important to note the novel *Myra Breckinridge* predates the Stonewall riots, and most certainly queer theory, but it is also situated on the crest of a wave of rebellion against normative society which dominated the late 1960s. Gender norms had begun to blend; the feminization of men was obvious, in styles of longer hair and more casual and colorful dress. Women had also begun to use less artifice in the construction of their appearance. More natural hairstyles, less make up, and the casting aside of restrictive undergarments all marked a change in 1960s gender performance. In this manner, actions representing Butler's ideas on gender "slippage" were commonly found in this era.

An Obstinate Theory of Perversion: “You can’t have two kinds of love.”

The film *Cabaret* (1972) is an early 1970s text which may be viewed as the conclusion of a spectrum of films that began in the 1950s and take on the topics of sexuality and gender. *Cabaret* represents the logical outcome of a cinema freed to look at gender performance after the censorship wars of the 1960s resulted in liberalization. Moreover, this film exemplifies a narrative freed from Hays Code dominance. Directed by Bob Fosse, *Cabaret* contains queer elements which also render it capable of being read as a text about gender performance. Primarily these occur within the space of the cabaret, but the plot also centers on a relationship between two men, who not only sleep with the same woman, but with each other. *Cabaret* takes place in 1931 during Germany’s Weimar Republic, and the Nazis’ rise to power is a constant theme as the plot unfolds. Queer relationships take center stage, however, and though *Cabaret* was created after the liberalization of Hollywood’s censorship regulations, the love triangle is encoded, and for this reason, the film has been criticized.

In *The Celluloid Closet*, Vito Russo states that Christopher Isherwood, who wrote *The Berlin Stories*, the inspiration for *Cabaret*, disliked the film’s portrayal of Brian: “I felt as though his homosexual side was used as a kink in the film—like bed wetting—and that he was really supposed to be basically heterosexual” (qtd. in Russo 191). Russo is also quite critical of the film:

Joel Gray’s master of ceremonies in *Cabaret* can be a creep because no one has to like him, and Inger, the transvestite at the Kit Kat Club, can be a more honest character because he is only local color. But Michael

York's Brian is the hero. Brian represses his homosexual feelings throughout the film, and when he does sleep with the baron (Helmut Griem) the act is seen by everyone as the fall from grace ... Before Brian and Sally Bowles (Liza Minnelli) can get married, she calls it off largely because she feels he might 'slip' again. (191)

According to Benshoff and Griffin, "It is also possible to read the film's central three-way affair as part of the 'decadence' of Weimar Germany, thus linking queer sexuality to the rise of Nazism" (146). These critiques of *Cabaret*, however, are overtly simplistic. While the relationship between the same-sex characters is not shown, neither is the relationship between Bowles and the baron. Still, the sexual tension between Brian and the baron builds throughout this section of the film. While it is obvious that someone is sleeping with the baron, the viewer learns that the most passionate affair occurs between Brian and the baron. While the baron is buying fur coats and caviar for Sally, what he wants is Brian, and he is charming him little by little.

One of the most important scenes of the film occurs when Brian and the baron are dining in a countryside café where the patrons rise one by one to sing "Tomorrow Belongs to Me." It is these two who experience a Germany overtaken by a dangerous belief system. While Sally is the party girl who sees life from the inside of a cabaret, Brian is ever mindful of the events unfolding around him. And for this reason, Brian *is* the hero of *Cabaret*. A sub-plot of the film involves the romance between Fritz and Natalia, two of Brian's students. Fritz begins to court Natalia because she is rich, but he later falls in love with her. Natalia will not marry Fritz, however, because she is a Jew and is loathe to confer her outsider status onto him. The idea of the secret or "closeted"

is one of the central themes of the film. Homosexuality is not linked to the rise of Nazism; secreted behaviors are. Fritz eventually confesses to Brian that he is Jewish. Therefore, Fritz's status as a closeted Jew is equated to Brian's as a closeted homosexual. The issue of "coming out" is a vital element of *Cabaret*. In the end, Fritz does "comes out" to Natalia and the two are married, yet this option is clearly not possible for Brian and Sally.

