

WOMEN & FILM (1972-75):
A HISTORY OF THE FIRST FEMINIST
FILM MAGAZINE

Clarissa K. Jacob

Royal Holloway
University of London

PhD, Media Arts

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Abstract

This thesis provides a cultural and critical history of *Women & Film*, the first ever feminist film magazine, published in California between 1972 and 1975. Scholarly accounts of the development of feminist film criticism often acknowledge its pioneering status; yet the magazine's own history remains largely unwritten. Drawing on recent interviews conducted by myself, as well as close readings and analysis of the magazine and extensive archival research, this thesis seeks to trace the magazine's inception, evolution and demise. The result is a reassessment of its place within feminist film studies, positing it as a unique, foundational text in feminist film criticism and theory.

Taking inspiration from prior scholarly explorations of periodicals of the 20th century, I begin with an exploration of the historical moment that gave rise to *Women & Film* and examine how the counterculture, radical left politics and the women's liberation movement shaped its initial direction and outlook. Its pages provided the earliest exclusive forum for the development of feminist film criticism and theory in print. I conduct close readings of selected articles, including the 'images of women' criticism which the magazine is primarily known for, an association which has contributed to its scholarly neglect. However, *Women & Film* was also an important site for the development of film criticism informed by semiotic theory. My inquiry considers such writing, but also the way in which these methodological and theoretical debates played out within the magazine's human history, specifically the disputes that brought about the departure of a group of women who would go on to found the journal *Camera Obscura* (1976-present). Lastly, I assess the important contribution made by the magazine to women's film history through the publication of some of the earliest historical work on women directors of the past.

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INTRODUCTION

In the spring of 1972, a new magazine appeared in the alternative bookstores of the wider Los Angeles area. *Women & Film* considered cinema from a feminist perspective and was the first publication of its kind. It was set up by two young women: Siew-Hwa Beh, a student in filmmaking at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), and Saundra Salyer, a former San Francisco State University (SFSU) student, and journalist for *Everywoman*, a feminist newspaper based in LA. Initially drawing on the contributions of their respective partners, Bill Nichols and Mike Shedlin, and other friends from college and political groups, Beh and Salyer launched *Women & Film* as an attack on the sexism they saw to be prevalent in film, from the depictions of women on screen, to discrimination in the Hollywood film industry. At a time when the study of film was coalescing into a distinct academic field, the magazine's editors were also aware of women's seeming omission from cinema's history and the lack of critical attention paid to women filmmakers of the day. In contents and appearance, *Women & Film's* early issues reflect the diverse interests and influences of its two editors: the counterculture of the West Coast during the 1960s and 1970s, including psychedelia and the alternative press movement; the writings of the women's liberation movement; revolutionary Marxism; and post-war American cinephile culture, with its preoccupation with the European new wave cinema and international political film.

Eventually, film scholars from other parts of the country who shared the magazine's radical political outlook joined as contributing editors, bringing their own approaches to film which drew on their backgrounds in comparative literature and modern languages. From *Women & Film's* fourth installment – double issue 5-6, published in 1974 – onwards, the influence of structuralist theory on film criticism, then very slowly finding its way into US academic discourse, becomes apparent in the writing of some of these new contributors. Among them were Chuck Kleinhans and Julia Lesage (founders of *Jump Cut* in 1974) and Janet Bergstrom, Constance Penley,

Sandy Flitterman and Elisabeth Lyon. However, the magazine's founding co-editors disagreed with the centrality of structuralist and semiotic theory to feminist film criticism and to *Women & Film* as a project. In late 1974, the latter four resigned to launch their own publication, *Camera Obscura: a journal of feminism and theory*. Another issue of *Women & Film* was published in 1975, and although further issues were planned, in 1976 Beh and Salyer decided to cease publication.

Despite its short-lived existence, *Women & Film's* output encompassed a wide-range of approaches to film criticism and some of the earliest formulations of feminist film theory. It documented and supported the work of an increasingly active cohort of women filmmakers, critics and distributors, mostly from the US and Europe, a period often referred to as the women's film movement.¹ It also published some of the first attempts to recover a feminist film history by scholars. *Women & Film's* last issue encapsulates just how much feminist film studies had evolved over the first half of the 1970s: twice the size of its debut installment, it features reports on two women's film festivals, a phenomenon that had proliferated exponentially since the first event in New York in 1972, interviews with women directors from around the world and discussions of over a hundred films by women.

Yet despite its pioneering role in the development of feminist film criticism and history, *Women & Film* has received little scholarly focus until now. Much of the writing and teaching of feminist film studies instead begins with the British theorist Laura Mulvey, specifically her essay 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,' published in 1975.² While *Women & Film* is sometimes mentioned in the introductory passages of film studies texts, this is usually in order to set the scene for the interventions of later critics such as Mulvey and her contemporaries. *Women & Film* is not only overshadowed by Mulvey's essay; the magazine is consistently characterized as being part of a feminist critical tradition that is both diametrically opposed, and inherently inferior, to the approach represented by its author and her successors. One of the goals of this thesis is to challenge this genealogy by re-evaluating the magazine and questioning its relegation to this supposedly unsophisticated past.

¹ See my discussion below for an explanation of this term.

² Laura Mulvey, 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,' *Screen* 16, no. 3 (1975): 6-18. This has been my own experience as a student and as a University tutor in film studies.

The History of Feminist Film Criticism and *Women & Film*

The earliest consideration of the critical approaches published by *Women & Film* is Claire Johnston's *Notes on Women's Cinema* (1973). The 40-page pamphlet was the first anthology of women's film criticism, and was produced by the Society for Education in Film and Television to accompany the Women's Cinema festival at the British Film Institute in 1973. Aside from Johnston's writing, the rest of the collection is made up of texts by *Women & Film* contributors Barbara Martineau, and Naome Gilbert, whose *Women & Film* article 'To Be Our Own Muse: The Dialectics of a Culture Heroine' is reprinted. The pamphlet also includes an ad for the magazine.³ Although she includes Martineau and Gilbert in her edited collection, Johnston is critical of their approaches, describing their writing and that found in *Women & Film* in general as 'a sociological analysis based on the empirical study of recurring roles and motifs.'⁴ Regarding their treatment of Hollywood cinema, she criticizes *Women & Film's* editors' for employing a

Crude determinism [that] leaves little room for aesthetic analysis. The moralistic assertions on which it is based tend to erode the important intervention which women are trying to make in the media by reducing the argument to the level of values.⁵

While she credits Gilbert with avoiding the 'trap of determinism,' Johnston argues that she nonetheless assumes the magazine's 'sociological perspective.'⁶ Moreover, Martineau's perspective in 'Subjecting Her Objectification or Communism is Not Enough' is criticized for being 'subjective.' For Johnston,

To take up such a critical position is consistent with the central impulse behind the women's movement as a whole, which is the examination of our subjectivity as a way of understanding our oppression. However, such an approach may not take us very far; and by placing so much emphasis on emotionality and mystery, [...] it could prove to be totally recuperable into conventional male, bourgeois criticism.⁷

However, she posits, 'if we view the image of woman as a sign within the sexist ideology, we see that the portrayal of woman is merely one item subject to the law of verisimilitude, a law which directors worked with or reacted against.'⁸ Johnston calls for a feminist approach to film criticism and filmmaking 'based on an analysis of how

³ See Chapter III for my discussion of Martineau's writing for *Women & Film* and Chapter IV for Naome Gilbert's article. The ad erroneously refers to *Woman & Film* rather than *Women & Film* magazine.

