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Summer 2015

CINEPHILE

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA'S FILM JOURNAL



Timothy Scott Brown Wheeler Winston Dixon David E. James Victoria Kennedy
Andrew Marzoni Emma Pett



THE VELVET LIGHT TRAP

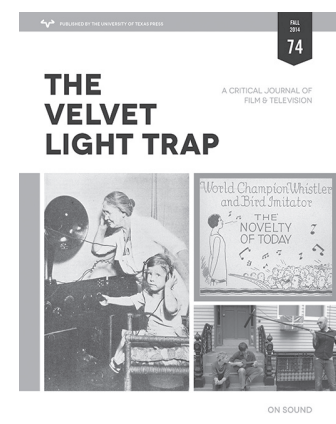
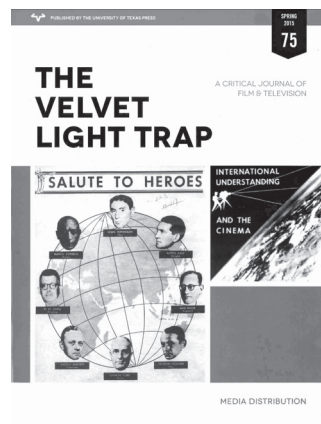
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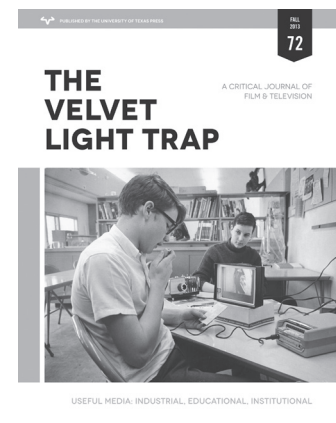


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Editors' Note

In his novel *The Go-Between* (1953) L.P. Hartley wrote the since much quoted line: “The past is a foreign country: they do things differently there.” Put most simply, the topic of this tenth anniversary edition of *Cinephile* attempts to wrangle with the question of how a specific moment in the past—the 1960s—can at once seem both distant and close. This issue seeks to explore why there is such persistent cultural fascination with this period of time, one which occurred nearly half a century ago. The essays in *Cinephile* 11.1 explore the manifold visions of the 1960s that have, and continue to, proliferate in film and television. The distinctive art, fashion, music, and cinema of the era, as well as the associated sense of freedom, rebellion, and unharnessed creative expression, serve as both academic and artistic inspiration for this issue.

If we ever needed proof of the continuing hold that the 1960s has on the present, one need look no further than current media offerings. Retrospectives, historical overviews, and contemporary renderings of the decade in film and television prove that the era has been one of recent re-visitation. *TIME* magazine’s April 2015 cover (“America 1968–2015: What has changed, what hasn’t”) makes evident how easy it is to draw parallels between the 1960s and the contemporary era. The 1960s serves as a point of comparison to evaluate how far we have come, and how much further we have to go. Although the decade is commonly associated with sexual exploration, drug experimentation, and psychedelic paraphernalia, the goings-on of the period have much deeper resonance. It is an era that saw an explosion of artistic creativity and social progress, the likes of which were arguably never experienced again. It shines in the past like a great mirror reflected toward the future. It remains in our collective memory as a decade unlike any other: one that represents hope, as well as hopes dashed. We believe the following “visions” put forward in this issue are ones that highlight 1960s themed media while also commenting on the relevance of the era today.

This issue would not have been possible without the passion and support of our editorial board members who assisted us greatly with each step of the editing process; es-

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pecially Claire Davis who was integral in the passing of the Editor-in-Chief torch. To Kevin Zhang for volunteering his time to assist us with layout, we are extremely grateful; the issue would not have been completed without you. Angela wore two hats with grace, serving as co-Editor-in-Chief as well as our in-house artist in her creation of wonderfully original artwork to complement our issue’s articles. We would also like to thank Lisa Coulthard for suggesting that this issue of *Cinephile* be historical in nature, as well as our faculty advisor Christine Evans for her guidance throughout the process, and Brian McIlroy and Kimberley Monteyne for their insightful feedback on our call for papers. We are also very grateful to the contributors featured in this issue; their hard work and accommodation of our tight editorial schedule cannot be over-emphasized. We are very fortunate to feature six unique perspectives on an era that has proven ripe for academic exploration. As much as *Cinephile* 11.1 serves as a reflection on the past, it also looks ahead to the future. So tune in, turn on—but don’t drop out; just turn the page.

—Molly Lewis & Angela Walsh

Contributors

Timothy Scott Brown is Professor of History at Northeastern University. His books include *West Germany in the Global Sixties: The Anti-Authoritarian Revolt, 1962-1978* (2013), with Andrew Lison, *The Global Sixties in Sound and Vision: Media, Counterculture, Revolt* (2014), and, with Lorena Anton, *Between the Avant-garde and the Everyday: Subversive Politics in Europe, 1957 to the Present* (2011).

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David E. James is a Professor in the School of Cinematic Arts at the University of Southern California. His most recent publications are *The Most Typical Avant-Garde: History and Geography of Minor Cinemas in Los Angeles* (2005), and the co-edited collections, *Optic Antics: The Cinema of Ken Jacobs and Alternative Projectwions: Experimental Film In Los Angeles, 1945- 1980* (2011). His *Rock 'N' Film: Cinema's Dance With Popular Music* is forthcoming from Oxford University Press.

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The 1960s from Real to Reel

Cultural R/Evolution and Moving Image in Film and Television

The importance of media to the cultural-political explosion of the 1960s is difficult to overstate. The moving image, in particular, holds a central position not only as a site of cultural praxis where the rebellion was enacted, but in the politics of cultural memory through which the upheaval of the decade is processed. One broad set of interpretations of the 1960s has emphasized the role of explicit political activity carried out by student and subcultural radicals inspired by Marxism, anarchism, and the liberation movements of the Third World. Another has focused on the role played by broad-based, cross-generational cultural change at the level of sexual mores, fashion, access to consumer goods, and so on. In both interpretations, media have been central, but more so in the latter, if only because of the key role of television and film in popularizing changing mores. The tension between these two interpretive poles has an obvious political valence. Were the 1960s revolutionary or merely evolutionary? And, if the latter, what does that render of the claims and aims of 1960s radicals?

The question here, among other things, is one of agency. To what extent was the upheaval of the 1960s a matter of events driven by actors hoping to challenge the status quo, as opposed to an ultimately depoliticized cultural insurgency elaborated along the sleek hyper-modernist surfaces of consumer capitalism? As with most interpretive dialectics, the synthesis quickly suggests itself. Obviously the rebellion of the 1960s derived its cumulative power from the convergence of these disparate strands of cultural-political radicalism, rather than solely from one or the other. From this perspective, the field of culture—from mass-produced popular culture to various forms of underground culture spanning radical youth tribes to the avant-garde in the arts—represented a continuum in which dif-

ferent phenomena mutually influenced each other, as well as the political rebellion with which they were, sometimes nominally, often explicitly, connected.

If one theme or question emerges from the essays in this issue, it is about the status of popular culture as a field for the creation, elaboration, and consumption of the 1960s cultural revolution. Cultural production was a key site of activism in the 1960s, to be sure, but even in the (nominally more passive) realm of consumption, the cultural was imbued with potentially emancipatory content. As we know from Cultural and Media Studies, consumer choices in fashion, music, film, and so on are far from unpolitical. Yet the question remains of the *extent* to which the creation and consumption of popular culture could ultimately function as a form of political resistance. Each of the essays in this issue, in their own way, comes to grips with this conundrum.

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Wheeler Winston Dixon's essay, "The End of the Real: 1960s Experimental Cinema, and The Loss of Cinema Culture," calls to mind the now (in some cases, literally) lost world of 1960s independent filmmaking, a world in which the notion of making art outside of normal channels of production and distribution was understood by its protagonists as its own form of radical praxis. It is difficult

to call to mind now, in an era of almost unlimited access to the cultural means of production—no further away than one’s laptop—the radical imperative at work in the artistic initiatives Dixon examines. Against the backdrop of our current and seemingly endless horizon of digital possibility, the technical inaccessibility of this earlier wave of underground art reads as particularly ironic.

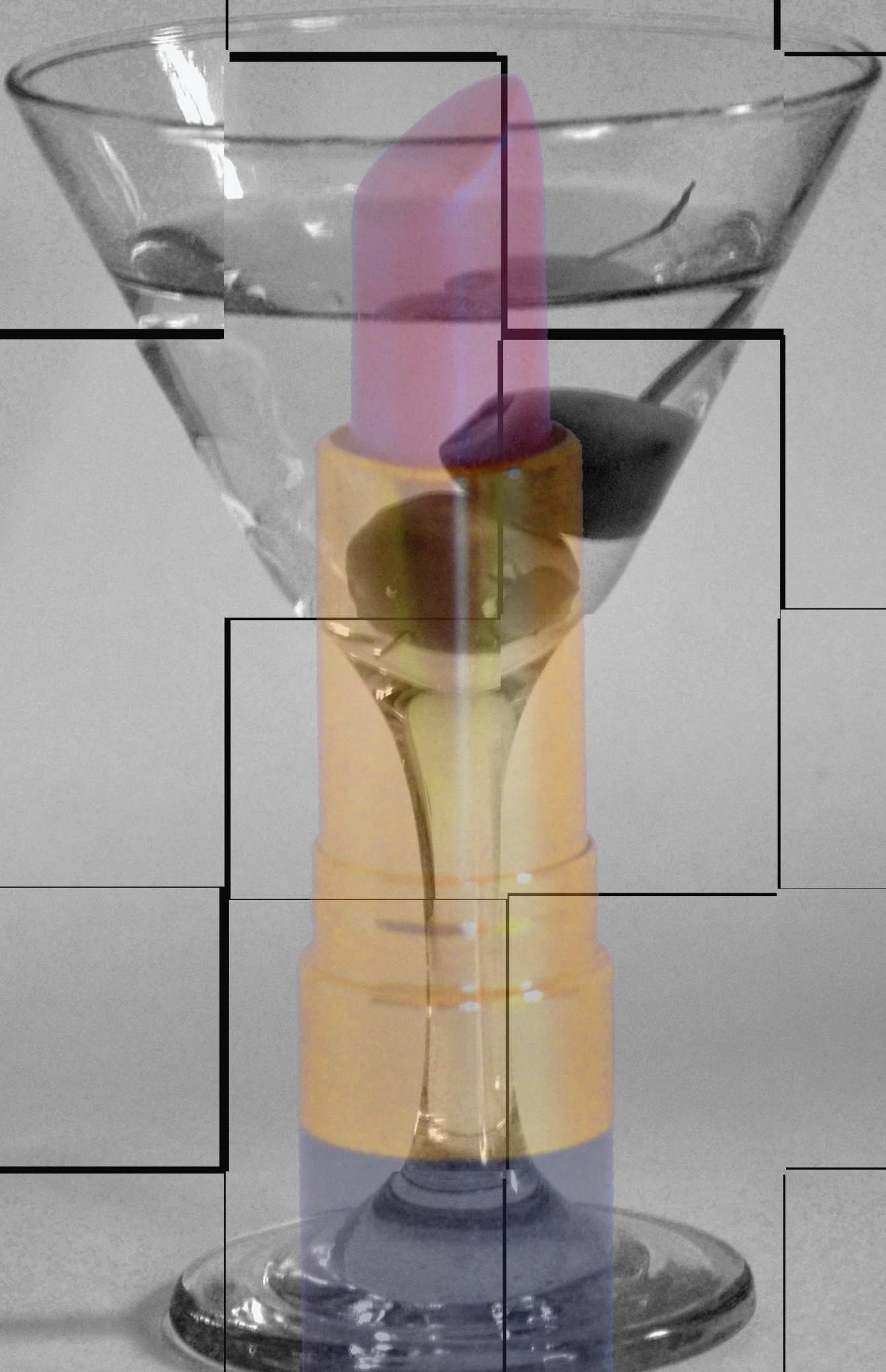
David E. James’s essay, “Generic Variations In The Post-Classic Musical: *Lady Sings the Blues*,” depicts film sitting astride a fissure separating two cultural-productive regimes: on one side, art as the province of moguls and Svengalis; on the other, art as the project of artists imbued with an imputed cultural authenticity. The 1960s—above all in the world of popular music—saw the passage from one to the other. In “abandon[ing] the 1960’s model of music as spontaneous self-expression and revert[ing], if allegorically, to the 1950’s model, established in *Rock Around the Clock*, of the priority of the manager and by implication of popular music as an industrially manufactured commodity,” *Lady Sings the Blues* (Sidney J. Furie, 1972) calls attention to how deeply popular music was imbedded in capitalism. This was the case both before and after the 1960s sea change.

Film’s power to give shape to, and help foster, changing mores is the subject of Emma Pett’s essay, “Breaking the Rules: Fashion and Film in ‘Swinging Britain.’” Filmic depictions of “Swinging London” “articulated [a] sense of longing,” she shows, both before and after the fact, introducing a note of emancipation in otherwise more-or-less conventional lives. Film viewership, she argues, in facilitating the “appropriati[on] [of] a range of different fashions,” could thereby facilitate a sort of “cultural resistance.” This resistance could not, however, be separated from the acts of consumption with which it was fundamentally associated. Fashion’s “ideological role,” thus, was ambiguous.

The figure of Theodor Adorno looms over such sites of ambiguity. Against Adorno, who argued that popular and mass culture debased the intellect and prevented authentic resistance to capitalism, decades of thinkers have argued the reverse, that popular culture presents manifold sites of resistance. Yet, as Andrew Marzoni shows in his essay “Sympathy for the Dialectic: Godard’s *One Plus One* and the Battle of the Brows,” popular music—here as instrumentalized in Godard’s *One Plus One* (1968)—offered no simple binary between resistance or capitulation, but a series of negotiated meanings and loose semiotic ends. Centred on the Rolling Stones’ recording of the

song “Sympathy for the Devil,” Godard’s film depicts a “conflict between different media and traditions of high and low [that] only become... more complex as the film progresses.” It is characteristic that neither the Beatles nor the Stones, as Marzoni shows, trusted the French filmmaker’s attempt to integrate music and politics via film. Interesting here is the revolutionary valence attached to the Rolling Stones, and more generally to rock music as a new cultural form that seemed to capture, and offer a vehicle for the politics of the 1960s youth rebellion. Except in a few celebrated cases, the revolutionary charge of music in the 1960s came more from the side of the audience than from that of the musicians. This bears not just on the gap between artistic intentions (like those of the filmmaker Godard) and artistic reception, but again, on the extent to which the popular arts—broadly defined here to include both rock music and avant-garde film—have political-emancipatory potential.

This question is operative in a double sense, for it bears both on the 1960s moment, and on its memorialization, the latter even more heavily mediated than the original. In her essay about the recently-concluded hit television series *Mad Men* (Matthew Weiner, 2007-2015), “*Mad Men* and Images of Women: Imitation, Nostalgia, and Consumerism,” Victoria Kennedy shows that memorialization, in its least critical form—nostalgia—has the power not only to recall the political-cultural dilemmas of the past, but also to recapitulate or even erase them. On the one hand, she examines how the show handles images of women, commenting on the real social inequities women faced during the show’s time period while simultaneously positing a stereotypical and disempowering binary model of womanhood. On the other hand, she shows how product lines designed to capitalize on the nostalgia evoked by the show—*Mad Men* clothing, cosmetics, and dolls—emphasize the latter at the expense of the former. This copy of a copy of a copy, she suggests, represents a straining out of the truth present in the show’s depiction of the 1960s, leaving behind a nostalgic restoration of regressive gender relations that the show (in part) critiques. It is interesting to reflect here, in thinking about the dilemma that Kennedy identifies, how much the consumeristic memorialization happening *now* echoes the way in which consumer choice buttressed the formation of identity *then*. The disjuncture between ideas and their surfaces is present wherever the two are—together—for sale. In this way, the themes of these essays on film and television in or about the 1960s are the themes of our own moment, as well.



Victoria Kennedy

Mad Men and Images of Women Imitation, Nostalgia, and Consumerism

The award-winning AMC series *Mad Men* (Matthew Weiner, 2007-2015) continually foregrounds acts of tracing, copying, and imitating, from the use of tracing paper in the art department to the installation of the Xerox machine in the office. Indeed, the show itself is an imitation, simulating the aesthetics and culture of 1960s Manhattan. Yet, on another level, *Mad Men* has offered a critical commentary on the act of imitating that revolves around images of women. *Mad Men* draws considerable attention to images of women, especially in advertising, and it does so with a self-consciously critical tone. The series undercuts nostalgia for the images of women it presents by highlighting the sexism embedded in these images, and by showing the troubling impact of images on the lives of the characters. Yet, my interest here is not with the women who are already bound up in established images of women, like Joan (Christina Hendricks), Betty (January Jones), and Megan (Jessica Paré). What interests me is how Peggy (Elisabeth Moss), the new girl, comes to be indoctrinated into the culture of images and simulation, transforming from plain secretary to stylish copywriter. Although some critics like Sara Rogers, Kim Akass, and Janet McCabe have argued that Peggy successfully avoids selling out to the advertising culture around her, these readings of Peggy ignore the aesthetic changes Peggy undergoes which develop in

tandem with her professional advancement. As Peggy becomes further immersed in the world of images as the show progresses, she remakes herself according to those images. In this way, Peggy's fraught journey through the advertising world parallels her aesthetic journey of making herself over.