When Sally tries to seduce him, Brian tells her he has slept with three women and yet felt nothing. She accepts the fact that he is most likely homosexual but they eventually become lovers. Sally, with her bobbed hair, displays more masculine characteristics than Brian: she is sexually aggressive, brags about her conquests, eats voraciously, and is raucous. Brian is prim and proper, quiet and gentle. *Cabaret* is yet another example of a film in which the female half of a couple "reads" as male, and the male "reads" as feminine.

Brian is resistant to Sally's advances and coy with the baron, but ultimately succumbs to both. Yet he is disturbed by the class difference between himself and the baron, as well as the baron's *laisse-faire* notions about the Nazis. After Brian and Sally confess to their mutual relationship with the baron, we see the two men together one final time. Obviously Brian has broken off their relationship, as the baron appears angry. Later, the baron abandons both and leaves the country. Sally's belief that Brian is gay is the unspoken truth at the heart of their relationship. After Fritz and Natalia marry, it becomes obvious that the idea of marriage to her makes him miserable. Therefore, Sally terminates their relationship when she terminates her pregnancy. The parallel relations between Fritz and Natalia and Brian and Sally have to do with claiming one's true

identity. During the wedding scene, Fritz and Natalia *perform* their vows in Hebrew; the language inherent to their identity as Jews further binds them, just as those who are homosexual share a common, encoded language, which identifies their status.

The most important element of the film is the world of the cabaret, which is also a queer space because it involves cross-dressing and gender bending. The film always comes back to the space of the cabaret at every critical juncture. Brett Farmer considers this film an “explicit celebration of transvestism:”

These spectacular moments of gender transgression all point to a profound current of sexual subversion at play in the musical numbers. With their images of gender and sexual ‘otherness,’ they present what Annette Kuhn describes as ‘a vision of fluidity of gender options,’ ‘a utopian prospect of release from the ties of sexual difference that bind us into meaning, discourse, culture.’ It should not be surprising, therefore, that many of these examples of gender transgression in the Hollywood musical have become privileged images of and for gay subculture iconographies. (87)

In the cabaret, it is possible to act out gender slippage under the guise of theater, or, in this case, theater which is also carnivalesque. The world of the cabaret is up-ended and sexually decadent, but even the Nazis accept the mischief there. The master of ceremonies, played by Joel Gray, is a trickster figure. He dresses in drag, wears make-up which configures him as a woman, and he performs the unspoken. His presence also appears in the film during moments of conflict and denial. As Brett Farmer suggests, the gender transgression in *Cabaret* ultimately ties it to gay culture as well. And it is within the realm of the cabaret that Sally Bowles is most at home. In the end, she goes back to

the queer space of the cabaret, to a place that is more real to her than the political and emotional disasters of the outside world. Yet it is also implied that this queer society is doomed, as the final representation of *Cabaret* is the distorted mirror in which the audience, many of them Nazis, is reflected.

Ken Russell's *Women In Love* (1969), based on the book by D. H. Lawrence, examines the "war between the sexes" in an intellectually liberated England of the 1920s. The film relates the story of two sisters, Ursula and Gudrun, played by Jennie Linden and Glenda Jackson, and the two best friends who fall in love with them, Rupert Birkin and Gerald Crich, played by Alan Bates and Oliver Reed. The narrative is a meditation on love in all its various incarnations and possibilities, yet there is a dark undercurrent of obsession and unfulfilled longing which is encoded by Rupert's sexual longing for Gerald, Gudrun's desire to be an independent, modern woman, and, finally, the introduction of a homosexual character, Loerke, who incites Gudrun in a manner which intensifies her cruelty toward Gerald.

Women In Love is not a film that represents gender "slippage" through dress or mannerism. The characters' sexual proclivities are barely encoded; they are close enough to the surface to be verbalized and discussed. Rupert is honest from the beginning about his love for Gerald, and Loerke, while play-acting with Gudrun, under the guise of Tchaikovsky, states, "I am a homosexual. I am a homosexual composer, who is married to protect his family from gossip and scandal." However, when Loerke invites Gudrun to come back to Berlin and live with him, perhaps he is doing more than playing games. The first indication of the complex nature of *Women In Love* comes when Rupert throws

over the advances of the wealthy Hermione, whose aggressive sexuality and wealth disgust him, and Hermione strikes him with a paperweight.