⁴ Johnson, 'Women's Cinema as Counter-Cinema,' *Notes on Women's Cinema*, ed. Claire Johnston (London: Society for Education in Film and Television; BFI, 1975), 26.

⁵ Johnston, 'Introduction,' *Notes on Women's Cinema*, 3.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid, 4.

⁸ Johnson, 'Women's Cinema as Counter-Cinema,' 26.

film operates as a medium within a specific cultural system.⁹ Her analysis is informed by a Marxist conception of ideology and Freud's formulation of the unconscious, as well as drawing on Roland Barthes' *Mythologies* (1972).¹⁰ In *Mythologies*, Barthes builds on Ferdinand de Saussure's idea of the linguistic system of sign and signifier to develop his theory of contemporary social and cultural myths. For Johnson, these ideas can be used to consider the role of female stereotypes in cinema in a new way.¹¹

Writing in 1973, Johnston is only referring to the magazine's first two issues. Yet in subsequent histories of feminist film criticism, these 'sociological' and 'subjective' labels remain attached to the magazine as a whole. This is despite the fact that, as this thesis will show, subsequent issues of *Women & Film* feature the writing of several critics whose approaches not only employ the medium-specificity called for by Johnston but also engage with the same structuralist theories informing her work.¹²

In later accounts of the development of feminist film criticism where *Women & Film* is mentioned, it is almost always alongside the work of Molly Haskell, Marjorie Rosen, and occasionally, Joan Mellen. Maggie Humm in *Feminism & Film* (1997) refers to the magazine as part of 'an embryonic feminist studies,' alongside the work of Haskell, Rosen and Mellen.¹³ Janet McCabe in *Feminist Film Studies, Writing Woman into Cinema* (2004) credits the magazine with having 'initiated and developed further discussions on the politics of representation' but focuses her analysis on Rosen and Haskell.¹⁴ In *Cinema Studies: The Key Concepts* (2006), Haskell, Rosen and Mellen are cited as the 'three leading feminists writing on the representations of women in the cinema' in this period, with the magazine considered a part of this 'powerful heritage.'¹⁵ Haskell's *From Reverence to Rape: The Treatment of Women in the Movies* (1974), Rosen's *Popcorn Venus: Women, Movies and the American Dream* (1973) and Joan Mellen's *Women and Their Sexuality in the New Film* (1974) provide similar overviews of the different categories of women film characters throughout cinema history. Their

⁹ Johnson, 'Introduction,' 4.

¹⁰ Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, trans. Annette Lavers (London: Vintage, 2000).

¹¹ 'Myth transmits and transforms the ideology of sexism and renders it visible [...] and therefore natural. [...] Such a view of the way cinema operates challenges the notion that commercial cinema is more manipulative of the image of woman than the art cinema,' Johnston, 'Women's Cinema as Counter-Cinema,' 25.

¹² These include Julia Lesage's 'Feminist Film Criticism: Theory and Practice,' *Women & Film* 5-6 (1974): 12-19 and Eileen McGarry's 'Documentary, Realism and Women's Cinema,' *Women & Film* 7 (1975): 50-59, discussed in detail in Chapter V.

¹³ Maggie Humm, *Feminism and Film* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press; Indiana University Press, 1997), 12-13.

¹⁴ Janet McCabe, *Feminist Film Studies, Writing Woman into Cinema* (London, Wallflower, 2004), 15.

¹⁵ Susan Hayward, 'Feminist Film Theory,' *Cinema Studies: The Key Concepts*, 3rd ed. (Abingdon: Routledge, 2006), 136; 137.

sociological approach, often referred to as 'images of women' criticism and explored in more detail in Chapter IV, is certainly similar to some early *Women & Film* articles but it does not describe all of the magazine's output. Yet the repeated grouping of *Women & Film* with Haskell, Mellen and Rosen's work strengthens the magazine's association with the 'images of women' criticism.

Following the publication of Mulvey's 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema' in 1975, accounts of the development of feminist film criticism begin making even more pronounced distinctions between the different critical approaches of the period. Writing in 1978, B. Ruby Rich identifies sociological criticism as one of 'two voices' in feminist film criticism of the early 1970s.¹⁶ She characterizes this approach – one 'exemplified by early *Women & Film* articles' – as an American, 'subjective' perspective, 'often a speaking out in one's own voice,' as opposed to the 'British, so-called theoretical approach.'¹⁷ Rich describes the latter as

Committed to using some of the most advanced tools of critical analysis, like semiology and psychoanalysis, this approach has tried to come to terms with *how* films mean — to move beyond regarding the image to analyzing the structure, codes, the general subtext of the works.¹⁸

In her 1982 book *Women's Pictures*, Annette Kuhn refers to the writing in earlier issues of *Women & Film* as 'descriptive or journalistic, and [...] sociological or quasi-sociological.'¹⁹ This she juxtaposes with 'a rather different approach' being formulated in Britain by figures such as Johnston and drawing on 'structuralism, semiotics, and [...] psychoanalysis.'²⁰

In some cases, *Women & Film* is overlooked entirely; in *Women & Film: Both Sides of the Camera* (1983), E. Ann Kaplan merely notes that feminist film criticism 'quite naturally, began with a sociological, political methodology.'²¹ This approach, as she describes it, examined the 'sex roles women occupied in various imaginative works, from high art to mass entertainment. They assessed roles as "positive" or "negative" according to some externally constructed criteria.' But, Kaplan reports, 'as the inadequacies of this approach became clear, feminists began to use structuralism, psychoanalysis and semiotics in their theoretical analysis.'²² Robert Stam in *Film*

¹⁶ Rich, 'The Crisis of Naming in Feminist Film Criticism,' *Jump Cut* 19 (December 1978) reprinted in *Chick Flicks: Theories and Memories of the Feminist Film Movement* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1998), 71.

¹⁷ Rich, 'The Crisis of Naming in Feminist Film Criticism,' 71.

¹⁸ Rich, 'The Crisis of Naming in Feminist Film Criticism,' 72. Her emphasis.

¹⁹ Annette Kuhn, *Women's Pictures: Feminism and the Cinema* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982), 75.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 75-76.

²¹ E. Ann Kaplan, *Women & Film: Both Sides of the Camera* (New York: Routledge, 1988), 1.

²² *Ibid.*, 23.