However, while *Mad Men* resists idealizing Peggy's transformation by representing the sexism she encounters even as she makes herself over, consumer products inspired by the show and marketed by recognizable brands like Banana Republic, Estée Lauder, and Mattel have not been so nuanced or critical in their adoption of the 1960s aesthetic. The modern-day consumer of these products is compelled to remake herself according to the images presented, in the same way that Peggy is compelled to transform when viewing similar images. So, while the show uses Peggy's narrative arch to criticize the sexist ways that



women are interpellated by patriarchal ideology through images, many of the major ancillary products associated with the show uncritically reassert that female consumers and spectators must identify with one of two polarized positions of womanhood. These acceptable images of women are embodied in *Mad Men* by Betty, who is coded as the angel in the home, and Joan, who is represented as a Whore of Babylon figure. Moreover, despite Peggy's centrality to the series, many of the major ancillary products associated with the show assert visually and rhetorically that Peggy is neither an acceptable position of identification for the female viewer, nor an acceptable image of a woman. This practice of copying the aesthetic but leaving behind the critique is intriguing since it provides an opportunity to consider the effectiveness of embedding social critiques in period fictions. In this paper, I will argue that nostalgia has largely overshadowed the critical aspects of *Mad Men's* treatment of women by looking at the ways in which Western consumer culture references and appropriates the show. I begin by outlining the show's critical approach to images of women through an analysis of Peggy's character and aesthetic development over the first several seasons. The second part of this paper then discusses the uncritical and nostalgic ways that the show's images have been used to sell consumer products.

Peggy and Images of Women

Peggy is central to *Mad Men*. The viewer is implicitly positioned as Peggy since we enter the world of the Sterling-Cooper advertising agency at the same time she does in the pilot episode, "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes." The pilot episode foregrounds Peggy's arrival and immersion in this world, and it highlights the criticisms she receives. As Joan gives Peggy her introductory office tour, she offers Peggy several pieces of advice, most of them pertaining to cosmetics, fashion, and body aesthetics. One of the most memorable of Joan's suggestions is to "go home, take a paper bag, and cut some eye holes out of it. Put it over your head, get undressed, and look at yourself in the mirror. Really evaluate where your strengths and weaknesses are." Further comments are made on perfume, Peggy's ankles, and the fact that "men love scarves." Peggy is also assessed by the male executives. Upon meeting her, Pete Campbell (Vincent Kartheiser) asks, "are you Amish or something?" and goes on to suggest that "it wouldn't be a sin for us to see your legs. And if you pull your waist in a little bit, you might look like a woman." Peggy's initial look is loose,

lumpy, sparse, pale, and dull. Her clothes are not form-fitting, they hang loosely off her body, concealing curves and giving her a lumpy look. This lumpiness is accentuated by her ponytail, which she wears every day in the office. Her bangs are not full and symmetrical, but sparse and thin, hanging haphazardly. Peggy's complexion is pale and her facial features are not defined by make-up, giving her a muted appearance. Moreover, in contrast to Joan's vibrant reds and purples, the colours that Peggy wears are usually dull pastel shades.

At the agency, Peggy is surrounded by images of women and she struggles to navigate the binaristic aesthetic options presented: Betty or Joan; Jackie or Marilyn; angel or whore. Peggy's struggle to embody an acceptable aesthetic is foregrounded halfway through the second season in the episode "Maidenform." In the episode, Paul Kinsey (Michael Gladis), one of the copywriters, pitches



an ad campaign for underwear manufacturer Playtex. Paul explains: "Jackie Kennedy and Marilyn Monroe: every single woman is one of them. Watch this." He opens the office door and points to passing female employees telling his companions, "Jackie...Marilyn...Jackie...Marilyn. Well, Marilyn's really a Joan, not the other way around." Peggy, the only woman on the creative team, objects, saying: "I don't know if all women are a Jackie or a Marilyn. Maybe men see them that way." Paul's reply is that "bras are for men. Women want to see themselves the way men see them." Trying to navigate both the ad rhetoric and her own place within the office, Peggy asks: "Which do you think I am?" and another of the men replies: "Gertrude Stein." Peggy recognizes that she does not fit within either aesthetic, and is in some way disadvantaged—overlooked, invisible—because of this. The male copywriters, all of whom are eager to be involved—especially when it comes time to audition models for the ad, effectively block

Peggy from working on the campaign. Frustrated, Peggy complains to Joan. However, Joan's advice has nothing to do with business and everything to do with images of women. She tells Peggy: "You want to be taken seriously? Stop dressing like a little girl." Soon after, Peggy makes an appearance at a strip club excursion where the ad men and the Playtex executives are mingling. With lips painted deep red, she appears in a sleek, shiny, vibrant blue dress with a deep v-neckline that emphasizes her cleavage. She also foregoes her usual ponytail, instead wearing her hair down. At the end of this episode, Peggy learns that she can break into the business by changing her look, although she is noticeably uncomfortable about the kind of attention she garners from the lead Playtex executive.

While Peggy changes her look briefly at the end of "Maidenform," her long-term makeover begins with a haircut that she gets near the end of the second season in "The Jet Set." Peggy tells her homosexual coworker Kurt (Edin Gali) "I don't know why I pick the wrong boys," and she asks him "what's wrong with me?" Kurt replies: "You are old style." Touching her hair, he explains that she does

At the agency, Peggy is surrounded by images of women and she struggles to navigate the binaristic aesthetic options presented: Betty or Joan; Jackie or Marilyn; angel or whore.

not have the appearance of the "modern office working woman." Kurt promises to "fix" Peggy, and he accomplishes this by taking her into her kitchen where he promptly cuts off her ponytail. This scene is crucial for a number of reasons. First, it is significant that Peggy's makeover happens at the hands of a man instead of a woman. Joan has offered aesthetic advice throughout the series, but it is the haircut that Kurt gives Peggy that incites her full and lasting transformation, echoing the largely male-driven ad campaigns which seek to incite aesthetic transformation in female consumers. Secondly, as a homosexual male, Kurt occupies a liminal position, which may be read as allowing him access to both male and female fantasies of beauty. Kurt's language is also extremely telling. He identifies Peggy's aesthetic problem as connected to a crisis of identity. Peggy wants to be a modern career woman, but her look, as Kurt points out, is at odds with the expected image of woman in that sphere. With his promise to fix



her, Kurt rhetorically places beauty as central to identity. According to this language, Peggy is in some way broken, flawed, or incomplete because of her look. A makeover, he promises, will solve this brokenness.

Yet Peggy's haircut at the end of the second season does not signify the end of her makeover. Her dissatisfaction with both her appearance and her treatment at the office continues into season three. "Love Among the Ruins," an early episode of the third season, shows Peggy attempting once again to negotiate her identity in terms of the ads she works on. Echoing her negotiation of the Jackie and Marilyn looks from the second season, this episode shows Peggy role-playing as Ann Margaret in front of her mirror at home. She stands in her girlish nightgown in front of her bedroom mirror and sings a few lines from the song "Bye Bye Birdie," twirling and making faces at the mirror in an attempt to imitate Ann Margaret, whom the men in her office hold up as an ideal of femininity. As in "Maidenform," Peggy feels alienated because she does not identify with the image of womanhood that is admired by her male co-workers. As Peggy herself explains, the appeal of Ann Margaret is her ability to "be 25 and act 14," in other words, to embody both innocent purity and womanly sexuality. Peggy's performance in front of her mirror is part of the thread of her transformation narrative, echoing Joan's advice in the pilot episode that she stand in front of a mirror with a bag over her head to assess herself. Her downcast gaze at her own reflection indicates the result of her assessment: Kurt's haircut is not enough. Peggy recognizes that she must make further changes to her appearance and style in order to integrate herself into the office more fully.

Throughout the third and fourth season, Peggy continues to make herself over off-screen. Her new aesthetic is characterized by vibrant, form-fitting clothes that empha-

size an hourglass silhouette, strategic cosmetics to enhance her facial features, and a sculpted hairstyle that is darker and richer than her natural colour. Simultaneously, Peggy advances at the agency, gaining more responsibility and power. The signal that Peggy's aesthetic transformation is complete appears near the end of season four during the episode "Chinese Wall," when Peggy works on a new campaign for Playtex—recalling for the viewer her experience with the earlier Jackie/Marilyn campaign in the first season. At this point, the Sterling-Cooper-Draper-Pryce agency is in a crisis and needs to solidify its relationships with clients. Consequently, Peggy's pitch to Playtex is crucial. As she stands in front of the ad mockups presenting her pitch, one easily notices how similar Peggy looks to the woman on the ad image—their face shape, hair colour, and hairstyle the same. The similarity between Peggy and the ad in this episode calls into contrast Peggy's inability to identify herself with the Jackie/Marilyn campaign. Since that experience, Peggy has transformed herself into an acceptable image of femininity. In so doing, she exemplifies what Baudrillard, in "The Precession of Simulacra," terms "hyperreality," a concept that describes a state wherein simulations—representations, imitations—become the accepted reality. The images that surround Peggy are not real women, yet they are accepted and idolized as such. Once she is in synchronicity with the idealized images of women, Peggy's ideas are well received. Yet there is still an undercutting of Peggy's look, since she has presented her



pitch to Playtex with a flaw in her own appearance. Her triumphant "well that went well" is immediately undermined by the response of Harry Crane (Rich Sommer): "You've got lipstick all over your teeth." Clearly, the project of simulation that women are compelled to undertake is a project that must be worked on constantly.

Consumers and Images of the 1960s

One of the major sites of consumable products stemming from the show is Banana Republic's clothing line, which debuted in 2011, followed by a second line in 2012, and a third line in the spring of 2013. In August 2011, *British Vogue* published an article introducing Banana Republic's *Mad Men* line, which debuted in stores later that month. In the article, Banana Republic's creative director Simon Kneen explains some of the things he finds so intriguing about the fashion of *Mad Men*: "Women were just beginning to find themselves in the workplace. I wanted to reflect that empowerment but also push the femininity with a few fun, sexy touches—leopard print heels, silk print scarves, and a leopard print trench coat" (Milligan). Noticeably, empowerment is followed by a "but" in Kneen's sentence, subordinating the idea of female empowerment to the aesthetic definitions that follow: femininity and sexiness. This presentation of the aesthetics of femininity and sexiness as the two options for women reflects the dilemma that Peggy faces throughout the series. The clothing line presents the female consumer with the same choices Peggy faces in the show: Jackie or Marilyn? Betty or Joan? The line noticeably features the looks of both Betty and Joan, but not Peggy. For example, the line featured a dress called "the Betty dress" that imitated, on a smaller scale, the fullness of Betty's New Look skirts. The collection also featured a number of close-fitting sheath dresses and leopard-print accessories evoking Joan's look, but few pastels, and no loose-fitting silhouettes reminiscent of Peggy's initial look. Moreover, the two female models used in the initial ad campaigns promoting the clothing line were blonde and redheaded, clear imitations of Betty and Joan. There was no brunette model to evoke Peggy's look. A press release for the next year's collection worked further to define the ideal aesthetics for women wanting to adopt a *Mad Men* inspired 1960s aesthetic, using terms like "ladylike" and "feminine" and emphasizing bright colours, florals, nipped-in waists, and detailed accessories ("Banana Republic").

The pressure put on female consumers to display their gender according to these particular images of women mirrors the pressure that Peggy feels to make herself over in the image of her boss's angelic wife, the sultry office manager, or the women represented in the advertisements she works on. In short, the Banana Republic clothing line positions the consumer as Peggy—forced to choose or negotiate a look from two presented options of femininity:

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MAD MEN
COLLECTION

Designed exclusively by Banana Republic in collaboration with *Mad Men*® costume designer Janie Bryant. Inspired by the razor-sharp tailoring and feminine silhouettes of 1960s style.

the angel and the whore. Yet where the show highlights these pressures and painstakingly shows Peggy’s self-doubt, self-loathing, and self-fashioning, the Banana Republic clothing line effaces the critical commentary on images of women, instead allowing its nostalgia for the aesthetics of femininity in the 1960s to naturalize the looks it presents. While *Mad Men* emphasizes the constructedness of images—the story revolves around an advertising agency, after all—Banana Republic’s ad campaign uncritically tells female consumers to simulate two idealized images of 1960s women: the demure housewife and the sexy, modern office woman.

Banana Republic is not the only company to embrace the aesthetic of *Mad Men*. In 2012, cosmetic brand Estée Lauder launched its own *Mad Men*-inspired collection. This line featured only two products: a lipstick and a crème blush. In an article on the debut of the collection, *The Hollywood Reporter* announced: “The cosmetics giant offers two provocative products that will bring out any woman’s inner January Jones or Christina Hendricks” (Ginsberg). Here, as in the Banana Republic line, there are two appropriate poles for viewer and consumer identification: January Jones and Christina Hendricks—Betty and Joan. Peggy, so central to the viewing experience of the show, is completely absent in both Estée Lauder’s ad

Shake. Stir. Seduce.

Introducing Estée Lauder
MAD MEN
Collection

Limited Edition Lipstick and Crème Rouge.

Estée Lauder

Exclusively at
estee-lauder.com
and Bloomingdales.

ESTÉE LAUDER

campaign and *The Hollywood Reporter* article. Peggy is the blank slate upon which Betty and Joan may be written, and thus she is unrepresented yet again. Estée Lauder’s



cious stones, and pearls” (*New American Bible*, Rev. 17.4). Mattel’s representation of Joan embraces this look in order to create the binary between the two aesthetics of femininity. The doll representing Betty is attired in white and blue—colours iconically associated with the Virgin Mary, most angelic of mothers. Furthermore, Mattel’s aesthetic choices include the excision of certain accessories that are central to the show’s representation of the 1960s. As the former senior vice president for Barbie

ad campaign presents only one image: a model who looks strikingly similar to Betty. Yet here, as in the Banana Republic clothing line, the binary between angel and whore is present. The ad copy features the tagline: “Shake, stir, seduce” (Ginsberg) conveying to the viewer that the Betty-lookalike model the consumer is meant to emulate is angelic and feminine on the surface, but underneath smoldering with sexuality. Here again, then, is the effacement of Peggy as an image of woman, and the placement instead of the viewer as Peggy—in need of a makeover to simulate Betty and/or Joan.

Finally, Peggy’s absence is solidified in Mattel’s collection of *Mad Men* dolls, which featured only four options: Joan, Roger, Betty, and Don. Mattel, like Banana Republic and Estée Lauder, implies that Peggy is not an appropriate object of identification or aesthetic pleasure. Moreover, it complicates the nostalgia of *Mad Men* even further by refashioning Joan’s silhouette so that it is slimmer and presents a perfect hourglass. Mattel thus presents the look of *Mad Men* as re-envisioned through the lens of Barbie aesthetics. Still, the two images of women presented by Mattel fall in line with the binaristic view of women espoused by Banana Republic and Estée Lauder. It is no coincidence that the Joan doll wears a purple dress. This dress is a miniaturized copy of a costume worn on the show in the episode “Babylon,” and the fact that Mattel chooses this particular purple and scarlet dress from among many of Joan’s dresses speaks to their intentional positioning of her as a Whore of Babylon figure. As described in the Book of Revelations, the Whore of Babylon is “wearing purple and scarlet and adorned with gold, pre-

marketing, Stephanie Cota, stated in a *New York Times* article, “certain things are appropriate, and certain things aren’t” (Elliott). The article goes on to note that the dolls will not come with “cigarettes, ashtrays, martini glasses or cocktail shakers.” I would go further, however, and suggest that body fat—specifically Joan’s body fat—is aligned

The power of nostalgia is so strong that it diminishes the potential for critique.

with cigarettes and alcohol as inappropriate and in need of excision. Although Mattel claims to want to evoke the aesthetics of *Mad Men*, the company is only nostalgic for an idealized image of the 1960s that is both unrealistic and heavily influenced by patriarchal ideology.