Instead of a reversal of masculine and feminine traits, *Women In Love* presents not an opposition of gender roles in a couple, but an opposition in two couples, one of which is masculinized and the other feminized. Gerald and Gudrun are equally forceful and dominant personalities: Gudrun displays bravery when charged by attack dogs, she brazenly wanders through the slums taking pleasure from watching the sexual activity of couples in public, as does Gerald, and she is fiercely independent. The gentle and sensitive Rupert and Ursula portray the feminine, and when they depart from a vacation to Switzerland, Gudrun and Gerald's relationship begins to unravel without their stabilizing presence.

However, it is under the spell of Loerke that Gudrun becomes cruel and domineering. She insults Gerald's lovemaking, his class background, and equates his masculinity with crudeness. After multiple provocations he attacks her and then walks to his death in the snow. Gudrun's treatment of Gerald is often criticized as an extension of her feminism, but her actions are, in fact, more complex. Under the influence of Loerke, Gudrun seems to take on his "perversion." When Gerald asks Lorke if he plays sports, in an obvious reference to his femininity, Loerke replies, "not sports no, only games ... secret games, initiating games full of esoteric understanding and careful sensual secrets." Lawrence describes Loerke as "elf-like," "an odd little boy-man," "a gnome," and "puny." In the universe of hegemonic gender traits, Lawrence encodes him as gay. Ken Russell shows him in bed with his male lover. In both texts, however, he is a loathsome character, duplicitous and egotistical.

Yet the narrative of *Women In Love* is not anti-homosexual; the plot suggests that Rupert would have been happier with Gerald, who truly loves him. Rupert tells Ursula when Gerald dies, “I didn’t want it to be like this. He should have loved me. I offered him.” When Ursula questions Rupert in the final scene, he states that he wanted to love her and Gerald equally. Ursula says, “I don’t believe it. It’s a theory, an obstinacy, a perversion. You can’t have two kinds of love.” Yet Rupert concludes, “I don’t believe that.” Birkin shocks Ursula, and perhaps the viewer, with the admission that he is bisexual. Michel Foucault posits that through sexuality the individual “has access” to his “intelligibility” and identity (Foucault 155-56); “sex is the most speculative, most ideal, and most internal element in a deployment of sexuality organized by power in its grip on bodies and their materiality, their forces, energies, and sensations, and pleasures” (155). Yet as *Women In Love* contemplates types of sexuality outside the moral prescriptions of society, it is also, as Foucault suggests, a discourse.

As tendencies toward portraying alternative kinds of sexuality became more acceptable in film of the 1960s, cinematic narratives opened up space for discourses regarding difference and helped to create a more accurate view of human sexuality among the public. As Foucault posited, “Discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it” (102).

Spectacles of queer sexuality such as those presented in *Cabaret* were made possible by earlier texts such as *Midnight Cowboy* (1969), a film about a homosocial relationship between two outsider figures, one of whom occasionally prostitutes himself to support the other. Joe Buck, played by Jon Voight, sets out to be a gigolo, but his

“butch” cowboy clothes cause him to read as gay. The character of Childe in *The Killing of Sister George* (1968) reads as infantile and feminized, and appears to be cruelly dominated by the TV star June (George) Buckridge, but she is a scheming opportunist in control of their relationship. In the private space of their apartment, Chile wears little girl clothes and collects dolls, but in the lesbian bar, The Gateways, while dressed as a man she signifies as masculine. These fluid markers of identity are also signifiers of sexuality. As Butler states:

... acts, gestures and desire produce the effect of an internal core or substance, but produce this *on the surface* of the body, through the play of signifying absences that suggest, but never reveal, the organizing principle of identity as a cause. Such acts, gestures, enactments, generally construed, are performative in the sense that the essence or identity that they otherwise purport to express are *fabrications* manufactured and sustained through corporeal signs and other discursive means. (185)

In *Two Mules for Sister Sara* (1970), Sister Sara, Shirley McClaine, appears to be a nun simply because she garbs herself in nun’s clothing and claims this identity. After helping a mercenary to liberate a Mexican fort from the French, however, she reveals herself and her true profession, which is that of a prostitute. Many film texts of the era support Butler’s theories about fabrication. In cinema especially, identity and gender become more fluid as rendered by surfaces: clothes, dialogue, traits, manners, hair styles, and even choices of actors with certain body types were all used to create or encode meaning in 1960s films.