Theory: An Introduction (2000) also omits any mention of the magazine. He recounts instead that theorists such as Mulvey, Cook, and others

Criticized the naïve essentialism of early feminism, moving the focus from biological sexual identity, seen as tied to “nature”, to “gender,” seen as a social construct shaped by social cultural and historical contingency [...]. Rather than focus on the “image” of women, feminist theorists transferred their attention to the gendered nature of vision itself [...]. This discussion took the debates beyond the simple corrective task of pointing out misrepresentations and stereotypes, in order to examine the way dominant cinema engenders its spectator.²³

Generally, when *Women & Film* is mentioned, it is relegated to a ‘proto-moment’ of feminist film theory, associated with an approach that is often dismissed as essentialist and lacking in theoretical rigour or sophistication, and juxtaposed with those informed by structuralism and psychoanalysis. Those that do acknowledge *Women & Film’s* pioneering role do not undertake any kind of prolonged investigation into the magazine or its contribution to the development of feminist film criticism and theory.²⁴ Much time and space has been dedicated by feminist film critics to delineating, critiquing and reformulating the ideas of Johnston, Mulvey and other members of the later critical schools, therefore I will not attempt to do that here. My aim is not to refute the distinction between these two kinds of criticism, but instead to question *Women & Film’s* association with just the one type, and thus destabilize the strict duality that characterizes discussions of 1970s feminist film theory and criticism. Other critics have noted this tendency and pointed to its failings. In their introduction to *Re-Vision: Essays in Feminist Film Criticism* (1984), Mary Anne Doane, Patricia Mellencamp and Linda Williams write that

such a dichotomy oversimplifies the many points in between, the ongoing arguments concerning what constitutes the dominant forms of representation under patriarchy. The polarization also places the two positions in an inaccurate adversary relation to one another, while suggesting that the U.S. sociological position is incapable of theorizing and the British adoption of French linguistic and psychoanalytic theories ignores social, political and economic contexts and problems.²⁵

²³ Robert Stam, *Film Theory: An Introduction* (Malden: Blackwell, 2000), 173.

²⁴ One exception to this tendency is Sue Thornham’s *Feminist Film Theory: A Reader*, ed. Thornham (New York: New York University Press, 1999). In her anthology, ‘The Image of Women in Film: Some Suggestions for Future Research’ by Sharon Smith from *Women & Film* 1 is reprinted alongside an extract from Haskell’s *From Reverence to Rape*, Johnston’s ‘Women’s Cinema as Counter-Cinema’ and Rich’s ‘The Crisis of Naming in Feminist Film Criticism,’ all of which appear under the chapter title ‘Taking up the Struggle.’ She begins her introduction by presenting *Women & Film’s* debut issue as the starting point for feminism’s ‘passionate attack’ on male-dominated cinema, albeit one whose ‘vocabulary now seems outdated and the terms of its arguments no longer clear.’ Thornham, ‘Introduction,’ 1.

²⁵ Mary Anne Doane, Patricia Mellencamp and Linda Williams, ‘Feminist Film Criticism: An

Given *Women & Film's* groundbreaking role as the first publication dedicated to feminist film criticism, the recovery of this magazine's history and a reassessment of both its contents and its position in the history of feminist film criticism and theory seems necessary and timely. I will now lay out the methodological framework for such a reevaluation.

Methodological models

This study has been informed by prior scholarly explorations of 20th century political and cultural periodicals. One of the earliest examples is *The Moment of 'Scrutiny'* (1979) by Francis Mulhern, a reflection on the origins of the literary journal founded in England in 1932 by the critic and author F.R. Leavis (1895-1978). Mulhern begins by examining the various economic and political crises that Britain faced during the inter-war years: the decline of the country's industrial prowess due to a failing manufacturing sector and poorly implemented strategies of modernization; the emergence of a 'mass' media with the formation of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) in 1922 (accompanied by a rise in the production of wireless radios), the expansion of the journalistic press, and the increasing influence of advertising; and the influence of Marxist philosophy and psychoanalysis on the intellectual circles of the period.²⁶ He eventually narrows his focus to the intellectual debates that defined Leavis' field – literary criticism – particularly the developments within the English department at Cambridge that led to *Scrutiny's* foundation.²⁷

Mulhern's inclusion of this vast array of historical details does more than simply provide a backdrop before which *Scrutiny* can be examined. Rejecting the monographic tendency traditionally associated with 'Leavisism,' Mulhern instead argues that 'the power of disturbance so often ascribed to [Leavis's] person was in reality that of a whole cultural current, and of the instrument that sustained and directed it: [*Scrutiny*].'²⁸ He attempts to identify the 'moment' of *Scrutiny* by considering it

In its material specificity [...] as a practice that unfolded in time, constituting a history that was specific to itself and at the same time bound to other histories that made up mid-century English history as a whole; not as the 'expression' of a

Introduction,' *Re-Vision: Essays in Feminist Film Criticism*, ed. Doane, Mellencamp and Williams (Los Angeles: American Film Institute; University Publications of America, 1984), 8.

²⁶ Francis Mulhern, *The Moment of 'Scrutiny'* (London: Verso, 1981), 4-5; 7-9; 10-15.

²⁷ *Ibid*, 13-24.

²⁸ *Ibid*, Preface, viii.

master-subject but as a play of many voices, within the ideological formation in which *Scrutiny* was the organizer and bearer.²⁹

His line of inquiry is a response to a series of questions posed in his opening paragraph: 'It is insufficient [...],' he says, 'simply to record that *Scrutiny* came into being in Cambridge, in the spring of 1932. This curt statement of fact does no more than pose the essential questions. Why there? Why then? Why thus?'³⁰

Writing as a Marxist critic in the late seventies, Mulhern was inevitably influenced by the work of the French Marxist philosopher Louis Althusser (1918-1990). In his book, *Althusser: The Detour of Theory* (1987), Gregory Elliott recounts that during the late sixties and early seventies, the work of Althusser 'help[ed] renew Marxism [...] and impart[ed] new vigour and greater sophistication to Marxist enquiry' across a huge range of disciplines.³¹ Elliott confirms that Mulhern's historical enquiry is one 'facilitated by Althussarian analytical notions.'³² Mulhern's formulation of 'the moment' of *Scrutiny*, which he also referred to as the 'successive politico-cultural conjunctures of its career,' is clearly drawn from Althusser's *For Marx* (1969).³³ In it, Althusser observes that to comprehend his work 'it is essential to realise that [these essays] were conceived, written and published by a Communist philosopher in a particular ideological and theoretical conjuncture.'³⁴ Althusser in turn cites Lenin's acknowledgement of his 'current situation,' specifically his 'analysis of the structure of a *conjuncture*' as the inspiration for such an approach.³⁵ According to Althusser, Lenin 'reflect[ed] on the present in the present' in order to transform the 'current situation' politically and 'analysed what constituted the characteristics of [the current situation's] structure: the essential articulations, the interconnexions [sic], the strategic nodes on which the possibility and fate of any revolutionary practice depended.'³⁶ Writing about a culturally rather than politically revolutionary moment, Mulhern's problematic – 'Why there? Why then? Why thus?' – can therefore be considered as a three-pronged examination into *Scrutiny*'s historical conjuncture that invokes Althusser's concept of conjunctural analysis.

A similar methodology can also be discerned in two more recent studies of film journals: Terry Bolas's *Screen Education: From Film Appreciation to Media Studies*

²⁹ *Ibid*, ix.

³⁰ *Ibid*, 3.

³¹ Gregory Elliott, *Althusser: The Detour of Theory* (London: Verso, 1987), 331.

³² *Ibid*, 310.

³³ Mulhern, ix.

³⁴ Louis Althusser, 'To My English Readers,' trans. Ben Brewster, *For Marx* (London; New York: Verso, 2005), 9.

³⁵ Althusser, 'On the Materialist Dialectic,' *For Marx*, 179, original emphasis.

³⁶ *Ibid*, 178-9.