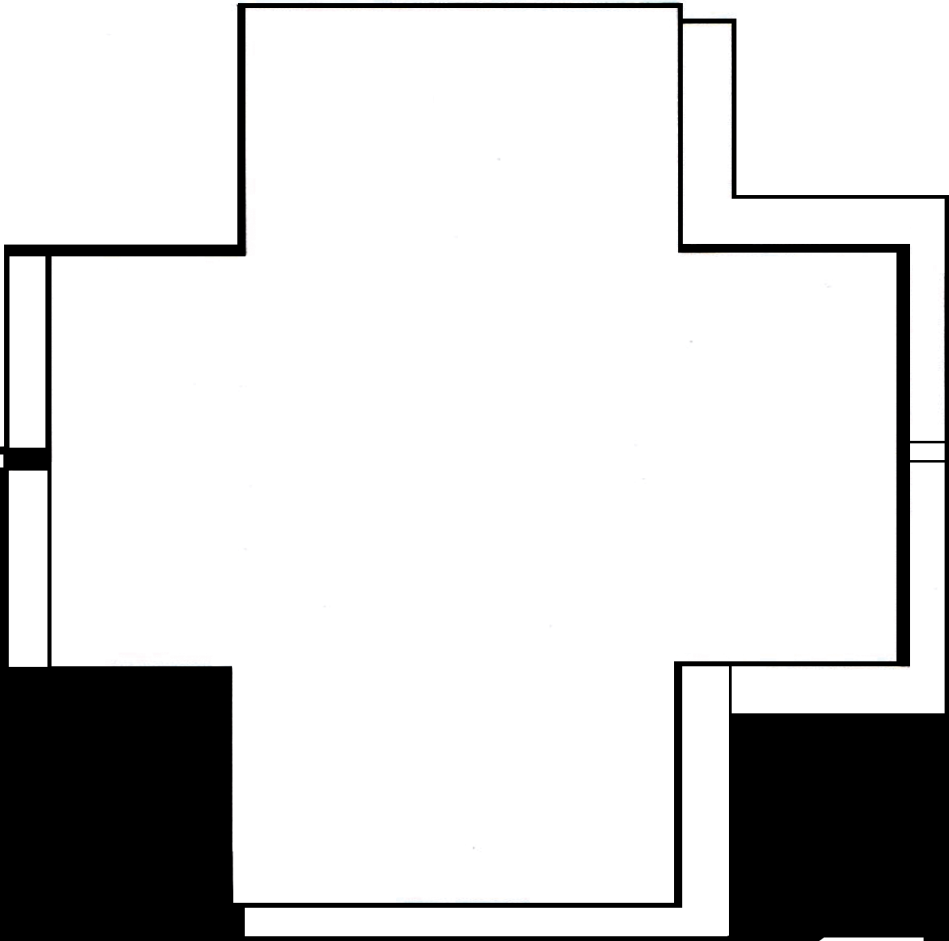
Through this examination of *Mad Men*-inspired products, it becomes clear that the show’s critique of images of women does not always translate off-screen. Ancillary products embrace the nostalgia of the show and attempt to replicate the images presented, but they leave behind the show’s critical commentary on the production of images and their impact on viewers. Ultimately, the images presented in products inspired by the show reinscribe the hegemonic ideals of binaristic womanhood that the show attempts to critique and undercut. The power of nostalgia is so strong that it diminishes the potential for critique. This discrepancy ultimately points to the deeply unsettling conclusion that the sexist images of women presented on the show are not artifacts from a historical

past. Rather, the show uses a nostalgic aesthetic to displace its commentary on the enduring manner in which real women are encouraged to engage in a practice of simulating images—a practice that can be seen even in the images that are used to sell *Mad Men*-inspired merchandise in the present. The approach of ancillary markets to the women of *Mad Men* is crystallized in the introduction to a 2012 Boston Globe article titled “How to Channel Your Favorite Female ‘Mad Men’ Character.” The article advises female readers: “Want to channel your inner Joan? Try a ripe red lipstick. Or the future Mrs. Don Draper? Pick up a vintage-inspired floral shift dress that’s ready to stand the test of time. Relate most to Peggy? Read on and start prepping” (Raczka). While the television series demonstrates concern over the impact of images on real women, the message to the commercial market is clear: like Peggy, you need a makeover. Choose an acceptable image to imitate, read on, and start prepping.

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1



1

Andrew Marzoni

Sympathy for the Dialectic

Godard's *One Plus One* and the Battle of the Brows

This essay is primarily concerned with the Rolling Stones' appearance in Jean-Luc Godard's 1968 film, *One Plus One*. And yet, it is tempting to begin with a brief discussion not of the Stones, but the Beatles, and in particular, the cover art of their 1967 album, *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* (see fig. 1).

The cover art, co-designed by British pop artists Peter Blake and Jann Haworth, is a collage—a prominent form of modern art—but also, in a sense, a bibliography.¹ This is not to say that the Beatles cite all of the figures represented on the cover of the album, but their presence seems to indicate what is at stake in *Sgt. Pepper's*, much like



Fig. 1

(and perhaps no less cheekily than) T.S. Eliot's "Notes" to *The Waste Land*. While Eliot's collage marries the Western literary canon with ancient religious texts, in a distinctly postwar move, the Beatles dissolve the binary between high and low culture, the avant-garde and the popular. In *The Myth of Popular Culture: From Dante to Dylan*, Perry Meisel argues that this binary is, among other things, a di-

1. The cover was photographed by Michael Cooper, and art-directed by Robert Fraser.

rect response to the emergence of new media technologies immediately prior to the turn of the century, and is thus central to twentieth-century critiques of art and culture. Eliot was aware of this, and one of the most noticeable

things about his "Notes" is their self-conscious appeal to the highbrow, an inauguration of high modernism in reaction to the media of the masses, from which literature, of course, must not be excluded. *Sgt. Pepper's* is one significant moment in an ongoing "Battle of the Brows," to use Meisel's phrase, on par with Andy Warhol's *32 Campbell's Soup Cans* (1962) (37).² But if the Beatles, like Warhol, fail to explicitly address the political significance of this battle and its possible conclu-

sions, Godard takes these as his focus. Though the revolution may not in fact be televised, Godard concludes, it will most certainly be filmed.³

2. Meisel refers to Warhol as "postmodernism's chief avatar," finding in his silkscreen paintings of cultural figures such as Marilyn Monroe (1962-1964) and Geronimo (1986) "the locus classicus for the deconstruction of 'mass production,'" and the summary disruption of "every distinction there is, especially the difference between high and low" (71).

3. Though, Colin MacCabe notes, the first five post-'68 films

But if the Beatles, like Warhol, fail to explicitly address the political significance of this battle and its possible conclusions, Godard takes these as his focus. Though the revolution may not in fact be televised, Godard concludes, it will most certainly be filmed.

In the following pages I argue that *One Plus One* is Godard's first attempt at making a truly dialectical film, an attempt that is ultimately thwarted by producer Iain Quarrier's final cut of the film, distributed under the title *Sympathy for the Devil*. In using the term "dialectic," I refer on the one hand to Hegel's three stages of dialectical movement: a thesis, an antithesis which negates the thesis, and a synthesis, which resolves the tension between the thesis and antithesis. Though Hegel never used these terms himself to describe the triadic nature of the dialectic, they are used extensively by Marx, for whom they constitute the basis of materialist philosophy.⁴ This Marxist revision of Hegel's dialectic, as Godard seems to understand it, describes dialectical movement as an ongoing negation of negation that is not rooted in mind, as it is for Hegel, but in material reality. Class struggle is thus central to Marx's philosophy of dialectical materialism, which holds that nothing is final or absolute, revising the Hegelian dialectic as a form of critique that is necessarily revolutionary. Marx formulates this revolutionary dialectic in Volume I of *Capital* as follows:

The capitalist mode of appropriation, which springs from the capitalist mode of production, produces capitalist private property. This is the first negation of individual private property, as founded on the labour of its proprietor. But capitalist production begets, with the inexorability of a natural process, its own negation. This is the negation of the negation. It does not re-establish private property, but it does indeed establish individual property on the basis of the achievements of the capitalist era: namely co-operation and the possession in common of the land and the means of production produced by labour itself. (929)

were made for a television audience (see MacCabe 216).

4. See especially Chapter 2 ("The Metaphysics of Political Economy") of Marx, *The Poverty of Philosophy*, trans. H. Quelch (Amherst, N.Y.: Prometheus, 1995) 112-92.

In the Postface to the Second Edition of *Capital*, Marx attributes the revolutionary essence of dialectical materialism to its regard of "every historically developed form as being in a fluid state, in motion," therefore grasping "its transient aspect" (103).

I want to argue that it is this fluid theory of history to which Godard attempts to give cinematic expression in *One Plus One*, but by editing Godard's film such that its dialectic is formally resolved, Quarrier provides a solution to the mathematical expression *One Plus One* that is left unsolved in Godard's original title and cut of the film. In becoming *Sympathy for the Devil*, the film loses its revolutionary potential. It is not only the form of *One Plus One* that is dialectical, but its content as well: namely, popular culture circa 1968. The tension between revolution and rock-and-roll explored by Godard in *One Plus One* is replaced with a false equivalency in *Sympathy for the Devil* that undermines not only Godard's vision of political cinema, but a conception of popular culture as inherently dialectical. Before turning to an analysis of Godard's film, then, I would like to briefly discuss Meisel's conception of the "Battle of the Brows," a dialectical reading of popular culture which *One Plus One* can be seen to anticipate.

Meisel's stated polemical target in *The Myth of Popular Culture* is the claim of Theodor Adorno in *Introduction to the Sociology of Music* that popular culture is not dialectical. The "Battle of the Brows," for Meisel, describes a history of critical approaches to the distinction between the high and the low which culminates in Bob Dylan, in comparison to whom no "single cultural figure since Shakespeare, except perhaps for Freud, is as 'dialectical' . . . Dylan is all dialectic" (9). Meisel attempts to read Adorno dialectically, or "against himself" (45), in order to show that Adorno's evaluation of jazz as "the false liquidation of art" (132) in opposition to the dialectics of "higher music" in "relation to its historical form" (Meisel 26) reveals a dialectical conception of popular music which in fact contradicts Adorno's thesis. Meisel writes:

Adorno's description of dialectic is stirring—classical music "catches fire on those forms, melts them down, makes them vanish and return in vanishing." So, even by Adorno's own description, does jazz. If the history of jazz is anything, it is "dialectical." Far from using its "types as empty" . . . jazz and its musical heirs take the "forms" that enable them as their very subject. This includes the classical time signatures from which they depart. They "return in vanishing." (50)⁵

5. Additionally, Meisel points out, even "the distinction between

For Meisel, jazz is necessarily dialectical as an American art form in that America has suffered from an anxiety of British influence from its very beginnings. Dylan, “Bluesman and Anglophile . . . brings rock to its classic phase by becoming wholly transatlantic—by becoming literary as well as musical, ‘high,’ as it were, as well as ‘low’” (Meisel 173). The dialectic is resolved, Meisel argues, when Dylan upsets the expectations of folk purists at the Newport Folk Festival in 1965, donning an electric guitar, and thus crossing “the Atlantic of the Middle Passage with the Atlantic of the Grand Tour” (173). American culture, then, has always been engaged in dialectics of tradition, race, class, and gender, whose completion Meisel locates in rock and roll—a “stringent aestheticism” initiated by John Keats, of all people (132). Meisel arrives at this conclusion by noting the irony of the British Invasion allowing “American music to address its ‘popularity’ at its source—not at its African American origin, but as with any American cultural enterprise, at its British origin” (144). While Meisel stops short at declaring rock and roll as an end of history (he goes on to acknowledge the later significance of reggae and hip hop, among other phenomena, to contemporary popular culture), his dialectic finds resolution in a synthesis of transatlantic exchange.

Godard, a Frenchman directing a film about British rock stars and African-American revolutionaries, outright refuses the completion of the dialectic, envisioning the revolution as an international movement. The conflicts between various media and the categories of high and low, in particular, have been central themes in Godard’s work since Michel Poiccard’s (Jean-Paul Belmondo) mimicry of Humphrey Bogart in 1960’s *À bout de souffle*, Godard’s first feature. But his insistent unwillingness to accept synthesis or resolution results in *One Plus One*’s most notorious extra-textual moment. Colin MacCabe reports that the shoot “was marked by constant rows” between Godard and Quarrier (212).⁶ This quarrelling between director and producer became particularly heated over the decision whether to include in the final cut the full rendition of “Sympathy for the Devil,” the track which the Stones variously de- and re-construct in the scenes of the film shot in the London studio where the band recorded

‘form’ and ‘material’ in any kind of music is misleading, since music has no semantic plane that it signifies, only a series of ‘formal’ ones. The ‘vulgarity’ that Adorno assigns to ‘popular music’ is unfounded. What is vulgar is the analysis and the presupposition” (50).

6. In addition to producing the film, Quarrier appears onscreen, emphatically reading from the pages of *Mein Kampf* in a pornographic bookstore.



Fig. 2

its 1968 LP, *Beggars Banquet*. Godard’s cut of the film, MacCabe notes, does not contain a complete version of the song, “which leaves the film intentionally incomplete, inviting the audience to add *One Plus One* for themselves” (212). In a move all too befitting of the producer’s role, Quarrier misunderstood or at the very least disagreed with Godard’s vision and recut the film such that it ends with a full take of the song, retitling his edit *Sympathy for the Devil*. “At the opening night of the London Film Festival,” MacCabe writes, “Godard disowned the producer’s cut and invited the audience to see his own version of the film being projected outside. As he was leaving the cinema, he punched his producer” (212). Andrew Sarris adds that Godard, holding a check to cover the cost of renting the theatre, interrupted Quarrier as he presented the film, instructing the audience to recoup their admittance fee and donate it to the Eldridge Cleaver fund, calling those who refused “bourgeois fascists” (52).

Such vitriol was by no means uncommon for Godard during this, his “revolutionary period,” which begins with his declaration of the “end of cinema” in the closing credits of 1967’s *Week-end* (see fig. 2), an announcement which serves as the break between the earlier, narrative period of Godard’s career as a pioneer of the *Nouvelle Vague*, through his work with Jean-Pierre Gorin in the Dziga Vertov Group in the 1970s. And yet, in later interviews, Godard refers to *One Plus One* as his “last bourgeois film” (qtd. in Totaro); as such, many critics have considered it part of a “transitional” trilogy along with *Week-end* and *La Chinoise* (1967) (Totaro).⁷ Though I by no means intend

7. See, for instance, MacCabe 213; Richard Wolin, *The Wind from the East: French Intellectuals, the Cultural Revolution, and the Legacy of the 1960s* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2012) 68; Steve Cannon, “‘When you’re not a worker yourself . . .’: Godard, the Dziga Vertov Group and the audience,” *100 Years of European Cinema: Entertainment or Ideology*, eds. Diana Holmes and Alison Smith (Manchester:

to take Godard at his word, the ways in which *One Plus One* presents itself as a non-bourgeois film and, in Quarrier's cut, fails in its attempt to do so serve as an accurate metonym for the fallout of 1960s revolutionary fervour.

One Plus One—Godard's first English-language film, shot entirely in London—is itself a battle of the brows, or as Friedrich Kittler would have it, a war fought between “different media, information technologies, data flows” (xli). The film was shot in the summer of 1968, just weeks after the political upheavals in France, and simultaneous with the subsequent fading away of widespread revolutionary sentiments amongst students and workers, despite various radical aftershocks. As MacCabe tells it, Godard came to London that summer with plans to cast John Lennon in a Leon Trotsky biopic. The project fell through after two meetings with Godard left the Beatles “suspicious”: “The Rolling Stones,” MacCabe writes, “proved more amenable” (211). In his 2010 autobiography, Keith Richards notes that the Stones were no less suspicious: bemoaning the film in retrospect, he remembers Godard looking like a “French bank clerk” (252), a misfit even in a crowd of misfits:

Where the hell did he think he was going? He had no plan at all except to get out of France and score a bit of the London scene . . . I mean, why, of all people, would Jean-Luc Godard be interested in a minor hippie revolution in England and try to translate it into something else? I think somebody slipped him some acid and he went into that phony year of ideological overdrive. (252)

Godard's supposed squareness notwithstanding, “a minor hippie revolution in England” is only one part of the film's focus, and only if one is willing to grant the Stones revolutionary status.⁸ Formally, the film is composed of ten episodes, each approximately ten minutes long. While Godard does cut between four different diegetic spaces—the Stones' recording studio, a Black Panther-occupied junkyard, a pornographic bookshop, and the adventures of Eve Democracy (played by Anne Wiazemsky, Godard's then-wife) as she spray-paints the streets of London—within each scene there are no cuts. Rather, the film is composed mostly of long takes, each of which is marked by what Brian Henderson describes as “a long, slow tracking shot that moves purely laterally—usually in one direction only

. . . sometimes doubling back . . . over a scene that does not itself move, or strictly speaking, that does not move in any relation to the camera's movement” (2). This is a technique Godard first uses at length in *Week-end*, and which Henderson identifies as Godard's “non-bourgeois camera style”(2).⁹ Tracking relentlessly, refusing to rest on any single, fixed point, this dialectical movement of the camera is most prominent in the studio sequences, as Godard frames each of the Stones one at a time, allowing the viewer to add one plus one (Mick, plus Keith, plus Brian, plus Bill, plus Charlie) as they themselves add one plus one (guitar, bass, drums, vocals, etc.). Camerawork aside, the film's internal competition between various media—literature, music, and film itself—reveals that the dialectics of *One Plus One* and with them, Godard seems to be saying, the dialectics of revolution, are dependent upon the dialectical nature of the forms of popular culture that, together, make up the film.