During the era of the Hays Code and BBFC regulations, all major aspects of sexuality in film were encoded, especially those which challenged mores of gender normativity. By the late 1960s, however, the cinemas of Britain and America were free to create narratives outside the limits of heteronormativity, women characters who operated beyond the limits of specific hegemonies and performances of identity previously unexplored. The films investigated in this chapter not only validate Judith Butler's theories on gender performance, but they also demonstrate how the liberalization of film narratives, the empowerment of women characters, and the deconstruction of gender structures all helped to free the cinema from regulations and constraints. This liberation empowered the women on screen, along with those who observed them.

CONCLUSION

The decade of the 1960s was a period of social, cultural, and political upheaval in both Britain and America, which constituted a period of transition in cinema as well. The end of the Hays Code and the instigation of a ratings system, along with the lessening of BBFC regulations, marked the beginning of a new cinematic grammar in both countries. The influence of the art house film, the French New Wave, European film, and underground film ultimately led to the period known as the New Hollywood in America and broadened the spectrum of topics and characters in British film as well. As the history of representation in cinema parallels the continuum of history, the complex female representations of 1960s films also indicate cultural transitions in regards to morality, sexuality, identity, and gender roles.

The time period bound by the control of the Hays Code is known as the era of Classical Hollywood. In Britain during this time frame, the stipulations of censorship also shaped the narratives, *mise-en-scene*, editing, production, and choice of actors who created the diegesis of films. This dissertation has endeavored to prove that the end of stringent censorship regulations also helped to destroy traditional ideologies about gender, undo the binary of social codes which relegated women to the status of other, empower female characters *and* those who took them as role models, and ultimately to defeat sanctioned, patriarchal representations of women. Michel Foucault holds that law is the agent of power, a force which creates hegemonies in order to perpetuate the status quo and to maintain the order which upholds it. Since it is primarily female roles

that were used to undermine censorship laws in 1960s film, these characterizations also helped to overthrow patriarchal hegemonies.

“Censor the body and you censor breath and speech at the same time” wrote Helene Cixous in “The Laugh of the Medusa” (350). The history of film censorship may be observed as a history of the restriction of the human body in cinema. With the advent of the Hays Code, depiction of the naked body was taboo; yet in the 1960s, with the loosening of regulations, the human form reappeared. In Britain, nudity materialized in *Peeping Tom* (1960); in America, it surfaced in *The Pawnbroker* (1964). Afterwards came *Three In the Attic* (1968), an American film with a plot regarding the adventures of a young man involved with a white girl, a black girl, and a Jewish girl. Not only does this film overthrow racist stereotypes, it also includes brief male nudity. *Midnight Cowboy* (1969) contains more prolonged scenes of the male nude form, and more explicit sexual activity.

In Britain, *Performance* showed the bodies of its protagonists bathing, but it was Lindsey Anderson’s *If* which depicts a frontal view of a naked woman walking down a hallway. Ken Russell’s *Women In Love* contains a prolonged shot of male nudity as well. These later films undermine Mulvey’s theory of “*to-be-looked-at-ness*” with their focus on male bodies. A decade after Mulvey’s work, Steve Neale addressed the “male gaze.” Neale posits that mainstream cinema assumes there is a male “norm, perspective, and look” and thus takes “the female image as its object of investigation” (19). Neale holds that the male image had not been investigated because “women are a problem, a source of anxiety, of obsessive inquiry; men are not, where women are investigated, men are tested. Masculinity, as an ideal, at least, is implicitly known. Femininity, by contrast, is a

mystery” (19). However, I have shown that films such as *Women In Love*, *Bonnie and Clyde* and *Performance* investigate masculinity from multiple positions, in a way unique to the examination of identity in this decade.