(2009) and Emilie Bickerton's *A Short History of 'Cahiers du Cinema'* (2009). While neither study makes a direct reference to the work of Althusser, both retain the term 'conjuncture' and respond to the question of 'why?' by positioning their subjects within their respective critical, economic, social, cultural and political contexts. In her study of *Cahiers*, Emilie Bickerton poses a series of questions in order to uncover the 'particular set of challenges unique to [*Cahiers*'] historical conjuncture' that echo those asked by Mulhern: 'what gave rise to this little magazine [...]? Why in France, and at this time? [...] How did the journal develop, and why in such directions?'³⁷ She responds by outlining 'the environment out of which *Cahiers* emerged,' examining its political and cultural backdrop, as well as the state of film and film criticism prior to the magazine's founding.

The British journal *Screen Education* is the focus of Terry Bolas' examination. It was published by the Society for Education in Film and Television (SEFT) between 1959-1968 and promoted the study of film and television across the curriculum in British secondary schools. As part of his investigation into its history, Bolas pays significant attention to the development of film studies in Britain since the early 1930s, as well as the political and bureaucratic inner-workings of SEFT. He charts the emergence of film theory during the late sixties and early seventies, in which *Screen - Screen Education's* successor in 1969 - played a significant role as well as considering concurrent journals and the generational split that characterized the theoretical conflicts of the period.³⁸

My investigation therefore starts with a consideration of *Women & Film's* own conjunctural moment. I begin this task below, where I sketch out the broader historical context of the magazine and the social, political and cultural currents most relevant to it. But I also consider the magazine - to use Mulhern's expression - as 'a play of many voices.' These voices include those of the magazine's two founding co-editors, Siew-Hwa Beh and Sandra Salyer as well as those of later contributors whose involvement influenced the magazine's trajectory. Throughout this thesis then, I use the specific cultural and theoretical conjunctures of *Women & Film's* editors and several key contributors as the prisms through which to consider the magazine, its contents and its relationship to the development of feminist film criticism and theory.

These voices are also literal ones. The personal testimonies of *Women & Film's* major and minor contributors, in the form of interviews conducted by myself are

³⁷ Emilie Bickerton, *A Short History of Cahiers Du Cinema* (London: Verso, 2009), 138; 2.

³⁸ Terry Bolas, *Screen Education: From Film Appreciation to Media Studies* (Bristol: Intellect Books, 2009), 169 - 217; 100-101; 119-122. Also see Richard Maltby, 'Reviews: Terry Bolas,' *Screen* 51, no. 4 (2010): 422-426.

central to this investigation. Over the course of this project, I interviewed Beh and Salyer as well as Janet Bergstrom, Jeanne Betancourt, Abigail Child, Sandy Flitterman Lewis, Barbara Hammer, Marsha Kinder, Chuck Kleinhans, Alexis Krasilovsky, Julia Lesage, Bill Nichols, Constance Penley and Sharon Smith.³⁹ As my citations indicate, this research has been supplemented by email conversations, other published interviews and writing by the participants. Early on, I set up a research blog that became a useful tool for tracking down interviewees as well as for collecting visual and contextual materials.⁴⁰ Where necessary, I have verified dates and facts but such accounts should always be considered fallible due to the difficulties of accurately remembering events that took place almost half a century ago.

Other models

As well as reconstructing an intellectual history of *Women & Film*, this thesis also seeks to challenge its status within the historiography of feminist film writing laid out at the beginning of this introduction. The initial inspiration for such a reevaluation is the work of the art historian Amelia Jones. During the 1990s, she attempted to rescue aspects of 1970s feminist art practice, in particular women's body art, from academic neglect and its rejection by 1980s feminists. In 1996, Jones staged a major exhibition of Judy Chicago's controversial and monumental installation, *The Dinner Party* (1974-1979), at the Armand Hammer Museum in Los Angeles.⁴¹ Jones positioned *The Dinner Party* alongside the art of other feminists of the period in an attempt to re-examine a work that had been denigrated for epitomizing '1970s feminism's supposed naiveté, essentialism, universalism, and failure to establish collaborative alternatives to the

³⁹ The majority of these interviews were carried out during a trip to US in October 2013 (crowd-funded through Kickstarter as well as Royal Holloway's Media Arts Department). In addition, I met with Jeanne Cordova, editor and publisher of *Lesbian Tide* and feminist activist; Ariel Levy, founder of Women Make Movies (WMM) and Deborah Zimmerman, WMM executive director since 1983, both participants in the women's film movement of the 1970s. Except for Jeanne Betancourt's (Skype), all interviews were filmed digitally by either Kate Wieteska or Geraldine Heaney, including Bergstrom and Child (audio only). I also returned to interviews with Kristina Nordstrom and Amalie R. Rothschild, gathered during the research for my Masters. See Clarissa Jacob, 'A Festival of One's Own: Sisterhood, Consciousness-Raising and Feminist Intervention at the First Festival of Women's Films, 1972,' (MA Dissertation, Courtauld Institute, University of London, 2011).

⁴⁰ See the Women & Film Project blog, <https://womenandfilmproject.wordpress.com/>

⁴¹ Although rarely shown in pictures, the installation also includes a vast array of contextual information, such as a timeline, educational resources on the 39 figures, images of the works' 'making of' and embroidered banners.

unified (and masculinist) authorial structures of modernist art production.’⁴² Consequently, Jones argued, *The Dinner Party*, and by extension many other feminist artworks, had failed to be ‘incorporated in any satisfactory way into histories and theories of feminist or contemporary art.’⁴³

Interestingly, Jones cites not an art historical text but Mulvey’s ‘Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema’ as the ‘organizing force’ behind the formulation of third-wave or postfeminism that she charges with overlooking the ‘subtleties and complexities of the feminist debates of the 1970s.’⁴⁴ ‘By identifying, defining, and rejecting earlier assumptions,’ she observes, ‘a new generation of feminists moved the discussion in a new direction. At the same time, such a strategy inevitably over simplified and misrepresented certain aspects of feminist theory and practice.’⁴⁵ ‘For me,’ she says,

The real political issue is how history gets told, because I am an art historian, and one that really bothers me is to see a whole group, a very large group, a very vital group of feminist thinkers completely shut down.⁴⁶

Although Jones acknowledges the necessity of ‘the development and definition of a feminist postmodern practice,’ she sees this polarization as resulting in the exclusion of certain kinds of feminist work.⁴⁷

In *Chick Flicks: Theories and Memories of the Feminist Film Movement*, B. Ruby Rich revisits ‘cinefeminism,’ a term she uses to refer to the ‘broad field of feminism and film that began in the seventies with the flourishing of film festivals and the simultaneous invention of theoretical approaches to classic Hollywood representations of women, eventually expanding to other films as well.’⁴⁸ The book is her attempt to ‘recover a sense of the field before it was entirely captivated by textual analysis, theoreticism and academic concerns;’ the moment, according to Rich, before feminist criticism became irreparably divorced from feminist political activism.⁴⁹ Her objective here echoes Jones’ desire to ‘rethink, resituate and re-evaluate’ 1970s feminist art, and

⁴² Amelia Jones, ‘The “Sexual Politics” of *The Dinner Party*: A Critical Context,’ *Sexual Politics: Judy Chicago’s Dinner Party in Feminist Art History*, ed. Jones (Los Angeles: University of California Press; Armand Hammer Museum of Art, 1996), 84.