In the first place, the viewer of Godard's film is confronted with the Stones in the studio, recording “Sympathy for the Devil.” As Richards notes, it was only by chance that the Stones happened to be working on that song while Godard was filming (see Richards 253). This contingency, though, is significant for a number of reasons. “Sympathy for the Devil” is the first cut on *Beggars Banquet*, but it is not the most explicitly political song on the record. That would be “Street Fighting Man,” which was released as the album's first single on August 31st, 1968, just a couple of days after the riots at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago. Mick Jagger wrote the song in response to the arrest of Tariq Ali at an anti-war

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9. Given the film's structure as a whole, this leads Donato Totaro to identify a close structural resemblance between *One Plus One* and Alfred Hitchcock's *Rope* (1948).

Manchester UP 2000) 102; and Neil Archer, *The French Road Movie: Space, Mobility, Identity* (New York: Berghahn, 2013) 7.

8. MacCabe notes that there are no accounts of Godard using drugs during this period (see MacCabe 211).

rally at the US embassy in London that March (see Janovitz 140), and the song's opening lyric certainly evokes the spirit of revolution: "Everywhere I hear the sound of marching charging feet, boy, / 'Cause summer's here and the time is right for fighting in the street, boy" ("Street Fighting Man"). The content of "Sympathy for the Devil" is revolutionary, too—Lucifer did stick "around in St. Petersburg" when he "saw it was time for a change," killing "the Czar and his ministers," after all—however, it is the song's form that is truly dialectical.

According to Richards, "Sympathy for the Devil" transformed "after many takes from a Dylanesque, rather turgid folk song into a rocking samba—from a turkey into a hit—by a shift of rhythm, all recorded in stages by Jean-Luc. The voice of [producer] Jimmy Miller can be heard on the film, complaining, 'Where's the groove?' on the earlier takes" (252). If the Dylanesque folk song is, as Meisel argues, a dialectic between the English lyrical ballad and the African American blues tradition, then the song's transition into a samba—a Brazilian genre which, like blues, has its roots in West African slave traditions—ought to be considered an analogously dialectical movement, recorded within Godard's film (see Meisel 173). After the film's first episode ends, the second begins in a junkyard on the Thames, where a group of black militants have stockpiled guns and ammunition used off-screen to murder three young white women dressed in white gowns closely resembling the poet shirts that Jagger and Richards, longhaired and svelte, wear at various points in the studio sessions. The militants are not mere brutes; they are intellectuals: the audience sees them read, record, and rewrite seminal texts of Black Power literature. Interestingly enough, the reading of the first of these texts, LeRoi Jones's *Blues People* begins, "What has been called 'classic blues' was the result of more diverse sociological and musical influences" (81), leading Jones to argue that the history of black assimilation in the United States is interwoven with and inseparable from the history of black music.¹⁰ Godard's viewer, then, is exposed to a negation of Meisel's version of Dylan's dialectic: the African-American militants read and write literature as the white English aesthetes play and record blues music.

This conflict between different media and traditions of high and low only becomes more complex as the film progresses. No one medium is uninterrupted by another. The sound of the Stones' strumming and drumming is al-

10. By the time of Godard's film, Jones was already going by the name of Amiri Baraka, by which he is most well known today.

lowed to bleed over into other scenes not set in the studio, which frees the sound of the music from the images of its recording and, in effect, puts them in competition with one another.¹¹ All of the film's sequences are interrupted by a disembodied narrator, Sean Lynch, who reads from the pages of a non-existent novel as the voice of literature with a capital "L"—a novel whose words, for the most part, have no immediate connection to the images that appear onscreen. Godard, throughout the film, cuts to another scene before Eve Democracy is allowed to finish spray-painting her various urban canvases, leaving her graffiti incomplete. In the film's final scene, Godard exposes *One Plus One* as film *qua* film: the director douses Eve Democracy herself with a bucket of red paint—or fake blood, perhaps—causing her to collapse on a crane, upon which is mounted a film camera: in Godard's version, presumably, a camera which is still filming. Implicit in Godard's film is the argument that the revolutionary activities captured by his camera mean nothing if they are not presented with a revolutionary aesthetic. Form and content, medium and message, must all unite for the dialectic to remain unresolved and for revolution to be possible.

Yet in Quarrier's version of the film, the dialectic is resolved: the final cut of "Sympathy for the Devil" plays in the background, to completion, and the frame freezes on Eve's corpse, posed in pieta (see fig. 3). The composition of the frame simultaneously evokes two famous paintings of the French Revolution: Eugène Delacroix's *La Liberté guidant le peuple* (1830) fig. 4) and Jacques-Louis David's

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11. The separation of sound and image here is quite literal as Godard did not mic the studio himself, but rather used Jimmy Miller's tapes of the sessions as the soundtrack for the Stones' segments of the film.

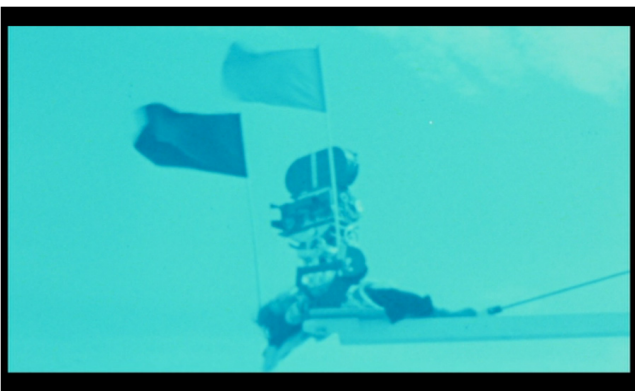


Fig. 3



Fig. 4



Fig. 5

La Mort de Marat (1793) (fig. 5).¹² The freeze frame and the final cut of the song—not to mention Quarrier’s title for the film, *Sympathy for the Devil*—disallow the possibility that *One Plus One* can exist as a film in progress, as Godard insists as his intended goal in *La Chinoise*, bringing the film to an end, and with it, the dialectic and the revolutions of 1968.

What is the revolutionary potential of media, the dialectic of their competition? This is the question that Godard’s film provokes and Quarrier’s cut undermines. In his reading of Godard’s *Histoire(s) du Cinéma* (1988), Richard Neer quotes a passage from Godard’s 1965 science fiction film, *Alphaville*: “Once we know the number 1, we believe we know the number 2, because 1 plus 1 makes 2. But we have forgotten that firstly we have to know the meaning of ‘plus’” (135). In this respect, it is no coincidence that Eve Democracy’s graffiti is, despite Quarrier’s edits, left incomplete and therefore dialectical: Godard’s title for the film, Sarris notes, originates as “a slogan that French students wrote on the wall of the Sorbonne during the revolt of May, 1968, while the producers felt that the title *Sympathy for the Devil* would have more familiarity

to patrons” (52). Neer concludes from his reading that the key to Godard’s “radical” montage — and with it, his

conception of history—is not in the juxtaposition (i.e. the “plus,” the addition), but in the counting: one plus one makes one plus one, not two (171). In closing then, I will offer three *ones*, a dialectic escaping the confines of Godard’s film.

One: *Beggars Banquet*’s original album cover (fig. 6)—at one and the same time graffiti, Eve Democracy’s art, and a collage—like *Sgt. Pepper’s* and, in effect *One Plus One*, which when considered only visually, as a series of images, is montage, but as a competition between media which flattens all frequencies, collage. It is, admittedly, somewhat more salacious on both counts. Both Decca Records in England and London Records in the US (itself a dialectic?) rejected the cover design, but the Stones refused to change it, delaying the release of the record by several months (Schinder 217).¹³

One: the replacement cover art (fig. 7), chosen in November of 1968, just weeks prior to the release of the Beatles’ self-titled record—their first since *Sgt. Pepper’s*—

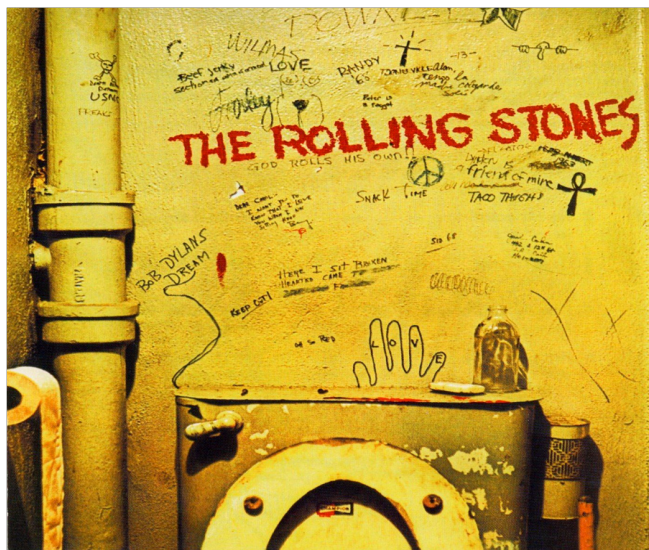


Fig. 6

12. Sarris notes that the use of tinted gels in this frame is rather uncharacteristic of Godard’s cinematographic style (see Sarris 52).

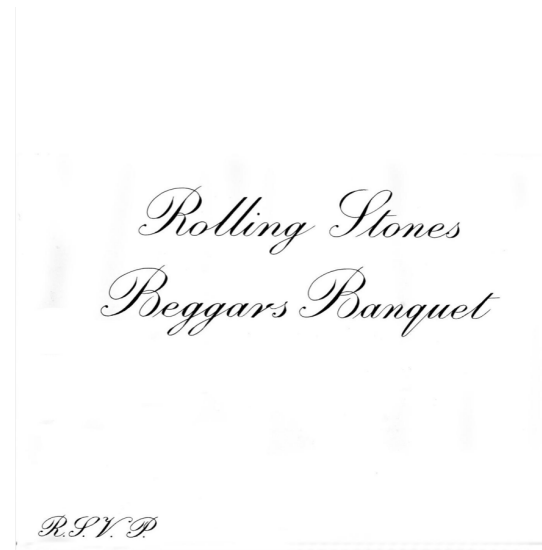


Fig. 7

13. The original *Beggars Banquet* artwork was reinstated with the album’s release on CD in 1984.

better known as *The White Album*, eliciting accusations of plagiarism on the Stones' part.

One: *The White Album*, a double LP (fig. 8)—minimalist to the eye, maximalist to the ear. Where the form and content of *Sgt. Pepper's* enacts a conceit involving a many-membered band of figures live and dead, fictional and real, spreading a gospel of psychedelic oneness and

The BEATLES

Fig 8

transcendent love, *The White Album* presents a blank declaration of unity ("The Beatles") which belies its content: thirty disjointed tracks, performed not by a group, but by four individuals—the record of a band falling apart. No longer the Fab Four, the Beatles of 1968 are John plus Paul plus George plus Ringo, and the musical and political 1960s comes to an end with schism disguised as a united front. Even as Godard, the Marxist, preaches class solidarity, his practice as a filmmaker demands that art must reflect material reality in a way that does not formally render that reality more abstract. It is likely that today we still do not know the meaning of *plus*, despite Godard's best efforts. His career as a filmmaker continues, decades after his revolutionary period, and indeed will never end — as Michel Foucault reminds us, an oeuvre can never be deemed complete (see Foucault 24). If *One Plus One* is thesis, *Sympathy for the Devil* its antithesis, and Marx's theory of history holds true, a non-bourgeois cinema will yet arise — if it hasn't already, if such a thing is in fact possible. The negation will continue to be negated: there is no need to rush toward *two*.

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Breaking the Rules

Fashion and Film in “Swinging Britain”

When *TIME* magazine baptized London “the Swinging City” in April 1966, it placed the British capital at the centre of the “Swinging Sixties” discourse. While there exists a significant body of research exploring British cinema of the decade in general (Hill; Murphy), and examining fashion in films of the decade in particular (Church Gibson; Landy), there remains little work to date on film audiences from this period. This article considers some of the findings from the AHRC-funded project “Cultural Memory and British Cinema-going of the 1960s,” the first major project which has set out to gather and explore the memories of film-goers from 1960s Britain. Its methodology is based on that of earlier ethnographic studies of audiences, including those by Helen Taylor, Jackie Stacey, and Annette Kuhn. Drawing on a wide range of materials, including over 800 questionnaire responses and 40 interviews, the project seeks to shed new light on the social and cultural history of cinema in the 1960s, and to contribute to a broader reappraisal of British social and cultural history during the decade.

This article focuses specifically on a small selection of these findings, and considers the memories of twelve of the project’s respondents. These memories are discussed as a means to re-evaluate recollections of, and responses to, representations of fashion in 1960s cinema. While the

project participants were not questioned about memories of fashion in 1960s films directly, a small number raised the issue themselves, and their responses are considered below. Building on existing work that has primarily examined the relationship between female spectators and female stars (Stacey; Moseley), this article considers the pleasures and meanings derived by both female and male British film-goers who have shared their memories of enjoying and emulating fashion in the films of the 1960s. It argues that, while the lives of many people living in 1960s Britain did not change dramatically throughout the decade, screen representations of fashion and “Swinging London” had a significant ideological impact on many cinema-goers, both within and beyond the capital. Notably, that fashion and consumer culture, as seen in the films of the decade, were strongly linked to notions of generational identity, and invoked memories of a desire for social and cultural change. These memories are considered as reconstructions of the past, which while they might not always be entirely accurate or reliable, contribute to a better understanding of the culture of cinema-going in the 1960s and how it related to people’s lived experiences.

1960s Britain witnessed a number of significant social changes such as the introduction of the contraceptive pill and the passage of the Sexual Offences (1964), Race Rela-

...fashion and consumer culture, as seen in the films of the decade, were strongly linked to notions of generational identity, and invoked memories of a desire for social and cultural change.

For female film-goers like Anne, their lives might not have resembled those of the characters they saw in 1960s films, but their wardrobes often did.

tions (1965), *Obscene Publications* (1967) and *Abortion* (1967) Acts. These all contributed to the perception of an increasingly “liberal” society. Several film academics have usefully contested such claims, particularly in relation to the supposed newfound freedoms for women. Central to these discussions has been the image of the “new, *déclassé* English girl” (Seebohm 34) who, for many, was epitomized by Julie Christie in films such as *Billy Liar* (John Schlesinger, 1963) and *Darling* (Schlesinger, 1965), swinging her handbag insouciantly as she strolled along the pavement. Melanie Bell, for example, has argued, that “the sexually liberated young woman was central to the myth of ‘Swinging Britain,’ but she was frequently reduced to nothing more than a sex object, paraded across a range of cultural texts for the pleasures of the heterosexual male” (81). Similarly, Sue Harper suggests that British films of the 1960s were “far more prescriptive towards women than they had been in the 1950s” (102). Drawing on research into the production contexts of 1960s British cinema, Harper argues that:

The Swinging Britain myth bore little relation to many people’s lived experience. If anyone did interpret the myth as a reflection of reality they might fairly have expected the whole country to be populated by young girls with visible knickers and flexible morality, who were good at sprinting along pavements. However, they would have been disappointed. (101-2)

While it is true that, for those who lived in provincial or rural parts of Britain during the 1960s, memories of “Swinging London,” or more generalized notions of “Swinging Britain,” were unlikely to be first-hand, the findings of this project suggest that, for some, they nevertheless carried an important cultural resonance. Alison was born in 1953, and grew up in a working-class family in Yorkshire. She recalls:

I was a little young for being involved in the “Swinging Sixties” and very much under my parents’ control. So although these films were a little interesting they did not feel too relevant, as I could not relate to the experiences they were portraying. If anything I suppose they left me (and possibly) my friends feeling

left out and a little resentful because we couldn’t get involved in the lifestyles portrayed, as we were too young. *Billy Liar* was very interesting though as it was filmed around Bradford when the city was being re-developed. In some scenes you can see the bulldozers at work! And Julie Christie’s character was such a free spirit!

Although Alison did not directly experience what she terms the “Swinging Sixties,” she recalls an awareness of the lifestyles represented in films such as *Billy Liar*, and a desire to be involved in them more directly. Similarly, Linda was born in 1950, and grew up in a lower middle class family in rural Cumbria. Her teenage memories of watching the “Swinging London” films, such as *Darling* and *Alfie* (Lewis Gilbert, 1966), were that they offered her “an insight into the ways other people lived, the girls usually had the trendy hairstyles and fashionable clothes. Up in Cumbria we were way behind with the fashions. Those girls with their mini-skirts, bobbed hairstyles and PVC coats and long boots... if only.” For Linda, although the world of “Swinging London” was remote, it was also highly desirable, even aspirational. Another female respondent, Anne, was born in 1943 and grew up in a working-class family in South Wales. Her memories of watching the “Swinging Sixties” films also reflect an interest in the fashions seen on the big screen:

With the “Swinging London” films, it was more a desire to be part of it. We would copy the clothes and fashions, especially Julie Christie. I think I wanted to be her for a while. But, of course, our lives weren’t like that. We got married and had children, like our mothers did. So things didn’t really change that much. I worked for one year before I got married, and then I was a housewife. So, there was only a surface nod to the things I saw in films, just the way I dressed, the fashions.