Many 1960s films upend claims made by early feminist film critics about the nature of cinema and its purpose. While the protagonist of *Peeping Tom* is a vicious murderer who stalks his victims, and *The Pawnbroker* contains a brief full frontal nude shot of a prostitute who is begging for money, as the decade progressed nudity became more often associated with pleasure and intimacy. Hillary Radner and Moya Luckett contend:

To the degree that the focus of the sexual revolution was to emphasize the issue of individual fulfillment as the purpose and goal of sexual activity, the 1960s provided a *mise-en-scene* that would later enable the enactment of “queer” identities as the focus of political engagement. If the political agenda of the 1960s did not produce the utopia it promised, the sexual revolution resulted in an irrevocable reconfiguration of identity with significant political and economic implications. (3)

Radner and Luckett also see the sexual revolution as “the logical extension of social transformations in the twentieth century that posit the individual as the location of identity and fulfillment” (4). Whereas women in films of the 1960s did not step forward to assert power in the public sphere through traditional careers which gave them authority over men, they claimed power over the personal space of identity and sexuality and assumed various roles such as adventurer, gangster, spy, actor, teacher, or artist.

The two critics' belief that "The sexual revolution significantly changed women's behavior and affirmed a woman's right (even duty) to take responsibility for her own life and pursuit of happiness" (5) is supported by many 1960s films.

Radner and Luckett believe that even though a number of serious movies which confront sexuality were allowed because of their association with art house film and literature of the era, such as *Reflections in a Golden Eye* (1967) and *Portnoy's Complaint* (1972), the exploitation and underground films of the decade also made sexuality the locus of political agendas, otherness, and antiestablishment ideology. Therefore, it is essential to reiterate that the content of multiple kinds of films from the 1960s helped to undermine the patriarchy, not just the Hollywood narratives such as *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, *Bonnie and Clyde*, or *The Graduate*, with their British counterparts, *Darling*, *Women in Love*, or *Alfie*, but also the radical narratives of smaller productions including *The Leather Boys* (1964), *Contest Girl* (1964), *Night of the Living Dead* (1968), *Medium Cool*, *Faster Pussycat! Kill! Kill!*, and the Hammer Horror films of the decade, helped to destroy stereotypical Hollywood constructs of femininity.

1960s cinema is a valuable, unmined territory for research since narratives such as *Candy*, *Lolita*, *Barbarella*, and *Performance* might not be so easily produced today—*Candy* and *Lolita* for the nature of their underage protagonists, *Barbarella* for its almost embarrassing emphasis on the sexual pleasure of its heroine who also radiates agency, and *Performance* for the bisexuality, decadence and esoteric nature of its text. These films were created at a cultural intersection which cannot be reproduced. All in all, many characters of the 1960s challenged mainstream representations of femininity. Laura Mulvey, however, with her vision focused upon the cinema of Classical Hollywood,

overlooked such movies. By the end of the 1960s, not only had “queer” texts emerged, but also female stars such as Julie Andrews, Vanessa Redgrave, and Audrey Hepburn, with their boyish figures, or Barbara Streisand, Rita Tushingham, and Liza Maneilli with their unconventional beauty, had undermined the 1950s ideal of how a star was supposed to look: voluptuous, glamorous, Caucasian, and either emotionally distant or dimwitted.

The allure of the mythical glamour girl faded into the reality of the normative female body, yet plastic surgery and the desire for bodily perfection had not yet overtaken American culture. The female faces and bodies of the 1960s also represent a normal physique often missing in current mainstream cinema. In *Myra Breckinridge*, Myra has the perfect body because she is surgically altered, but in the party scene, the naked bodies of women are completely normal and unspectacular. It was not the perfect female form that the directors of the Sixties fought for, but merely for any view of the body.

It is also salient to note that because major films challenged censorship practices, a climate was created where small independent films such as *Rachel, Rachel* (1968), starring Joanne Woodward, could exist and thrive. The film presents the story of a spinster school teacher who lives with her mother and must confront a new generation of morality in the form of her best friend, a lesbian who desires her, and a selfish ex-classmate, her first lover, who abandons her because he avoids commitment. Yet in the end, Rachel finds courage and sets off for a new horizon, a job on the opposite coast. The restless movement and desire for something more, which Diana Scott defines as “the next corner,” is inherent in *Rachel, Rachel* as well as more radicalized or spectacular films of 1960s cinema, proving that the essence of a generation runs throughout the

multiplicity of its texts. Major films and blockbusters, smaller films, art films, and underground films all contributed to major changes in American and British cinema.