⁴³ Jones, ‘Sexual Politics: Feminist Strategies, Feminist Conflicts, Feminist Histories,’ *Sexual Politics*, 24.

⁴⁴ Jones, ‘The “Sexual Politics” of *The Dinner Party*,’ 97

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 98.

⁴⁶ Jones with Daniela Salvioni and Diana Burgess Fuller, ‘Burning Down the House: Feminist Art in California; an Interview with Amelia Jones,’ *Art/Women/California 1950 - 2000: Parallels and Intersections*, ed. Diana Burgess Fuller and Daniela Salvioni (Berkeley: University of California Press; San Jose Museum of Art, 2002), 172.

⁴⁷ Jones, ‘Postfeminism, Feminist Pleasures and Embodied Theories of Art,’ *The Art of Art History: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Donald Preziosi (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 392.

⁴⁸ Rich, *Chick Flicks*, 1.

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, 2.

as such, has provided crucial groundwork for my investigation. Rich concludes her book with an 'Epilogue to an Epilogue' about *Women & Film* and co-founder Siew-Hwa Beh: 'it's a period that deserves to be remembered,' she stresses, 'not only out of respect to those foremothers but equally out of the need for those models that they invented out of thin air and bequeathed as a legacy to the future.'⁵⁰

The work of the British theorist Clare Hemmings has also been crucial to developing my historiographical approach for this thesis. In *Why Stories Matter: The Political Grammar of Feminist Theory* (2011), Hemmings proposes an analysis of feminist scholarship of the 1990s and 2000s that demonstrates a proliferation of narratives of progress, loss and return. As she states in her introduction:

Despite the complexity of the last few decades of feminist theory – its dizzying array of authors, objects, disciplines, and practices – the story of its past is consistently told as a series of interlocking narratives of progress, loss and return that oversimplify this complex history and position of feminist subjects as needing to inhabit a theoretical and political cutting edge in the present.⁵¹

Focusing her investigation on articles in feminist journals, Hemmings observes the way in which narrative forms and textual mechanisms such as 'the subject/object relationship, binary pairs and the excluded outside, embedded temporality and hierarchy of meaning, citation practices and textual affect' are deployed, to decipher the 'political grammar' that articulates and perpetuates 'narratives of progress, loss and return.'⁵²

While Hemmings' discussion does not deal specifically with the 1970s women's film or art movements, the textual mechanisms and chronology she identifies in genealogies of feminist politics and thought can also be found in feminist cultural histories, making her work pertinent to my own thesis. With Hemmings' framework in mind, E. Ann Kaplan's account of the evolution of feminist film criticism cited above can be recast as progress narrative: 'as the inadequacies of this [sociological] approach became clear, feminists began to use structuralism, psychoanalysis, and semiology in their theoretical analysis.'⁵³ Kaplan employs the assumptions that Hemmings exposes, specifically a narrative that conveys – and celebrates – a feminist critical trajectory transformed by later theoretical developments, 'the displacement of one set of

⁵⁰ Ibid, 387.

⁵¹ Claire Hemmings, *Why Stories Matter: The Political Grammar of Feminist Theory* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 3.

⁵² Ibid, 17.

⁵³ Kaplan, *Women and Film*, 23.

approaches by others, the move from natural, essential truths to the uncertain pleasure and dangers of poststructuralist approaches.⁵⁴

Yet Hemmings' analysis of the dynamics of narratives of loss and return complicates this investigation. 'Critiques of a Western feminist progress narrative,' she asserts, 'tend to underscore its mythic status, countering the conviction that feminist theory has become ever more multiple with correctives that emphasize instead the lost multiplicity of the past.'⁵⁵ Both Jones' and Rich's considerations of early feminist cultural work deploy the affect and chronological fixity of progress narratives even as they lament the lost past of feminist criticism. According to Hemmings, 'these narratives are not so much interested in a history of Western feminist theory as one of *multiplicity*, but as one that has abandoned multiplicity for increasing singularity, leading to present myopia.'⁵⁶ As she makes clear, narratives of loss are as guilty of homogenizing that which they reject as those progress narratives that, as Amelia Jones articulated, overlook and over simplify the 'subtleties and complexities of the feminist debates of the 1970s.'⁵⁷ Hemmings acknowledges her ambivalent position in regard to her thesis: she reflects upon her own investment in the construction of loss narratives, and her belief in their necessity, as well as her involvement in the poststructuralist moment that she attempts to analyze. I am therefore mindful of my own engagement in telling the loss narrative of *Women & Film*, and equally wary of homogenizing the complexities of the developments that took place in feminist film criticism and theory throughout the 1970s.

The Moment of *Women & Film*

Francis Mulhern's approach and the methodologies of studies such as Bolas' and Bickerton's, provide a useful framework to analyze the historical moment from which *Women & Film* emerged. The question 'Why there?' leads us to consider why the magazine appeared in Santa Monica, Los Angeles, so close to Hollywood, home of the commercial film industry, and not in New York, where a cinematic avant-garde had been flourishing for over a decade; where feminist and consciousness-raising groups were proliferating; and where women filmmakers, such as Maya Deren, Shirley Clarke and Joyce Wieland, had been active some time before the women's movement made its mark. Secondly, could such a magazine have appeared in 1968 or 1975; and if not, why

⁵⁴ Hemmings, 32.

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, 60.

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 61.

⁵⁷ Jones, 'The "Sexual Politics" of *The Dinner Party*,' 97.

not? The interventions that make up the women's film movement took place both on the page and on the screen, but why did *Women & Film's* founding co-editors choose a magazine as their weapon against the patriarchy instead of a filmmaking collective, film festival or distribution company?

Women & Film may have first appeared in 1972, but its seeds were sown during the previous decade. As a politically engaged, independently published magazine, its conjunctural moment encompasses the intersection of radical leftist politics, second wave feminism, US film culture – including mainstream Hollywood, European cinema and independent American filmmaking – and the development of academic film study, informed by literary, sociological, anthropological theories, and later, semiotics and structuralism. Below, I present a sketch of the 'moment' of *Women & Film*, a task that continues in each chapter of the thesis.

The sixties: radical politics, protest and counterculture

Women & Film was initially the product of a collaboration between two young women, both of whom were members of the post-war baby boom generation numbering 70 million, the largest in American history.⁵⁸ Most of *Women & Film's* contributors enjoyed the benefits of postwar affluence and greater access to higher education, thanks to improved access to student finance.⁵⁹ This led to considerable growth in the number of universities, widespread expansion of existing institutions, and a huge rise in university enrolment from the mid-1950s onwards.⁶⁰

This vast demographic became the defining force behind much of the political, social and cultural changes that would take place during the 1960s. In 1960, hundreds of Berkeley students protested against the House of Un-American Activities (HUAC); the demonstration was the first of a wave of student-led uprisings that would take place across the country throughout the decade.⁶¹ Students also fought against the regulations of universities acting *in loco parentis* – in the place of a parent – and the bureaucracy of the 'multiversity.' This was the vision of the university as a small state of

⁵⁸ Terry H. Anderson, *The Movement and the Sixties* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 89.