For female film-goers like Anne, their lives might not have resembled those of the characters they saw in 1960s films, but their wardrobes often did. Anne recalls enjoying “the thrill” of wearing clothes that her mother disapproved of, even though their actual lives were not so dissimilar. In this way, emulating the screen fashions of stars like Julie Christie offered some female cinema-goers small acts of resistance and subversion in an otherwise unchanged cultural landscape.

The star persona of Julie Christie is referenced, in the memories of many female cinema-goers, as someone they aspired to look like. Living a considerable distance from

the metropolitan hub of London did not necessarily lead to a sense of alienation or distance from the “swinging” culture of the capital city, as represented in films like *Darling*. Helen was born in 1953, and grew up in a working-class family in rural Nottinghamshire. When asked whether the “Swinging Sixties” films corresponded in any way to her memories of the decade, she recalls that “I did not have Julie Christie’s life, but the actresses were wearing clothes we had copies of, and she walked past shops we knew, so yes, in a way they did.” The activity of copying and making outfits seen on film actresses was not uncommon during the period, as Rachel Moseley has



established in relation to female fans of Audrey Hepburn (“Dress, Class and Audrey Hepburn”). This often formed part of a broader project of developing a distinctive type of gendered identity. Christine Geraghty points out that, unlike the high-end glamour of many female stars from the 1950s, “Christie’s clothes, while marked as those of a star, would also have been available through boutiques and dressmaking patterns to young women in the audience” (105). For women like Helen, copying Christie’s style formed part of a broader consumerist pleasure taken in shopping and following women’s fashion, and accessibility was a key factor. The representation of fashion on the big screen was, then, distinctly linked to the new consumer culture that developed in Britain throughout the decade.

So what did Christie’s fashion and sense of style mean to those women and girls who emulated it? As Pamela Church Gibson suggests, “the new ‘London’ films provided an opportunity to showcase different forms of fashionable behaviour, dress and décor, while at the same time subjecting them to a stern critique” (86). Indeed, several scholars have focused in particular on the fate of Diana Scott (played by Julie Christie) in *Darling*, arguing that the film’s narrative punishes the female protagonist for her promiscuous behaviour (August 82-83; Tarr 64). However, despite such readings of the film’s narrative, memories offered by female cinema-goers suggest that they took great pleasure in their admiration and emulation of Christie’s style in *Darling*; in this respect, their enjoyment of on-screen fashion transcended the apparent limitations of

the narrative. Jane grew up in rural Scotland, and explains her enjoyment of the “Swinging London” films in the context of broader generational attitudes. She recalls that she “liked the style and the fashion and the references to sexual freedom and independence. They were part of feeling like a member of a new generation.” A smaller number of male respondents also recall taking similar pleasures in watching Christie’s performances. Martin was born in 1951, and grew up in a lower middle-class family in Bristol. He recounts that, of the “Swinging London” films,

Darling was the best of the bunch and the only one I remember seeing during the 1960s. There was something about the Christie-Bogarde relationship that felt decadent—caught the loosening mood of the times. Julie Christie looked both glamorous and startlingly independent. Plus the end of the film opened up the possibility of European hedonism.

Both male and female audiences, then, recall recognizing in Christie a quality of independence and sexual freedom that seemed to them highly appealing.

In addition to admiring Christie’s “independence,” respondents to the survey repeatedly use a number of other terms to describe her star persona. These include “modern,” “fashionable,” “cool,” and “a free spirit.” Her appeal contrasts sharply, then, with that of Audrey Hepburn, who respondents describe as “elegant,” “well-dressed,” and “gamine” in memories of her 1960s films. As Moseley has observed, “Hepburn offered a way of being which enabled the British women I spoke with to negotiate a path between fashionable modernity and respectability, to

use clothes as both protection and ornament” (120). Christie, on the other hand, seems to have offered the female audiences who admired or copied her style a kind of enjoyment. Anne remembers: “it made you feel alive to see her walking down the streets of Bradford at the beginning of *Billy Liar*.” Judy was born in 1946 and grew up in a lower middle class family in Sussex. She recalls, “I remember buying a black-and-white mini-dress like one I saw on Julie Christie. I wore it around Brighton, and it felt daring and terribly modern. Some women made disapproving comments about my bare legs, but I didn’t care!” There is a sense, then, in which Christie’s style embodied a sense of vitality and generational identity. As Geraghty argues,

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. (105)

For middle-class respondents such as Judy, copying Christie’s fashions provided a means to push the boundaries of social conformity by imitating these “daring” expressions of female sexuality.

For those who lived in and around London rather than the provinces during the 1960s, memories of the permissive era are more often first-hand. Furthermore, it is not just female respondents from the London area who remember the importance of fashion in films of the 1960s. Michael was born in 1936 and lived in Kensington and Chelsea throughout the decade, working primarily as an antiques dealer. He recalls wearing “op art” shirts and ties as a form of rebellion against social norms regarding men’s fashions that were prevalent at the time. Michael explains the significance of “op art” fashions as follows:

When you wore [an op art] tie, you couldn’t see if you had a tie on or not, because they were the same, it was all zig-zags, things like that. So when I went into the Dorchester for lunch one day, the doorman said “I’m sorry, you can’t go in there, sir, you haven’t got a tie on,” and I just went like this [lifts imaginary



Both male and female audiences, then, recall recognizing in Christie a quality of independence and sexual freedom that seemed to them highly appealing.

tie], I had this invisible tie. That’s one thing. And for women, my good friend Mary, she went into Claridges for dinner, with her husband and a friend, wearing a trouser suit and she was stopped from going in. The doorman said “I’m very sorry, we don’t allow women with trousers in here,” so she took her trousers off and walked in with a jacket, which was like a mini skirt.’ Now, you see that made him look like an idiot, both those events made them idiots, but it was a kind of ... it was this mood, it was a ruse. So, any films that captured that, were in a way just slightly rebellious.

Michael goes on to discuss the subversive humour of the Beatles, whose films often captured this irreverent mood through their rebellious sense of fashion; his memories reflect the social and cultural significance of fashion in “Swinging London,” and the sense of being a “free spirit,” a status which was recognized and admired by many of those who lived in provincial and rural areas. Jill was born in 1941 and in grew up in a lower middle-class family in London. She recalls: that “as a young adult in London during the 1960s, I was of course aware of the changes in our culture. I remember particularly the real revolu-

tion in fashion, as Mary Quant and Courrèges became popular, and these changes were reflected in the films.” Mary was born in 1947, and moved to London from Cambridgeshire in the mid-1960s. She remembers films such as *Darling* and *Blow-up* (Michelangelo Antonioni, 1966) as representing the culture of “Swinging London,” albeit in a somewhat distorted way: “Yes they did, some of it was fantasy of course, but young people were expressing themselves differently for the first time and not just following in their parents footsteps. Sex, of course, became less of a worry for women with the advent of the pill, giving us control over our own bodies.” Mary worked in London in the mid-1960s and thus remembers first-hand how the availability of the contraceptive pill allowed her greater freedom and control over her own sex life. For Michael, Jill and Mary, then, the permissive society was less of a myth and more of a reality. While they acknowledge the role of “fantasy” in screen representations of the era, these are understood to relate quite clearly to the social and sexual changes that they themselves had experienced.

Mini-skirts and Mary Quant bobs were not the only looks to be associated with “Swinging London.” Towards the end of the decade, “flower power” became an increasingly popular movement and fashion statement. Jenny was born in 1946, and grew up in a lower middle class family in Hastings. She remembers, that “in 1965 I was walking around London barefooted with flowers in my hair!” It was in the latter half of the decade that counter-cultural films from the United States also had an impact in Britain, challenging earlier consumerist ideas of what was fashionable. Recalling their memories of watching *Easy Rider* (Dennis Hopper, 1969), some respondents reflected on how “it spoke to them personally” at the time. Stephen was born in 1947, and grew up in a working-class family in Derbyshire. He recounts that he watched *Easy Rider* several times, because “it made me feel so alive, when we were all so jaded and tired of consumerism. Growing your hair and wearing ‘hippie’ clothes meant something different then, you felt like you were doing something important, you were breaking the rules.” Although the look was quite dissimilar to the “op art” ties worn by Michael,

Stephen’s emulation of the “hippie” style seen in *Easy Rider* meant more than simply favouring a particular fashion trend: like Michael, he was employing fashion politically, as part of a subversive response to the Establishment of the era.

Fashions in interior *décor* are also discussed in the recollections of a few cinema-goers. Michael recalls a trip to New York, during which he was invited to watch a film at Andy Warhol’s studio:

In New York I went to The Factory and [Warhol’s] done, he’s ironed silver paper onto the walls, which is exactly what I’d done to my shop, my shop was all silver, it was like silver paper that you ironed on, and when you ironed it, it stuck to the wall. My shop, which I opened in ’65, was decorated like that, it was terribly daring and modern, and in his studio, his factory, was also the same silver walls, much better done than mine.

Outlandish wallpaper and “daring” interior *décor* can also be observed in several films of the decade, and underscore the significance of the growing consumer culture developing in Britain, and elsewhere. Jenny recalls the pleasures of seeing “purple wallpaper” in *Blow-up*, and Michael remembers watching films carefully to try and spot the art deco furniture. Sue Harper has wryly observed that “those who thought art had straightforward consequences might have expected the sales of lilac photography paper to skyrocket after the orgy scene in Antonioni’s *Blow-up* (1966). They would have been crestfallen” (102). In many respects she is right, in that the relationship between cinema-goers and on-screen fashions in interior *décor* is not a straight-



forward one; rather, it reveals the growing desire to make interesting or “daring” consumer choices, even if this was not always followed through. As Stephen recalls, “in our first home, we used wrapping paper as wallpaper, because it was much more interesting, and cheaper!” While these might not have been common cultural practices, they nonetheless reflect a particular sensibility that was characteristic of the era.

Though discussions aimed at debunking the “myth” of “Swinging London” have been grounded in thorough historical research, it is possible that they have downplayed the impact which social and cultural changes of the era *did* have on people—both in terms of the lives of those directly involved, and the repercussions for those watching from a distance. The ideological function of fashion in cinema-goers’ memories of the era, both onscreen and offscreen, can be understood in several ways. Firstly, there is a sense of longing articulated in the memories of those cinema-goers who, like Alison and Linda, did not directly experience the fashions of “Swinging London.” This was often followed, or accompanied, by the activity of emulating styles seen on stars such as Julie Christie. The “thrill” of copying Christie’s free-spirited and “daring” fashions offered women such as Anne and Judy, whose lives resembled those of their mothers, small acts of subversion in an otherwise rather humdrum existence. These memories can also be understood alongside Michael and Stephen’s memories of appropriating a range of different fashions as acts of cultural resistance. Finally, as Geraghty argues, the remembered pleasures of 1960s cinema-going need to be “placed firmly within the context of consumption” (103). Whether shopping for clothes that emulated Christie’s style, or ironing silver paper onto a shop wall, the joys of cinema-going were inextricably linked to those of the burgeoning consumer culture of the 1960s.

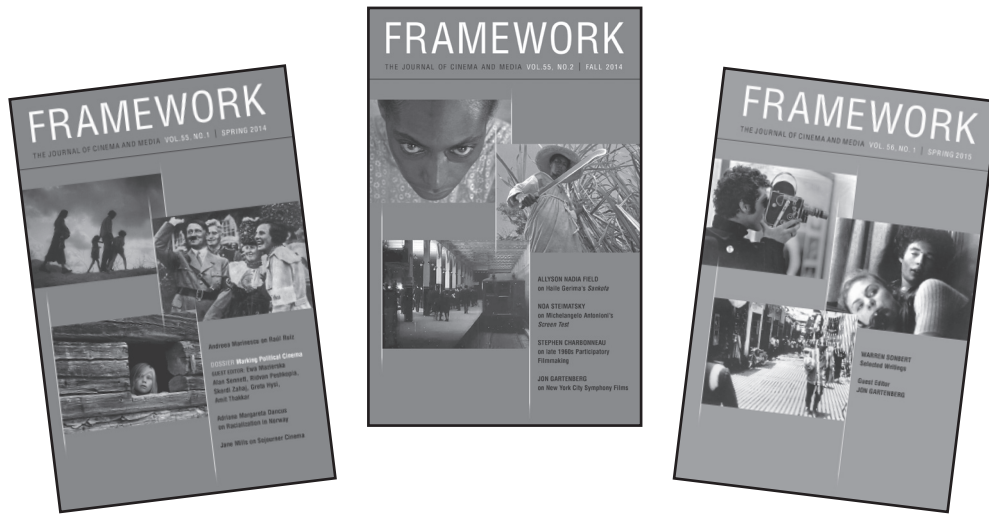
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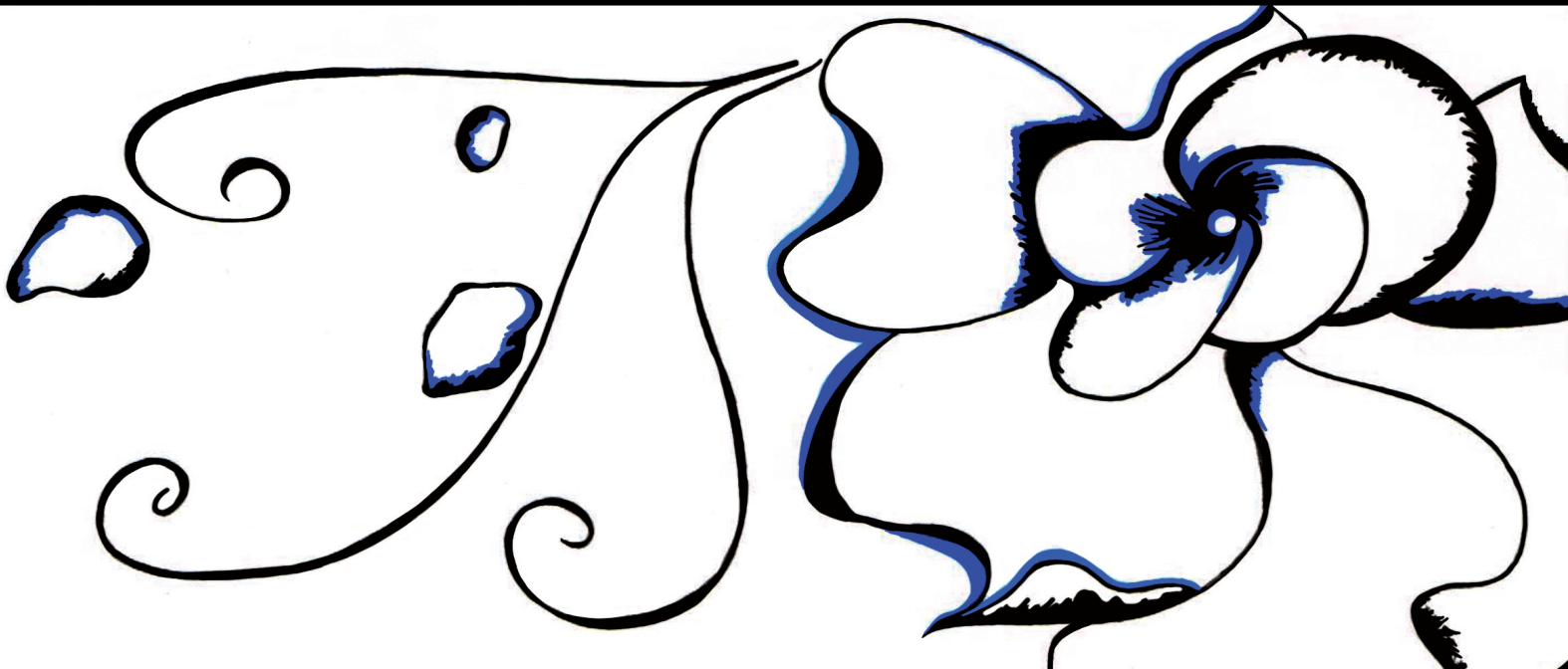
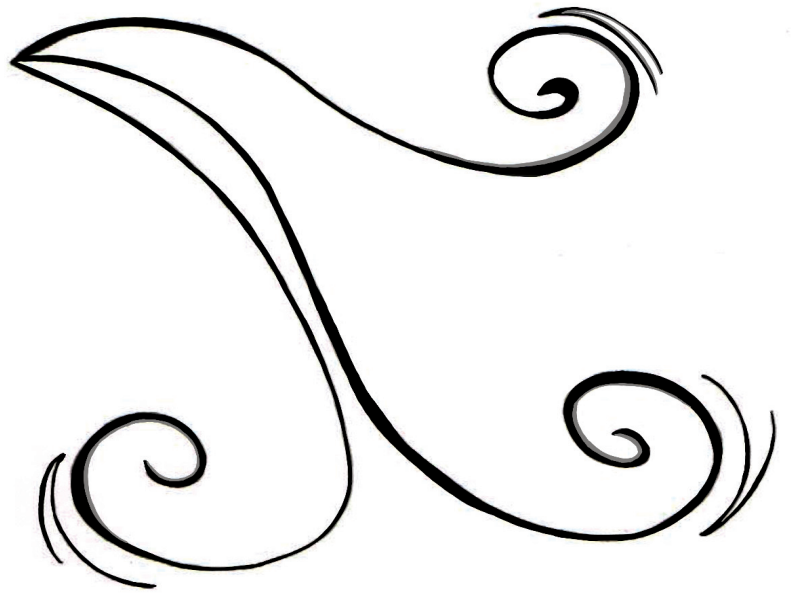
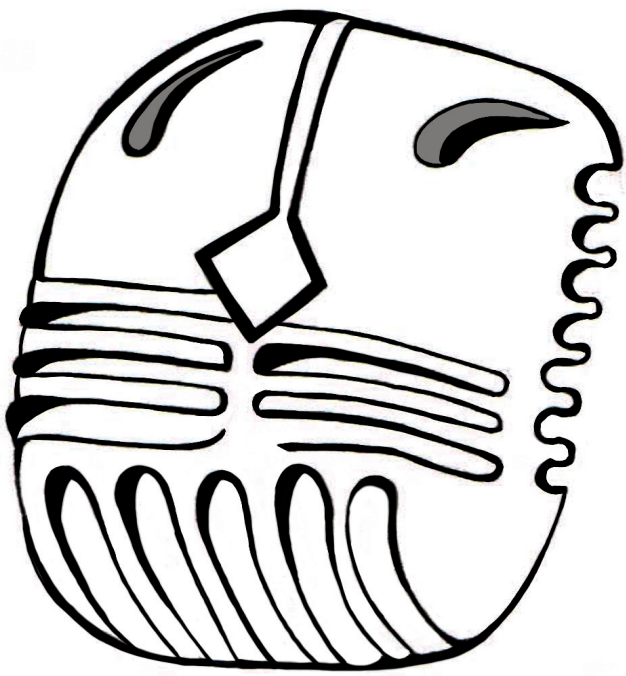
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Generic Variations In The Post-Classic Musical *Lady Sings the Blues*

This essay is drawn from David E. James's Rock 'N' Film: Cinema's Dance With Popular Music (New York: Oxford University Press, forthcoming, November 2015).