And films of the 1960s were not just about sexuality, although this was the trope which destroyed the Motion Picture Production Code and forced the British Board of Film Censors to open the gateway for controversial topics attached to the nature of sexuality. The 1960s radiated anxiety: threats of nuclear war and natural disaster resonated in the consciousness of both cultures. The unpredictability of an era in which empires were deconstructed, beloved political leaders assassinated, protesters took to the streets, race riots occurred, and a war raged in Southeast Asia affected every individual with access to mass media. To look at films of the 1960s that take women as their substance and *métier* is to remove a piece of a larger puzzle. Films such as *Dr. Strangelove*, *Night of the Living Dead*, and *2001: A Space Odyssey* exhibit fears of nuclear power and the space race. *Night of the Living Dead*, a low budget horror film that helped to reconfigure methods of cinematic production also encodes the anxieties of a generation with its black protagonist, the handful of normal citizens barricaded into a house, and the metaphor of the generation gap in the basement, as the couple whose daughter is making the transition into zombie or “other” not only kills her parents, but also consumes them.

Films such as *Wild in the Streets* (1968), a text whose youthful rock star hero helps lower the voting age to fourteen in order to become president with the battle cry, “Never trust anyone over thirty!” or Lindsay Anderson’s *If*, which concludes with its young protagonists, both male and female, gunning down the student body of a boys’ school after chapel, serve to parody the fears of the decade’s generation gap.

Additionally, there are films of the 1960s which explore contradictions of race and serve to undermine White Supremacy: including the American films, *A Patch of Blue* (1965), *In the Heat of the Night* (1967), or *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* (1967), along with the British films *Sapphire* (1959), *Flame In the Streets* (1961), and *To Sir With Love*.

The Sixties created a generation that would look at the world in a new light—and into this world came the average woman in search of identity. In her essay, “Feminine Fascinations: Forms of Identification In Star-Audience Relations,” Jackie Stacey looks at the effect of movie stars on the generation of women who observed them. She posits that identification with particular film stars and narratives also influences the female spectator’s sense of identity:

Drawing on literary analysis, identification has often been used rather loosely to mean sympathizing or engaging with a character. It has also been used in relation to the idea of ‘point of view’, watching and following the film from a character’s point of view. This involves not only visual point of view, constructed by type of shot, editing sequences and so on, but also narrative point of view, produced through the sharing of knowledge, sympathy or moral values with the protagonist. (197)

And while Laura Mulvey sees identification with stars as a way for the “dominant culture” to reinforce “patriarchal forms of identity” (197), the counterculture storylines and female stars of the 1960s accomplish the antithesis of Mulvey’s theory. As Stacey contends, “Spectatorship, when considered as an aspect of cultural consumption, should no longer be seen simply as an extension of a film text replication of infantile misrecognition, nor as an isolated viewing process, but rather as part of a more general

cultural construction of identities” (199). Stacey holds that devotion to a particular female star creates a desire to “become.” “The distance between the spectator and her ideal seems to produce a kind of longing which offers fantasies of transformed identities” (200). Thus, female characters offer “spectators fantasies of power outside their own experience” (201).

This observation is especially true of 1960s narratives which presented representations of stars as women fulfilling their dreams, disrupting patriarchal constructs, and often portraying characters that connote otherness. The women who identified with these characters were not only given empowered role modes, but were also offered prescriptions for identities outside patriarchally-sanctioned representations of women. Gay spectators were also provided divas such as Elizabeth Taylor, Liza Minelli, and Barbara Streisand, who became icons associated with gay culture as their roles represented both glamour and struggle.

Other female stars of the 1960s such as Jane Fonda and Vanessa Redgrave overthrew star system confines by declaring political affiliations and beliefs that would have been their demise under Hays Code rule. The 1960s was also the age that welcomed back the vamps with all their flair and sexual aplomb. Mae West, Marlene Dietrich, and Greta Garbo were forced out of film in 1940, but their doppelgangers returned in the 1960s with, among others, Liza Minnelli as Sally Bowles, Shirley MacLaine as Irma la Douce, and Tura Satana as Varla.