⁵⁹ Anderson, 95. In Beh's case this took the form of a scholarship for international students. See Chapter I.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ Students demonstrated outside the San Francisco City Hall after failing to gain access to the HUAC hearings investigating communist activity in the Bay Area. Berkeley student Douglas Wachter had been compelled to attend by a subpoena. The following day, violence erupted when police used clubs and fire hoses to clear the protesters from the area; 84 people were arrested, 31 of them Berkeley students. W. J. Rorabaugh, *Berkeley at War: The 1960s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 16.

diversified 'knowledge industries' developed by Clark Kerr; the University of California's president from 1958 to 1967. This 'small state' required governing and in October 1964, Berkeley became the site of the Free Speech Movement, an uprising that called into question the regulations of the multiversity.⁶² An attempt by police to arrest a former student staffing an information table for the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) on university property provoked a thirty-two hour sit-in. On 2 December, Mario Savio, one of the movement's leaders, called on classmates to 'put their bodies upon the gears and upon the wheels, upon the levers, upon all the apparatus [of the machine], and [...] to make it stop,' in a speech made on the steps of the University administration building, Sproul Hall.⁶³ An occupation of the building was organized by students; the following day, over a thousand were removed from Sproul Hall and seven hundred held by police, the largest mass arrest in the country's history.⁶⁴

1960 also saw the formation of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) and two years later, the publication of its *Port Huron Statement*. The New Left that SDS came to represent distinguished itself from the Old Left of the previous generation through its rejection of the bureaucratic Marxism of Soviet Russia; instead, it emphasized participatory democracy and the decentralization of power, and made issues such as racial inequality and American imperialism central to its activism. Central to SDS, the new left and the wider student movement was the role of alternative forms of organizing and leadership. As its founding document states, SDS sought

the establishment of a democracy of individual participation, governed by two central aims: that the individual share in those social decisions determining the quality and direction of his life; that society be organized to encourage independence in men and provide the media for their common participation.⁶⁵

As Wini Breines explains, 'yearning for community and for a democracy in which the individual had some influence was profound among new leftists.'⁶⁶ In response, 'students rejected the instrumental rationality they discovered around them in the university, the government and bureaucracy itself. In its place, another society was

⁶² The movement was a response to the enforcement of restrictions on student use of the University's facilities for political or religious organizing. These regulations had previously prevented speakers such as Malcolm X from addressing students on campus. Rorabaugh, 16.

⁶³ Mario Savio, 'Free Speech Movement Speech, 3rd December 1964,' Free Speech Movement Archive, http://www.fsm-a.org/stacks/mario/mario_speech.html (09.12.2013).

⁶⁴ Rorabaugh, 33.

⁶⁵ Students for a Democratic Society, *The Port Huron Statement* (1962), The Sixties Project, 1993, Institute for Advanced Technology in the Humanities, http://www2.iath.virginia.edu/sixties/HTML_docs/Resources/Primary/Manifestos/SDS_Port_Huron.html (22.01.2018).

⁶⁶ Wini Breines, *Community and Organization in the New Left, 1962-1968: The Great Refusal*, 2nd ed. (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1989), xiv.

imagined.⁶⁷ This ‘prefigurative politics,’ with its rejection of ‘hierarchy, leadership, and the concentration of power,’ was inherently anti-organizational.⁶⁸ Although there are of course historical precedents for the organizational ideals espoused by the new left, its driving force was the repudiation of the status quo rather than the implementation of specific theoretical models. ‘We have no formulas, no closed theories,’ state the authors of the *Port Huron Statement*.⁶⁹ As Breines puts it, ‘the utopian vision, a negation of what exists, served as a guide for social change.’⁷⁰ The new left’s style of political organizing and its utopian vision of an alternative society shaped many of the political and cultural movements that came after it, including the women’s movement. Breines also identifies a tension residing within the new left that would be replicated in other movements: ‘the contradictory demands of a national political organization, SDS, and the impulse towards local, utopian and spontaneous politics were projects pulling in conflicting directions.’⁷¹ This tension resurfaces in many of later movements and is a recurrent motif in this thesis.

Several political journals acted as the organs for the articulation of wide-ranging critiques of American society and the philosophies of the emerging New Left: the New York-based *Guardian* (1948-92), *Dissent* (1954-present), and *Liberation* (1956-77), as well as the *New Left Review* (1960-present) published in London. Moreover, many students set up their own campus-based radical journals, such as *Studies on the Left* (University of Wisconsin at Madison, 1959-67) and *The Activist* (Oberlin College, California, 1961-75).⁷² By 1965, SDS had over 15,000 members and its Vice-President Jeff Shero transformed their monthly newsletter into the weekly *New Left Notes*.⁷³

As Anderson points out, ‘during the 1960s the rise of student power was a national phenomenon concerning many more issues than just free speech.’⁷⁴ Students provided the mobilizing force behind civil rights, the New Left and Black Power movements as well as helping to coordinate rising opposition to the war in Vietnam. They turned to the literature of the fifties Beat generation as well as works of radical history, philosophy and political theory from Western Europe and contemporary American sociology to bolster their critique of the American way of life.

⁶⁷ Ibid, xiv.

⁶⁸ Ibid, xiv; Ibid, 6.

⁶⁹ Students for a Democratic Society, *The Port Huron Statement*.

⁷⁰ Breines, 53.

⁷¹ Ibid, 6.

⁷² Anderson, 58.

⁷³ Maurice Isserman and Michael Kazin, *America Divided: The Civil War of the 1960s: The Civil War of the 1960s*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 179; James W. Russell, ‘The Origins of *New Left Notes*,’ Next Left Notes website, 2011, <http://antiauthoritarian.net/NLN/?p=900> (02.03.2011).

⁷⁴ Anderson, 89.

The powers of ordinary men are circumscribed by the everyday worlds in which they live, yet even in these rounds of job, family, and neighborhood they often seem driven by forces they can neither understand nor govern [...]. The very framework of modern society confines them to projects not their own, but from every side, such changes now press upon the men and women of the mass society, who accordingly feel that they are without purpose in an epoch in which they are without power.⁷⁵

During the 1950s, social theorists such as C. Wright Mills, quoted above, critiqued American contemporary society and examined the dynamics of power, domination and mass society. Their ideas became the foundations of New Left thinking and debate during the following decade. Left historians and academics, such as William Appleman Williams, were among the first to critique American imperialism in the face of the escalating conflict in Vietnam, and laid the critical groundwork for antiwar campaigning of the sixties.⁷⁶

Since the mid-1940s however, the West Coast had been home to the exiled Marxist cultural theorists of the Frankfurt School of Critical Theory, whose work similarly centred on the examination of contemporary society and culture. Max Horkheimer had arrived in southern California in 1942, where he went on to write *The Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1947) with colleague Theodor W. Adorno. Herbert Marcuse escaped to the United States with the Frankfurt Institute for Social Research shortly before the Nazi Party's rise to power.⁷⁷ In 1964, he published *One Dimensional Man*, a book that examined advanced industrial societies, such as the United States and the ways in which their citizens' capacity for dissent or revolution had been undermined. Between 1964 and 1969, *One Dimensional Man* sold 100,000 copies in the United States.⁷⁸ Its author became an intellectual celebrity, suffering death threats alongside student adulation thanks to his direct engagement with the struggles of the youth movement and New Left.⁷⁹ Douglas Kellner argues that Marcuse's call for individuals to divest themselves of 'capitalist needs and consciousness' and instead 'acquire "radical needs" for thoroughgoing social change' was central to his appeal for the New Left. Kellner further asserts that Marcuse's emphasis on individual needs and desires

⁷⁵ C. Wright Mills, *The Power Elite* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959), 3.