The first rock 'n' roll musical film, *Rock Around the Clock* (Fred F. Sears, 1956), proposed that the new musical style originated in the vernacular folk practice of rural, socially marginal, youthful amateurs, here played by Bill Haley and his Comets, in a white rural community free from generational or racial conflict. But its narrative centres on an adult professional agent, Steve Hollis (played by Johnny Johnston, himself a singer and veteran of 1940s Hollywood musicals), who discovers the combo. "Talent," he tells them, "is something you can sell for big money." Taking over the Comets' management, he develops them successfully, and the film ends with a nationally-broadcast televised "Hollywood Jamboree," featuring them, along with the Platters, the most successful African American doo-wop cross-over group. Subsequent rock 'n' roll films, most notably *Monterey Pop* (D.A. Pennebaker, 1968), *Woodstock* (Michael Wadleigh, 1970), and other counter-culture documentaries, would attempt to assert not only rock's folk origins, but also its ability to create a biracial, eventually Anglo-American, music that united performers and fans together in an unalienated quasi-folk commonality.

Three months after the opening of *Super Fly* (Gordon Parks, Jr., 1972), the best of the blaxploitation films, and the only one to feature musicians in the narrative, another African American musical film re-engaged its generic themes of the devastation caused by drugs, but it did so in an inverted form and from the underside. It

starred the most successful singer of the time, Diana Ross, in her film debut, playing neither a drug-dealer nor a bad blaxploitation chick like Coffy or Cleopatra Jones who would take their revenge on the ghetto pushers; rather she portrayed a victim, a revered singer whose career and life were destroyed by drugs, dealers, and pandemic racism: Billie Holiday, Lady Day.

Lady Sings the Blues (1972) was loosely based on Holiday's ghostwritten autobiography, itself similarly loosely based on her life.¹ Credited to Sidney J. Furie, it revived and combined two Hollywood genres, biographies of swing-era musicians such as *The Glenn Miller Story* (Anthony Mann, 1954), and *The Benny Goodman Story* (Valentine Davies, 1956), and melodramas about women who bring destruction on themselves, such as *In This Our Life* (John Huston, 1942) or *Leave Her to Heaven* (John M. Stahl, 1945). Nominated for five Academy Awards, it also returned over nine million dollars in the next year, while the soundtrack album, containing both music and dialogue from the film, became Ross's only solo album to top the charts and eventually sold over two million copies. Her talent was sold for big money, and *Lady Sings the Blues* was the first and most successful film from Motown, the record company founded in 1959 by Berry Gordy, Jr., who eventually controlled all aspects of its production.

Descended from a white plantation owner and his slave, Gordy was the seventh child of parents who had left Georgia in the 1920s to find work in the Detroit automotive factories. He began writing songs, most successfully for Jackie Wilson, before founding Motown, and signing the Miracles, Mary Wells, the Supremes, and other local

1. Of Holiday biographies, Robert O'Meally's *Lady Day: The Many Faces Of Billie Holiday* valuably emphasizes Holiday's artistry.



artists. Soon he had sufficient local and then national hits to justify converting a house into a recording studio and assembling an extensive stable of artists, a studio orchestra of accomplished instrumental accompanists known as the Funk Brothers and songwriting and record production teams, including Holland–Dozier–Holland, who wrote most of the Supremes' hits. An Artist Development department ensured that all his acts were impeccably dressed, groomed, and provided with coordinated dance routines to maximize their crossover audience appeal. Similarly, Gordy's control over their careers and daily lives quickly made their production of hit records as efficient as Detroit's assembly lines, over a hundred of them in the 1960s, more than justifying the mainstream aspiration of the label's slogan, "The Sound of Young America."

The Supremes were the most successful of Gordy's groups. Formed as a doo-wop quartet in Detroit's Brewster-Douglass Housing Projects, they were signed to Motown in 1961 as a trio consisting of Mary Wilson, Florence Ballard, and Diana Ross. Their releases failed until 1964, when Gordy established Ross as the lead singer, and "Where Did Our Love Go?" topped the US charts. For the next two years, the Supremes traded places at the top of the US singles charts with the Beatles, the only group in the world who could compete with them, and by mid-decade they were global superstars, having recorded a dozen number-one hits. While retaining their identity as Motown artists, Gordy constantly extended the Supremes' repertoire; their second and third albums, both released in 1964, were *A Bit of Liverpool* and *The Supremes Sing Country, Western and Pop*, and in 1967 they released *The Supremes Sing Rodgers & Hart*. That year, Gordy changed the group's name to "Diana Ross and the Supremes," and their second album in the new configuration in 1968 was

Diana Ross & the Supremes Sing and Perform "Funny Girl."

Two years later he split his star from the group, and in May 1970, Ross released her first solo album, *Diana Ross*, the single from which, "Ain't No Mountain High Enough," topped both the pop and rhythm and blues charts, and confirmed her ongoing crossover appeal.

In a decade, Gordy had made Motown one of the most successful record labels in the world and the largest black-owned business in the US, while his success in appealing to both black and white audiences made it one of the most progressive of popular cultural forces on both sides of the Atlantic. The Beatles' inclusion of three of Motown's most important songs on their second album, *With the Beatles* (1963), and Bob Dylan's often-cited observation that Smokey Robinson was "America's best living poet" evidence Motown's place in the heart of rock 'n' roll, even as their music crossed virtually all social boundaries.² Diana Ross's distinctive voice was at the center of his conquest of the music industry, and when Gordy began moving part of his operations to Los Angeles in 1969, and to direct his attention to another medium, film, she accompanied him.

In 1969, Jay Weston, co-producer of *For Love of Ivy* (Daniel Mann, 1968), a romantic comedy starring Sidney Poitier and Abbey Lincoln, proposed to Berry that Ross, rather than Lincoln who had been his first choice, star in a film about Holiday (whom Berry had in fact known).³ Ross had demonstrated acting abilities in an ABC television special in which she played Charlie Chaplin, Harpo Marx, and W.C. Fields, and "My Man," a song associated

2. Dylan's remark has no authoritative source, but it occurs in, for example, Gulla (258).

3. Most production details for *Lady Sings the Blues* are derived from Taraborrelli.



with Holiday, had been part of her repertoire since her final concert with the Supremes, though her interest in it was focused on outdoing Barbra Streisand's cover in *Funny Girl* (William Wyler 1968). Nevertheless, the decision was a huge risk. Gordy was initially reluctant, concerned about Ross's suitability for the part and about the lack of crossover success for films with predominantly black casts, but he eventually agreed and financed a screenplay. He attracted no studio interest until Frank Yablans, a new president at Paramount, noted the money being made by recent blaxploitation releases, and agreed to finance the film with two million dollars. Weston signed Furie, veteran of two Cliff Richard musicals, *The Young Ones* (1961) and *Wonderful Life* (1964), and, more recently, *The Ipccress File* (1965) and *Little Fauss and Big Halsy* (1970), to direct. Very enthusiastic about Ross, Furie also found Gordy entirely in accord with his intentions: "I didn't want to make a serious, deep important movie. I wanted to make a piece of entertainment that would make big money for all of us" (qtd. in Taraborrelli 258).

Unfamiliar with Holiday's music, Ross was able to immerse herself in it while pregnant with Gordy's child, studying especially the eighteen songs that Gil Askey, musical director of the Supremes and many other top Motown acts, had selected as most appropriate for her voice. Several musicians who had worked with Holiday were recruited for the recording sessions. Dissatisfied with the script, Gordy had it rewritten by Motown staffers, and, dissatisfied with the wardrobe, Ross had new gowns made by Bob Mackie and Ray Aghayan. Shooting began on December 6th, 1971, and, despite Gordy and Furie vying for control, it was almost completed by early February. Gordy's insistence on repeated takes so infuriated Yablans that he threatened to close down production; in response,

Gordy repaid Paramount's two million and invested another two million of his own, ending Paramount's involvement except as distributor.

With the tagline derived from Ralph Gleason's *Rolling Stone* review, "Diana Ross is Billie Holiday," *Lady Sings the Blues* opened in New York on October 12, 1972, to rave reviews, especially for Ross's performance.⁴ Leonard Feather, a renowned jazz critic and personal friend of Holiday, spoke for the cognoscenti: "Miss Ross brought to her portrayal a sense of total immersion in the character. Dramatically, this is a tour de force. . . . Musically, there was no attempt at direct imitation of Billie's timbre, but the nuances and phrasing were emulated with surprising success" (51). The project Gordy described as "not a Black film but a film with Black stars" crossed over to the white market as easily as "Baby Love" (qtd. in Hutson). With it, Gordy himself crossed over from music to cinema, and, disarming even those who had most criticized the project, Ross herself became a film star. Where Gordy's previous insistence on broadening her range had involved assimilating the Beatles, Rogers and Hart, and *Funny Girl*, in this she laid claim to classical black music, to jazz, and to a singer considered by many to be one of the century's greatest. Conversely, the narrative also endowed Ross with the biographical misery the white mainstream demanded of a black artist, as well as with the addiction to narcotics that Hollywood insistently ascribes to black musicians of genius.⁵ In her first role, she became the first black woman

4. Gleason was astonished at Ross's performance: "In this film the face and the figure and the sound of Diana Ross have become Billie Holiday. I do not know how it was possible for her to get the kind of feeling she did into her singing" (22).

5. See, for example, *Round Midnight* (Bertrand Tavernier, 1986), *Bird* (Clint Eastwood, 1988), *Thelonious Monk: Straight, No Chaser* (Charlotte Zwerin, 1988), *Ray* (Taylor Hackford, 2004). *What's Love*



to win a Golden Globe award and the first since Dorothy Dandridge to be nominated for an Oscar as Best Actress.⁶ Having struck gold in music, television, and now in cinema, she was only steps away from her 1976 Billboard Award as “Female Entertainer of the Century.”

The degree to which Diana Ross could play, let alone *be*, Billie Holiday had been questioned when the project was announced. Slightly built and often appearing almost anorexic, Ross was physically the opposite of Holiday, a self-described “big fat healthy broad” “with big breasts, big bones” (Holiday and Dufty 9). The adequacy of her experience to Holiday’s calamitous life was also doubted; but even though she had not suffered as horribly, as a working-class black woman, she had experienced prejudice enough. A Motown Revue tour of the South in late 1962 had exposed her to segregated public faculties, and just before work on *Lady* began, two of her brothers were brutalized by the police. Other achievements linked the two, notably Ross’s recapitulation of Holiday’s success in crossing over to a white audience while maintaining the affection of her initial black public; one had wanted to play the Café Society, and the other, the Copacabana, and both fulfilled their ambitions. But differences in their voices precipitated most scorn, with Ross’s teenage breathiness deemed inadequate to Holiday’s biting authority. In fact, Holiday had a limited vocal range, hardly more than an octave, and even if her style derived from the blues and Ross’s from doo-wop, both had thin, nasal voices, quite unlike the powerhouses of their respective eras—Bessie Smith and Aretha Franklin, for example. Likewise, though Ross did not attempt to imitate Holiday’s timbre, Feather was correct in noting that she had learned the nuances of her phrasing, her practice of bend-

Got to Do With It (Brian Gibson, 1993) only appears to be an exception, for though Tina is not addicted to drugs, she is addicted to Ike Turner—who is addicted to cocaine.

6. In 1973, Ross was nominated for two Golden Globes awards, “Best Motion Picture Actress” and “Most Promising Newcomer - Female,” winning the later. She lost the Oscar to Liza Minnelli.

ing pitch, for example, or hesitating over a note rather than immediately hitting it on pitch. But while emphasizing the interconnected itineraries of her musical career and addiction, Berry’s final script had many inaccuracies and omissions. The sketchy biography excludes her life among jazz musicians and other artists, if her close friend, Lester Young, who coined the sobriquet, “Lady Day,” appears at all, it is only in the displaced form of the entirely fictitious Piano Man, and the film even gives an incorrect date for her imprisonment, placing it, not in 1947, but in 1936. Similarly, the triumph of her life was shifted to the film’s narrative conclusion at Carnegie Hall. Instead of allowing Holiday to descend into poverty and die under arrest in a hospital bed, Berry reimagined her demise as Ross’s triumph.

The musical differences between Holiday and Ross are most marked in two areas, the former’s interaction with her fellow musicians and her double-consciousness. A distinctive facet of Holiday’s genius as a jazz singer was her weaving of her voice among other elements in a collective improvisatory ensemble and her phrasing of her vocal lines in response to her instrumental accompaniment. This may be heard in her recordings, but films show her listening closely the other musicians and constructing her improvisation as a dialogue with theirs, while they similarly react to her. In the only visual record of her singing live, a performance of “Fine and Mellow” in the television program, *The Sound of Jazz* (1957), her attention to Lester Young and her replies to his improvisations are palpably intimate.⁷ Conversely, in *Lady Sings the Blues*, she of course sings within other musicians’ orchestration, but not in any reciprocal collaboration. Musically as much as narratively, they are merely a backdrop, props for her star performance.

The degree to which Diana Ross could play, let alone be, Billie Holiday had been questioned when the project was announced.

7. Her creative interaction with her instrumentalists is also clear in the several songs in which she is paired with Louis Armstrong in *New Orleans* (Arthur Lubin, 1947) where, much to her disgust, she played a maid; her account of the filming appears in Holiday and Dufty (119–22). Her only other film appearance was in a short, *Symphony in Black: A Rhapsody of Negro Life* (Fred Waller, 1935), in which Duke Ellington is seen composing music based on vignettes of African American life; already playing a spurned lover, she sings “Saddest Tale.”

Though in her 1930s performances and recordings, Holiday had been an exuberant jazz singer, in the post-war years, she narrowed her focus almost exclusively to torch songs, establishing a consistent persona as an abandoned or abused woman. "Strange Fruit," the only major exception, generalized her personal victimization into the situation of African Americans as a whole. The rhythmic and tonal consistency of her songs and their largely unvaried dramatic situations allowed her to inhabit her post-war persona with an extraordinarily expressive conviction. But at the same time, the strength of her voice sustained a distance from her victimhood, as if she were quoting it in a fashion that has often been likened to a Du Boisian "double-consciousness." Ross's characterization lacked this complexity. James Baldwin, for example, justifiably faulted the film for failing to portray Holiday's readiness to confront white police, managers, and other authority figures, arguing, first that "She was much stronger than this film can have any interest in indicating, and, as a victim, infinitely more complex," and then, that a "victim who is able to articulate the situation of the victim has ceased to be a victim: he, or she, has become a threat" (114-115).⁸ Ross, however, is never a threat, and never displays any autonomous power and, apart from one moment in the extremity of her addiction when she attacks him, she is psychically and emotionally dependent on Louis McKay.