One of the main contentions of scholarship about the 1960s assumes that a decade in which women were not writing or producing films could not create powerful female characters. As Christine Geraghty suggests, however, the female stars of the 1960s also

imbued their work with the stamp of their personalities and often helped to inform the narratives of specific films with alternative meanings. Furthermore, gay men were also creating powerful women characters that were both sexualized and forthright. The critic Edmund White states that the female characters of Tennessee Williams were often paired with gay males who spurned their advances, sensitive, suicidal gay males who balanced their forcefulness, or, as in the case of Alexandra del Lago, boy prostitutes. With these complex, powerful female characters, gay writers often created narratives where women occupy the central space and exhibit traits heretofore seen as masculine. Moreover, these forceful females, twinned with gay males, forced a rupture of cinematic texts through which the topic of homosexuality could emerge.

White also maintains that characters such as Sally Bowles, Holly Golightly, and Gudrun Brangwen are young women learning to navigate the public space in an era of liberation which included both increased sexual freedom and their entrance into the working world. Both Sally Bowles and Holly Goglightly, who are more naïve than they let on, also negotiate a complex urban landscape which engages them in situations they are unprepared for, therefore exhibiting the changing landscape of an era where women stepped forward to claim equality. White contends, “Holly Golightly and Sally Bowles represent appealing young women, who come from a rural milieu but are thrust into vice ridden, seething big cities” (White). They are out of their league, much as Gudrun Brangwen must feel her way into this new sexual landscape—thus her forays into the nocturnal urban space, a sexual terrain she is seen to haunt. Rather than write off Gudrun, as Haskell does by stating that “Lawrence was out to savage, in Gudrun and Hermione, the new, twentieth century intellectual woman” (340), White feels that

Lawrence instead was “interested in what happens to the urbanized female when she takes on new roles which permit economic independence, sexuality, and new ways of relating to men” (White)

While there were no women directors creating vehicles for feminine representations in the 1960s, it is certainly true that some of the most multifaceted and iconic female characters of this decade were constructed by Edward Albee, Truman Capote, and Tennessee Williams, who also had reason to subvert agendas of the patriarchy. Steve Neale posits that “Cinema draws on and involves many desires, many forms of ties, positions and roles. Identification are multiple, fluid, and at points even contradictory” (19). The notion of identity informs most of the cinema of the 1960s, and since identity is tied to gender, this is clearly a decade in which patriarchal notions of gender were cinematically displaced.

The issues of 1960s cinema are more complex than the original feminist film critics envisioned. This decade represents the beginning of identity politics, in which both spectacle and spectator reflect new ways of thinking and being. And while theorists like Mulvey and Haskell paved the way for feminist film criticism, their larger claims do not hold up to careful scrutiny. Even later feminist film theory is often thesis driven and does not spend enough effort analyzing multiple films texts. The more recent approach of cultural criticism, however, provides new ways of looking at cinema previously limited by the rubric of psychoanalysis. Not only was the tool of feminist thought in its early stages not large enough to register the massive, seismic changes taking place in the Sixties, the study of single films extracted from their context is not an adequate instrument to assess the changes taking place. One must look at an overview of the films

of the era to gauge their context within the larger view of the spectacle that films of the 1960s construe.

In an article in *Camera Obscura* (1987), the critics Janet Bergstrom and Mary Ann Doane address the repercussions of early feminist film theory:

... it is important to acknowledge that, even and perhaps especially within feminism, there is the ever-present potential of regression, uneven development, failure and disillusion, not to mention misunderstanding. For some, what had once been enabling is now perceived as a restrictive and tiresome paradigm, which generates analysis after analysis but little new insight. (15)

As Jane Gaines recommends, perhaps it is time to take a fresh look at films of particular eras. I have demonstrated that the 1960s represents a historical time frame which bears greater examination. As British and American cinema of the 1960s contains numerous female representations which helped to break down cultural codes and censorship modalities with their unique designs and desires, these roles also paved the way for contemporary women directors such as Julie Taymor, Sofia Coppola, Lisa Choldenko, Kathryn Bigelow, Mary Harron, and Debra Granik to continue to explore feminine identity.

Feminist film critics have theorized that the female body is a “spectacle,” a commodity, a medium of hegemony, and locus for the formation of identity. The female presence in film, therefore, has the power to subvert male authority. The unbridled representations of the feminine in 1960s film, in all its multiplicity, stripped of mystery, and armed with radical thoughts, words, and deeds, were indeed subversive. These

characters still intrigue and inspire. Striking blows against established constructs of femininity and censorship regulations, and therefore the patriarchy, these characters created new identities and role models for women of their own era, and also for the future.

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