⁷⁶ William Appleman Williams, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy*, 2nd ed. (New York: Delta, 1972).

⁷⁷ Douglas Kellner, 'Introduction: Radical Politics, Marcuse, and the New Left,' *The New Left and the 1960s*, ed. Kellner (London: Routledge, 2005), 1. See also Kellner, 'Introduction to the Second Edition,' *One-Dimensional Man* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2002) xi – xxxviii and *Herbert Marcuse and the Crisis of Marxism* (London: MacMillan, 1984).

⁷⁸ John Abromeit and W. Mark Cobb, 'Introduction,' *Herbert Marcuse: A Critical Reader*, ed. Abromeit and Cobb (New York; London: Routledge, 2004), 11. See Chapter I for a fuller discussion of Marcuse's ideas.

⁷⁹ Herbert Gold, 'California Left: Mao, Marx Et Marcuse!' *Saturday Evening Post* (19 October 1968), 56.

informed the influential slogan ‘The Personal is Political,’ a concept that would later assert a defining influence over second wave feminism.⁸⁰

Vietnam

By the mid-1960s, student activists and the New Left were increasingly concerned with the war in Vietnam. Under presidents Eisenhower and Kennedy, the conflict, inherited from the French after their defeat in 1954, had been conducted covertly, without a declaration of war. During Kennedy’s presidency, ‘advisors’ rather than troops were dispatched to aid South Vietnam’s fight against communist forces in the North, and American personnel numbered only 18,000 by the time of his assassination.⁸¹ However, President Johnson took a more forceful approach to the confrontation: he significantly increased financial aid to the South Vietnam government and expanded covert intelligence and military operations during his presidency.⁸² The bombing of North Vietnam began in early 1965 and by March, the first wave of ground troops arrived in the South. Faced with the Vietnamese terrain, and the combat tactics of the North Vietnamese army and National Liberation Front, US military strategy foundered over the next five years. What had initially been envisioned as an easy victory evaded the Johnson Administration and later, that of Richard Nixon.

Support for the war began to waiver as the American intervention into the conflict escalated, and with it, the number of American casualties. Leftist academics voiced their opposition to the war, and, increasingly, the press began to find fault with government strategy and to question the military’s official statements.⁸³ As the home of the nation’s military-industrial complex, and the last stop for many soldiers shipping out to the Pacific, California was a major stage for the anti-war movement. The state’s campuses became key sites for demonstrations, building on the networks for resistance already established by the Free Speech Movement, such as the 12,000-strong teach-in held by Berkeley students to mark Vietnam Day in May 1965.⁸⁴ According to Jeffrey Lustig, the many teach-ins that took place across the country

⁸⁰ Kellner, *Herbert Marcuse and the Crisis of Marxism*, 279. Sara Evans discusses the importance of these ideas in *Personal Politics: The Roots of Women’s Liberation in the Civil Rights Movement and the New Left* (New York: Vintage, 1980).

⁸¹ John Robert Greene, *America in the Sixties* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2010), 118.

⁸² *Ibid*, 122.

⁸³ *Ibid*, 129-131. See also William M. Hammond, *Reporting Vietnam: Media and Military at War* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1998).

⁸⁴ Lustig, Jeffrey R., ‘The War at Home: California’s Struggle to Stop the Vietnam War,’ *What’s Going On? California and the Vietnam Era*, ed. Marcia A. Eymann and Charles Wollenberg (Berkeley: University of California Press; Oakland Museum of California, 2004), 61.

Established the necessary foundation for any long term protest: an independent analysis and point of view. The foundation was shored up by the contributions of new and alternative sources of information: pamphlets, books, magazines [...] and listener-sponsored radio stations like KPFK and KPFA.⁸⁵

Opposition to the war intensified during the late 1960s and early 1970s. In 1969, close to 9,500 American casualties were reported.⁸⁶ That year, public opinion shifted dramatically when details about the massacre of some 350 women, children and elderly people at a village called My Lai were published by national media. The incident had taken place months earlier, in March 1968, but failed to come to national attention until it was revealed that several soldiers were under investigation by the Defense Department.⁸⁷ At the end of 1969, Life magazine published photos taken on the scene by a combat correspondent, Ronald Haeberle, which showed the full extent of the atrocity.

April 1971 saw 30,000 people join an anti-war march in San Francisco, the largest demonstration to take place on the West Coast.⁸⁸ That summer, the first leaked extracts from the Pentagon Papers, an official investigation into the war that had been launched by Defense Secretary Robert McNamara, appeared in the press.⁸⁹ Its revelations cemented the growing 'credibility gap' between official reports and the reality of the war in Vietnam and confirmed the suspicions of antiwar activists.⁹⁰

American film culture: cinephilia and the birth of film studies

While journalists and protesters were questioning government and military institutions, the country's cultural landscape was also in turmoil. The post war era had been a period of dramatic transformation for Hollywood, beginning with the demise of the Hollywood studio system in 1948. Developed in the late 1910s, this system, known as vertical integration, saw studios in control of both film production and distribution. During its golden age in the 1930s and 1940s, studios developed cost-efficient, standardized production methods, and often, standardized products in the interests of profit maximization.⁹¹ Following a decade of lawsuits, the Supreme Court ruled the

⁸⁵ Ibid, 62-63.

⁸⁶ Isserman and Kazin, 274.

⁸⁷ Hammond, *Reporting Vietnam*, 189-190.

⁸⁸ Lustig, 77.

⁸⁹ Hammond, 259.

⁹⁰ George C. Herring, *America's Longest War: The United States and Vietnam, 1950-1975*. 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986), 242.

⁹¹ Thomas Schatz, *The Genius of the System: Hollywood Filmmaking in the Studio Era* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1988) 8-9. As Schatz has recounted, many likened this system to the factory assembly line and accused it of being 'dehumanizing, formulaic, profit-hungry.' Schatz, 5. The

major studios' vertically integrated system comprising production, distribution and exhibition to be in violation of antitrust law. The five majors, Paramount, RKO, MGM, 20th Century Fox and Warner Bros., were obligated to separate production and distribution from exhibition, divest themselves of their theatre chains, and along with Universal, Columbia and United Artists, to refrain from monopolistic practices like block-booking (a move that opened the door for independent productions).⁹² Inevitably, studios were forced to scale-down production and shift to fewer films with bigger budgets since 'the profits that had been guaranteed by the old system, were no longer guaranteed, and the tremendous overhead costs of the studios had to be reduced.'⁹³ Throughout the 1960s, fundamental changes occurred as studios were increasingly transformed into conglomerates, the merger of MCA-Universal in 1962 being one of the first.