If *Lady Sings the Blues* contains any interpretative issue, it is not the relation between Ross and Holiday, but the relation between McKay and Gordy. Whether consciously or not, Gordy made the film a self-congratulatory allegory of Ross's career under his direction and control. The real-life McKay was a mob enforcer and sometime pimp who, like many of Holiday's other lovers, abused her. Married to her in 1957, he outlived her and when the film was in production, his threats were taken sufficiently seriously that he was hired as a consultant (Taraborrelli 261). He need not have been concerned, for the film's McKay, though a composite of Holiday's three husbands, is impossibly idealized. Physically gorgeous, impeccably tailored, unfailingly generous, and possessed of endless unexplained wealth that allows him to move effortlessly among all echelons of white society, he is simultaneously Prince Charming and Svengali. Saving her from ridicule at her debut, he takes her downtown to dance all night,

8. In the same essay, Baldwin did, however, apologize that his cynicism about Ross's casting "could not have possibly been more wrong" (106).

then to his luxurious apartment and his bed. Under his tutelage, her musical career soars, and when he is absent she succumbs to drugs and other calamities that take her lower and lower until he comes to her rescue. The ballad of her dependency on him is counterpointed by the white music industry's exploitation. The blond devil, Harry, who ensures her drug addiction for the advantage of his own career and then abandons her at the radio broadcast and withdraws her supplies, personifies the musical and chemical vulnerability from which only McKay can save her. To ensure that the lesson is learned, Gordy has the film tell it twice: first by financing her stay in the sanatorium and second by securing her Carnegie Hall performance. Just before that, in California at her second nadir, terrified, drugged, and confined with Piano Man's bloody body, she phones him, crying, "We can't do everything by ourselves." McKay/Gordy again comes to save her. "I knew you'd come, I've been waiting for you," she greets him, and he transports her magically to Carnegie Hall, where she reiterates her dependency by singing, with a full orchestra rather than history's trio, "My Man." "My Man" is the only song addressed to McKay, but their relationship is isolated from the drama of her music with, as Drew Casper notes, "their seven romantic scenes accorded a lush underscoring absent from the rest of the film" (Casper 268). By transmogrifying Billie Holiday into Diana Ross, Gordy represented himself as McKay and her savior. *Lady Sings the Blues*, then, abandons the dominant 1960's model of music as spontaneous self expression and reverts, if allegorically, to the 1950's model established in *Rock Around the Clock* of the priority of the manager and by implication of popular music as an industrially manufactured commodity.

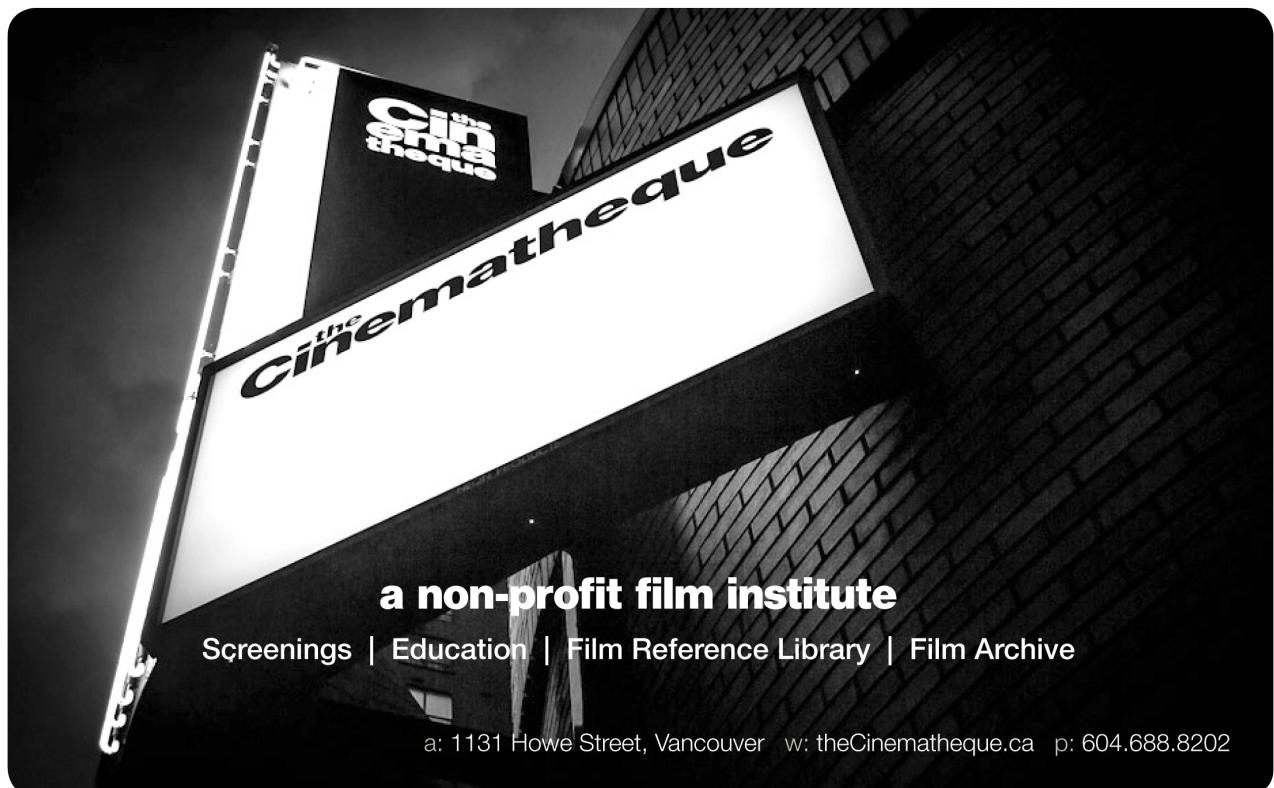
To ensure that the world would know that he, not the Ross whom he managed so brilliantly, was the real star of Motown, Gordy told the story again three years later in *Mahogany* (1975), also produced by Motown. Equally, to ensure it was told correctly, Gordy took over direction, firing Tony Richardson whom he had initially

If Lady Sings the Blues contains any interpretative issue, it is not the relation between Ross and Holiday, but the relation between McKay and Gordy.

hired. Ross's recording of the film's title song, "Do You Know Where You're Going To?," topped the *Billboard* Hot 100 and Easy Listening charts as well as being nominated for an Academy Award, but in the film she played a dress designer rather than a musician. The theme song articulated and accompanied Ross's recurrent choices of directions between an independent career and subordination to her man, between individual fulfillment and social responsibility. Though the independent career leads to professional success, making her the toast of the Rome fashion world, there she descends into emotional and sexual misery among wealthy but effete and impotent whites. On the other hand, again as Gordy's surrogate, Billy Dee Williams appears as a community leader and an aspiring politician determined to serve the black community. Returning home from European decadence, she finds him addressing a political rally and from the crowd she proclaims, "I want you to get me my old man back!" In return he offers her the chance "to stand by him when the going's gettin' rough," and to "love and cherish him for the rest of [her] life." Only when she promises to do so does he guarantee, "I'll get you your old man back." Even Billie Holiday never had to promise so much.

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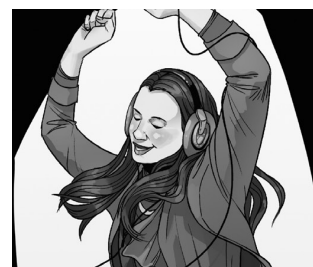


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The End of the Real 1960s Experimental Cinema, and The Loss of Cinema Culture



Cinematheque poster by Greg Shartris

The 1960s were an extraordinary time for the arts, and for film in particular. But it's easy to forget this—and it's very easy for contemporary students to miss it completely. In the wake of the demise of 16mm as a production and distribution format, the birth and death of the experimental film movement in New York in the 1960s seems both remote and essentially unknowable, in large part because the bulk of work created during the period was shot in 16mm format, and today, there are no more 16mm projectors—even at universities and in most archives.

We also live in an era that has witnessed the demise of books, magazines, and most printed material, in favour of

streaming media. I browse the web on a daily basis, and maintain a blog site that I update regularly, but there's a world of difference between something viewed online, and settling down with a print book, where you can turn the pages, read the text, and actually touch the material physically.

The end of film as a format means the end of an embrace of the real. You can't hold up the frames of a film to the light anymore, and see what's there with the naked eye, because you're forced—forced—to work in video. You're further removed from the vision you documented by the intervention of digital technology, which reduces everything to 1s and 0s.

There's no real image to see, unless you use technology to do so. There's an essential unreality to the digital images that you can't overcome, no matter how hard you try. Nothing is fixed; all is ephemeral. It's not for nothing that the major Hollywood studios routinely cut a 35mm negative of all the materials from the digital films they produce for long-term conservation. For the 16mm filmmakers, and the "orphan" films they produce, there is no future, and no present—only the past.

During the 1960s, experimental cinema exploded around the globe, centering in New York, San Francisco, and London. The cinematic culture of New York during this era was incredibly rich, embracing women and men, gay and straight, of literally every race and creed, making completely independent films for nothing at all in a seemingly relentless floodtide of raw vision. As I wrote in an essay entitled "On The Value of 'Worthless' Endeavor" in 2012,

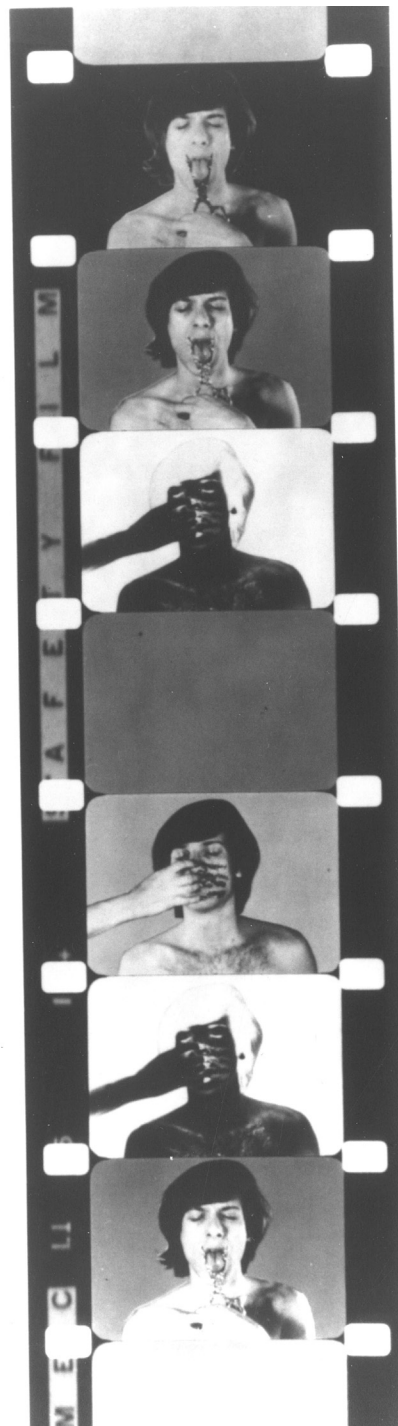
The end of film as a format means the end of an embrace of the real.

in the 1960s, working in New York, I was part of a group of filmmakers who created films out of almost nothing at all; outdated raw stock, ancient cameras that barely functioned, often borrowed for a few days from someone else, a few lights, the barest outline of a script, and “financing” that consisted of donated labor both in front of and behind the camera . . . [we] worked a variety of odd jobs to keep the wolf from the door, and plowed nearly everything we made back into films; films that had no market, no commercial value, and were so resolutely personal that it seemed that no one, outside of a small circle of friends, could ever possibly find them of value, worth or interest . . .

And yet now these films are, almost without exception, classics. They far outstripped what Hollywood was creating during the same period. The “underground” filmmakers who worked in this period were as varied as the subject matter could possibly allow. They were artistic outlaws, making the films that no one else had ever dreamed of, much less attempted to create. Some of the most important figures of the 1960s include Barbara Rubin, Robert Nelson, Stan VanDerBeek, Paul Sharits, Robert Breer, Ben Van Meter, Warren Sonbert, Ron Rice, Kenneth Anger, Maya Deren, Marie Menken, Gerard Malanga, Jud Yalkut, Scott Bartlett and many others.

All of these filmmakers shared one thing in common: a highly personal and deeply felt vision of a new and anarchic way of looking at film and video, fueled by the inexhaustible Romanticism of the era, and the fact that film and video were both very “cheap” mediums in which to work during the 1960s. Andy Warhol’s early sync-sound 70 minute features, such as *Vinyl* and *My Hustler* (both 1965) cost just \$200 to final print, since Warhol shot his films on an Auricon camera which created an optical soundtrack directly on the film as it was being shot. Even his epic split screen film *Chelsea Girls* (1966) cost just \$1,200 to final print, shot in much the same manner.

Gerard Malanga, Warhol’s assistant during the 1960s, produced many films of his own, including the stunningly beautiful works *In Search of the Miraculous* (1967), *Preraphaelite Dream* (1968), and *The Recording Zone Operator* (1968); the last film mentioned was shot in Rome, Italy in 35mm Technicolor /Techniscope in the winter of 1968, and featured members of The Living Theatre in the cast. A different vision is that of Ron Rice, whose feature film *The Flower Thief* (1960), was shot in 16mm black and white using 50” film cartridges left over from aerial



Paul Shartis's *T,O,U,C,H,I,N,G* (1968)

gunnery equipment used during World War II. Rice’s *Senseless* (1962), and *Chumlum* (1964) are equally daring; Rice’s early death in Mexico City in 1964 robbed the New American of one of its most audacious and uncompromising talents.

New-Narrative filmmaking in the Independent American Cinema can be seen in Stanton Kaye’s *Georg* (1964) and *Brandy in the Wilderness* (1969); Larry Kardish’s 80 -minute *Slow Run* (1968) is a relaxed and sensual narrative possessed of enormous power and intelligence. The pio



Andy Warhol and friends in Robert Breer's studio

neering montagist Max Katz should be remembered for his dazzling editorial construct *Wisp* (1963), as well as his 77 minute feature film *Jim the Man* (1970).

The late José Rodríguez Soltero produced *Jerovi* (1965), *Lupe* (1966), an elegiac remembrance of Hollywood actress Lupe Velez, and the rigorously formalist feature film *Dialogue with Ché* (1968), which was successfully presented at the Cannes and Berlin Film Festivals in 1969, and widely reviewed.

Vernon Zimmerman's *Lemon Hearts* (1960) stars the gifted actor Taylor Mead in no less than eleven roles, and is an improvisational comedy shot on a shoestring budget in San Francisco. Ray Wisniewski's *Doomshow* (1964) and Bud Wirtschafter's *What's Happening?* (1963) are documents of "happenings" (partially staged theatrical events) featuring such pioneering New York artists as Allan Kaprow, Yvonne Rainer, La Monte Young and Dick Higgins. Ben van Meter's *S. F. Trips Festival: An Opening* (1967) is a gorgeously multiple exposed record of a "happening" on the West Coast, and has much in common with Wisniewski's and Wirtschafter's work.

The late Jud Yalkut, originally a New York based filmmaker associated with the USCO Lightshow group,

continuously made films since the early 1960s, of which *Kusama's Self-Obliteration* (1967), a record of a "happening" conducted by Japanese artist Yayoi Kusama, and *US Down By the Riverside* (1966) are perhaps best known. A few years before his death, Yalkut had a comprehensive retrospective of his films at The Whitney Museum in New York, but since then, they've gone back into our collective unconscious.

Masao Adachi's *Wan: Rice Bowl* (1962) is an early example of Japanese expatriate American cinema, as is Edd Dundas's *The Burning Ear* (1965). Robert Downey Sr., whose popularity was widespread in the 1960s, produced the satiric narratives *Babo 73* (1964) and *Chafed Elbows* (1966) earlier in his career; they have not been screened publicly for more than a decade but are some of the very, very few films of this era now available on Criterion/Eclipse DVD. Satya Dev Dubey's *Barriers* (1967), shot in 35mm, is the work of an Indian expatriate in New York.

A group of influential feature films by New American Cinema artists seldom screened today includes Jock Livingston's Dadaist-influenced comedy *Zero in the Universe* (1966), David Secter's *Winter Kept Us Warm* (1968), revolving around a gay love affair on a Canadian college

The “underground” filmmakers who worked in this period were as varied as the subject matter could possibly allow.

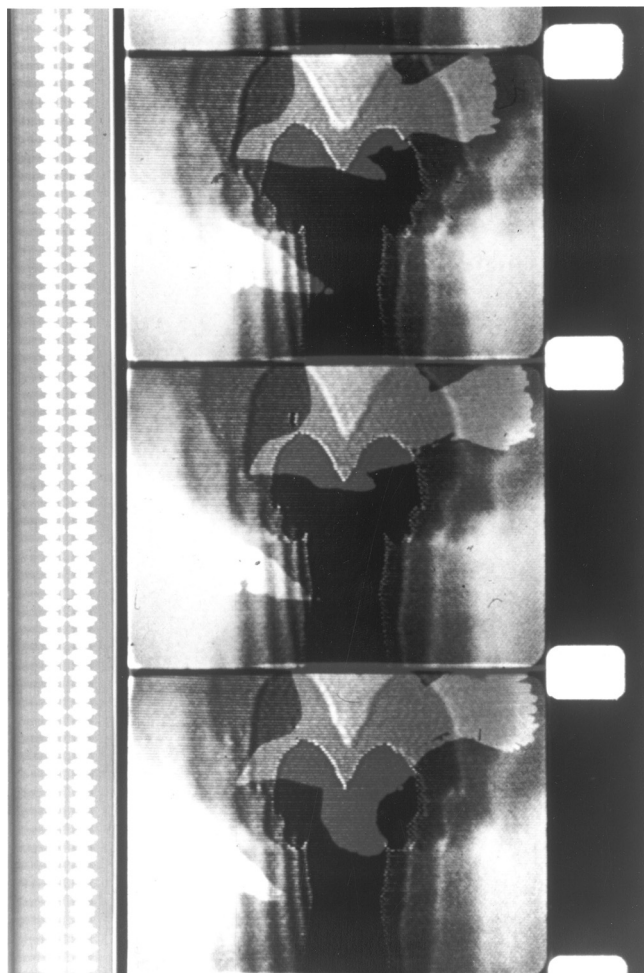
campus, Dick Higgins’s *The Flaming City* (1963), a hard-edged “Beat” epic about Manhattan life on the margins and Robert Kramer’s *Ice* (1969) dealing with a futurist cell of political revolutionaries; all of these films are certainly worthy of revival.

Christopher MacLaine’s films *Beat* (1958), *The Man Who Invented Gold* (1957), *Scotch Hop* (1959) and *The End* (1953) are all documents of the San Francisco “Beat” era; seldom screened today, these films provide a tantalizing peek into the world of a vanished yet still influential subculture.

The late Scott Bartlett’s films *Metanomen* (1966), *Off/On* (made in collaboration with Tom DeWitt, 1967) and *Moon* (1969) exemplified San Francisco’s preferred form of cinematic discourse for a later generation of artists, poets, writers and videomakers; indeed, Bartlett and DeWitt’s *Off/On* is one of the first films to mix film and video imagery together into a spatial congruent image mix. The visual structures of *Off/On* influenced the images we see on MTV today, as well as the digital special effects employed in many contemporary feature films. During his life, Scott Bartlett was sponsored by such filmmakers as Francis Ford Coppola. Yet today, despite their undiminished impact and undeniable influence, Bartlett’s films are seldom shown.

The works of Shirley Clarke and Maya Deren are well-known, but the films of their contemporary Storm De Hirsch are often marginalized. De Hirsch’s *Goodbye in the Mirror* (1964), to pick just one film from De Hirsch’s considerable body of work, is a 35mm feature film shot in Rome dealing with the lives of three young American women living abroad; screened at the Locarno and Cannes Film Festivals in 1964, this transcendent and ambitious narrative film is only one example of early Feminist cinema that led to the later work of Yvonne Rainer, Jane Campion, Sally Potter, Julie Dash and others.

Dorothy Wiley and Gunvor Nelson’s *Schmeerguntz* (1966) and *Fog Pumas* (1967) operated in a zone of feminist discourse that has been more widely appreciated abroad, particularly in Sweden, than in the United States. Carolee Schneeman is best known for her films

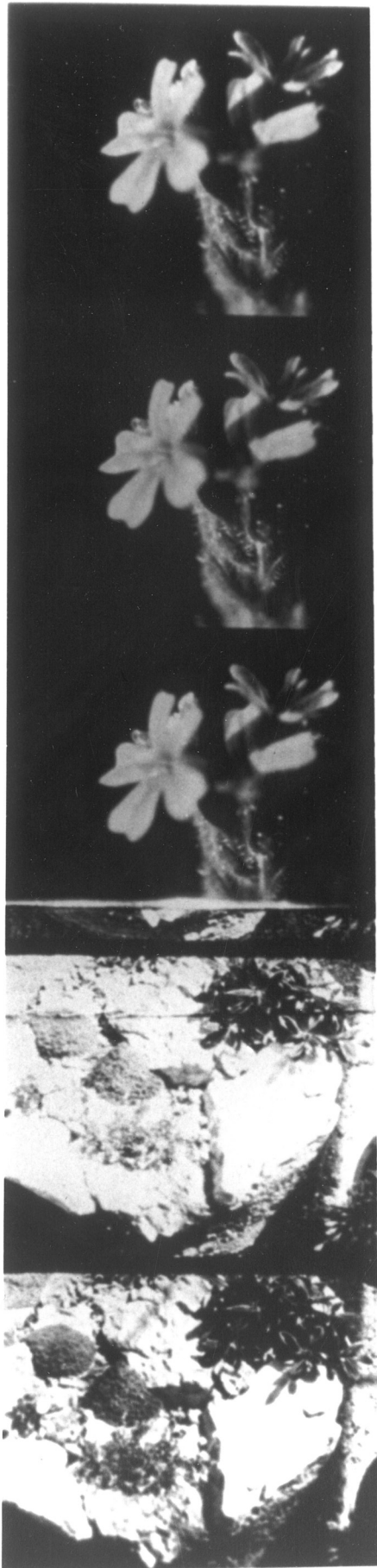


Scott Bartlett and Tom DeWitt’s *Off/On* (1967)

Fuses (1964-68) and *Plumb Line* (1968-72), which both deserve wider exposure. Naomi Levine, Marie Menken and Barbara Rubin have also created works of considerable depth and beauty. This list of women in the world of experimental cinema could be extended with other names of individuals who have worked in the cinema for many years, but who have yet to receive the sustained canonical inclusion their work so clearly deserves.

But try to see these films today – go ahead, just try. Many are still available from The Filmmakers’ Cooperative in New York City, or from Canyon Cinema in San Francisco, but in nearly every case, only 16mm copies of these groundbreaking films are available. When I wrote my book *The Exploding Eye: A Re-Visionary History of 1960s American Experimental Cinema* roughly fourteen years ago, one had the choice between 16mm prints and video (either VHS or DVD) to use in the classroom. Today that choice is gone, and with it, nearly all of the films described above. If you can’t see them, they might as well not exist.

In a 2003 interview with Gwendolyn Audrey Foster published in *Senses of Cinema*, talking about the New York



City underground film community during the 1960s, I noted that

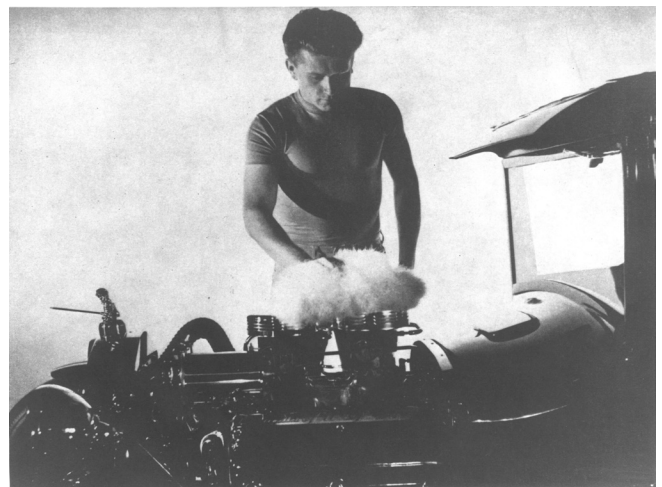
We lived a communal experience. You could crash at people's apartments by just calling them up and saying, "I need a place to sleep." People shared equipment, they shared talent, they shared time. People were allowed to be themselves, and we were all considered outcasts. We were all living on the margins of society . . .

I think we all thought of ourselves as making different kinds of movies, but that we were all part of one gigantic entity that was making movies together with a common purpose. We all thought we would live forever, that time was somehow frozen. We would never get older, and we would keep making art for the rest of our lives on the margins of society . . . It was inexpensive to live in New York City. If you didn't mind living on the Lower East Side, you could rent an apartment for about 50 bucks a month. Can you imagine that today?

No, I can't imagine that today, when two bedroom apartments on in the Lower East Side of Manhattan rent for \$4,000 a month, not including utilities. I well remember "housewarming" parties on Avenue A, B and/or C—"Alphabet City"—the worst part of the city in the 60s and 70s.

A bunch of people would get together with hammers and a pail full of twenty penny nails—essentially large spikes—and drive them through the front door of the apartment from the *inside*, literally creating hundreds of pin points to discourage junkies from kicking down the door, despite the Fox police locks, which didn't always work.

Right: Marie Menken's *Glimpse of the Garden* (1957)
Below: Kenneth Anger's *Kustom Kar Kommandos* (1965)





Ron Rice and Jack Smith

New York City was dangerous, but it was full of possibilities. Nobody had any money, but nobody cared. We made all our work from the castoff materials of society—Jack Smith, for example, made his landmark film *Flaming Creatures* on film that was literally *stolen* from a New York photo store, Camera Barn, and then processed the film with stolen developing mailers—he simply had no other way to make the films he wanted so desperately to create.

But now all that has changed. When simply *existing* in Manhattan costs so much—when museums now charge \$25 at the door to get in—when everyone sits at home and stares at their laptops and there's no real sense of physical community—where will the new work—the *dangerous* work—come from?

Today, filmmaking schools turn out reliable drones to create films for the mainstream cinema, whether in Hollywood or any other commercial cinema capital. The truly independent model of cinema has been lost—films that break all the rules intentionally, and are made solely out of a burning desire to get even a rough sketch of one's vision on film.

There will never be a return to the 1960s—the truly maverick vision of film—partly because the medium itself has vanished, and also because the films themselves are impossible to see. As late as 1997, I could run an entire semester's worth of experimental films as a course, and rent and screen almost all of the films mentioned in this essay. Today, with the death of 16mm, that possibility has evaporated.

What will the future hold when the past is so closed off to us? What can we do when the work of so many talented women and men has essentially been erased by a society that lives only in present, and celebrates only mainstream pop culture on a widespread basis?

The best new work – the most innovative new cinema, or music, or painting, or poetry— anything—always comes from the margins. But we live a society where the margins have been erased. What will we do when the past is no longer available to us? Make no mistake—we are living a new Digital Dark Age, in which an entire culture of cinema—as just one example—has been wiped from our collective social memory. Where will the new work come from? What will we do now?

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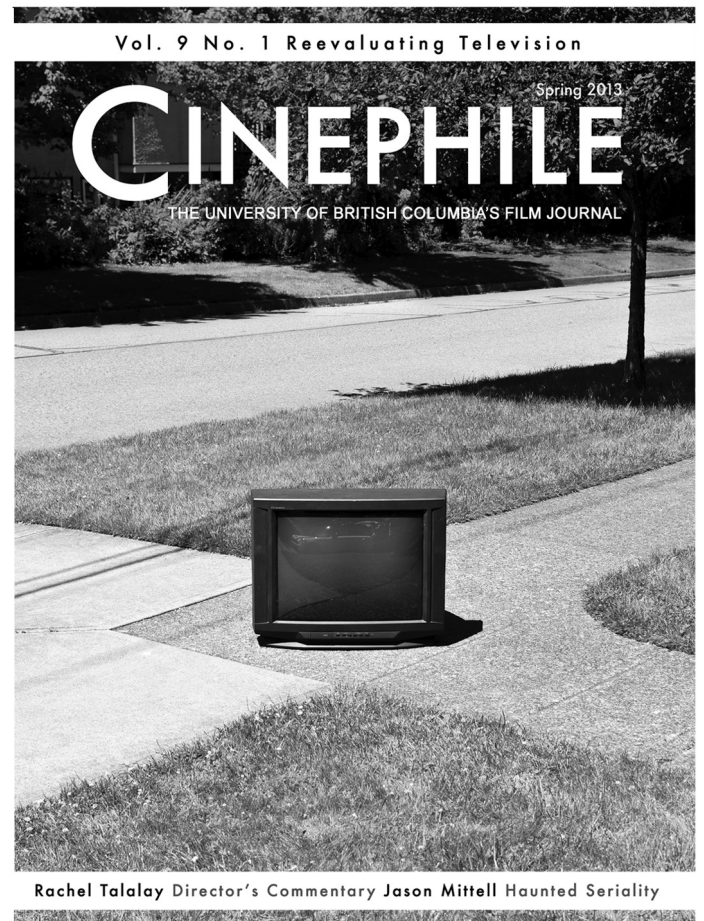
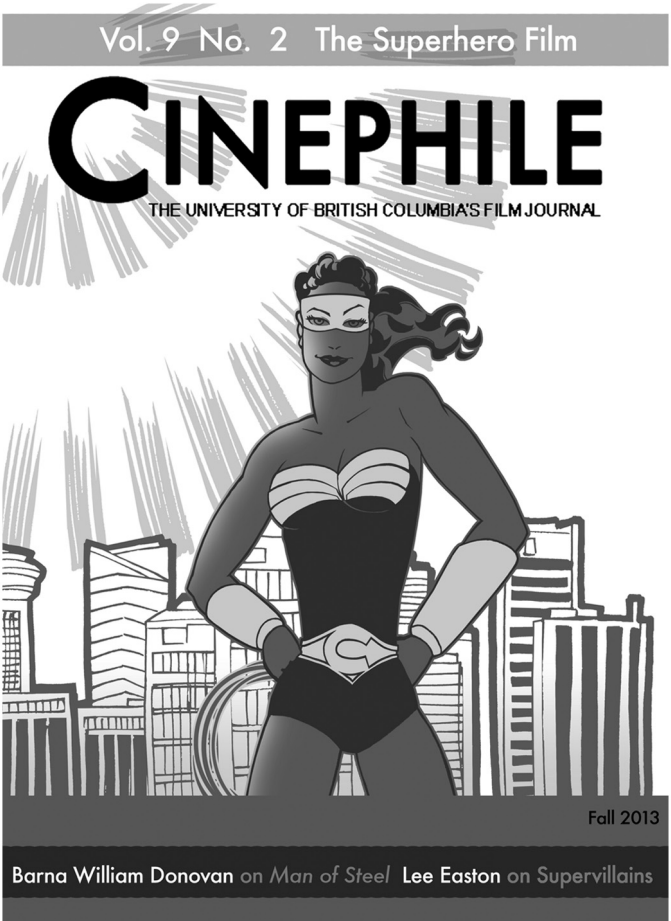
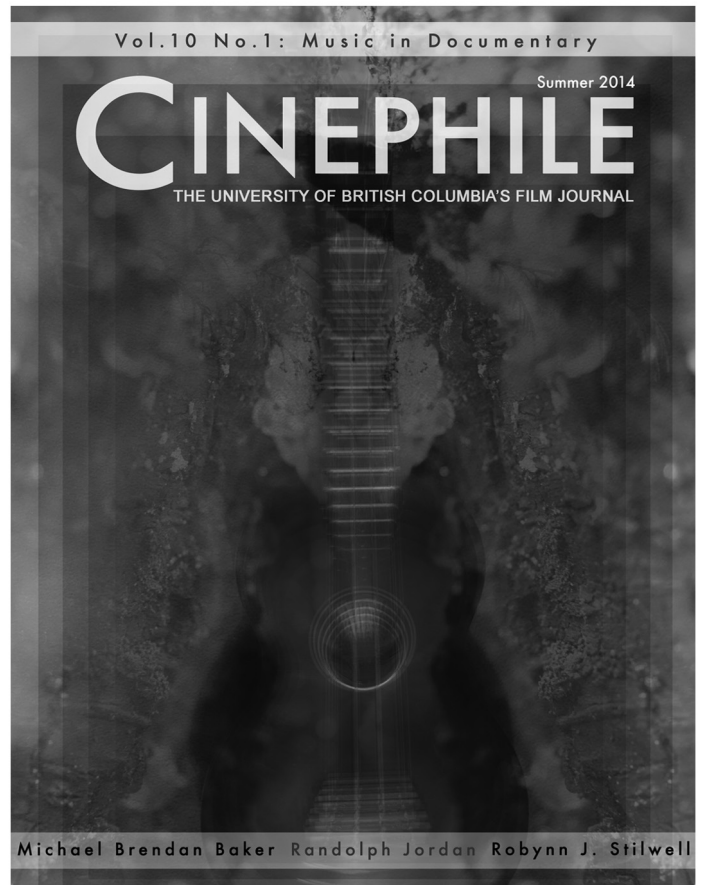
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Note: For those with 16mm projection capabilities, the films discussed in this essay, along with many more, can be rented from:

The Film-Makers' Cooperative: <http://film-makerscoop.com/>

and

Canyon Cinema: <http://canyoncinema.com/>



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