The dominance of Hollywood's products was also challenged by the increasing popularity of new international cinemas. The expansion of film academies across Europe and widening access to the industry helped produce a fresh cohort of young directors and new film movements in Britain, Czechoslovakia, France, Germany, Poland and Yugoslavia.⁹⁴ As Geoffrey Nowell-Smith writes, these new waves embodied both the rejection of the Hollywood studio production model (or in the case of France's *nouvelle vague*, the French studio film) and its associated aesthetics, and the espousal of broadly leftist politics.⁹⁵ European cinema increasingly overshadowed Hollywood's products on American screens; according to Barry Langford, the European New Waves 'were causing enormous excitement at festivals and art houses, but how such radical departures from convention could be imported into the American commercial film industry was unclear.'⁹⁶ Chuck Kleinhans, a contributor and editorial associate on *Women & Film's* third issue recollected:

I was of a generation in the late fifties and early sixties where seeing foreign films [...] was an incredible education and an alternative to the norms of postwar

critic Andrew Sarris for example, claimed in 1968 that 'an entity called cinema has been betrayed by another entity called Hollywood.' Sarris, *The American Cinema: Directors and Directions 1929-1968* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1996), 21.

⁹² Kristin Thompson and David Bordwell, eds. *Film History: An Introduction*. 3rd ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2010), 300.

⁹³ Cynthia Lucia, Roy Grundmann and Art Simon, 'Introduction to Volume III: American Film, 1946 to 1975,' *Wiley-Blackwell History of American Film*, eds. Lucia, Grundmann and Simon (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 7.

⁹⁴ Thompson and Bordwell, 403-404.

⁹⁵ Geoffrey Nowell-Smith, *Making Waves: New Cinemas of the 1960s* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), 3.

⁹⁶ Barry Langford, *Post-Classical Hollywood: Film Industry, Style and Ideology since 1945* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 107.

America. You saw things that you wouldn't have seen otherwise and the films were very different.⁹⁷

In order to offset the profits from American film exports, more and more European films began to be imported to the US.⁹⁸ Moreover, small, pioneering distributors helped circulate the work of European directors such as Ingmar Bergman during the late fifties and early sixties.⁹⁹ The director even appeared on the cover of *Time* in March 1960, a testament to the mainstream success enjoyed by these filmmakers.

The country's shifting demographics also played a definitive role in the changing patterns of production and consumption. Film occupied a special place in the counterculture of the sixties. Michael Zryd asserts that 'the "new generation" of the late 1960s counterculture proclaimed that film was its true language.'¹⁰⁰ Several of *Women & Film's* contributors stressed the high level of exposure to films they received in their youth. Chuck Kleinhans, for example, served as an officer in the United States Navy between 1964-66. 'I was the most junior officer of my ship,' he explained,

Which meant [I] had the obligatory duty of showing films. The person I served with most evenings [...] liked to see two or three films a night. So I learned to see all of these American films that were relatively contemporary [...]. I saw an incredible number of films.¹⁰¹

Kleinhans also projected films on his nights off and was subsequently exposed to a vast number of commercial features – from westerns to beach party movies – that stood in contrast to the 'sophisticated European art films' that he had previously preferred.

The increasing ownership of televisions at home (86% of households in 1959) meant that this postwar generation was also exposed to the studios' back catalogues.¹⁰² During the 1950s, many studios had responded to the threat posed by this new medium by moving into production. The developing symbiosis between media was solidified in 1956 by the sale of several studios' pre-1948 film catalogue to television, increasing the medium's reliance on studios for such content.¹⁰³ Following the resolution of the Screen Actor's Guild strike for residual pay in 1960, films made *after* 1948 could also be sold for broadcast.¹⁰⁴ Those who grew up with televisions acquired

⁹⁷ Chuck Kleinhans and Julia Lesage, interview with author, Eugene, OR, 19 October 2013.

⁹⁸ Thompson and Bordwell, 307.

⁹⁹ Peter Cowie, *Revolution! The Explosion of World Cinema in the 60s* (London: Faber and Faber, 2004), 108.

¹⁰⁰ Michael Zryd, 'Experimental Film and the Development of Film Study in America,' *Inventing Film Studies*, ed. Lee Grieveson and Haidee Wasson (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008), 184.

¹⁰¹ Kleinhans, interview.

¹⁰² Paul Monaco, *The Sixties: 1960-1969* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 2001), 16.

¹⁰³ John Belton, *American Cinema/American Culture* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2013), 333.

¹⁰⁴ Monaco, 18-19.

a now lost familiarity with classical Hollywood genre films, westerns, film noirs, melodramas and musicals, their stars and their visual styles.

Nonetheless, the tastes of the baby-boomer generation diverged radically from that of their parents and studios soon realized it was necessary to tailor productions to different age groups. The college-educated baby-boomers favoured the fare of art and repertory cinemas that showed independent and foreign films.¹⁰⁵ Thanks in part to the circulation of the Museum of Modern Art's film library, repertory theatres in New York, Los Angeles and San Francisco provided a 'crucial training ground' for many fifties and sixties film scholars.¹⁰⁶ The film critic and historian Andrew Sarris recalled the importance of the theatres situated around Times Square in New York as vital to developing his own cinephilia.¹⁰⁷ In Los Angeles, the Coronet Theatre became renowned for screening adventurous avant-garde art and foreign films as well as retrospectives of figures such as Charlie Chaplin.¹⁰⁸ The European influence was also felt in the growing number of film festivals taking place in US cities.¹⁰⁹

Radicalized baby-boomers were not only interested in viewing new forms of cinema, they were also intent on taking its medium into their own hands. One *Life* journalist reported in 1968 that:

The U.S. had bred a generation zonked on films. Saturated by movies and TV to the point where zooms, pans, montages and lap dissolves come easier than words, more and more young Americans are getting behind the camera and expressing themselves as never before. [...] Where a youth might once have dreamed of writing the Great American Novel, today he wants to make the Great American Film.¹¹⁰

It was this youth cinephilia, Zryd argues, that led to a demand for filmmaking courses within the institutions themselves.¹¹¹ A small number of institutions had offered filmmaking courses since the early 20th century, the first of which was established at Columbia in New York in 1915. By 1932, the University of Southern California had developed a Bachelor's degree in filmmaking, the result of an earlier agreement with the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Science to provide training with a series of lectures given by industry professionals.¹¹² A filmmaking programme was established

¹⁰⁵ Langford, 100.

¹⁰⁶ Haden Guest, 'Experimentation and Innovation in Three American Film Journals of the 1950s,' *Inventing Film Studies*, 238

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid*, 238.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid*, 239.

¹⁰⁹ The first recurring festival took place in Venice in 1932; see Chapter III for a history of film festivals.

¹¹⁰ Jon Borgzinner, 'Made Any Good Movies Lately?' *Life*, 11 October 1968, 92.

¹¹¹ Zryd, 184.

¹¹² Dana Polan, 'Young Art, Old Colleges: Early Episodes in the American Study of Film,' *Inventing Film Studies*, 97.

at the University of California in Los Angeles in 1947. In 1963, UCLA offered 'thirty-odd' courses in film, catering to around 80 graduate students.¹¹³ From the mid-sixties onwards, both practical and theoretical film courses became the fastest growing area within the arts.¹¹⁴ By the time Siew-Hwa Beh, *Women & Film's* founding co-editor, attended UCLA in 1970-71, the number of graduate students had doubled.¹¹⁵

Departments, or indeed courses, dedicated to the study of film history and aesthetics were established more slowly. Some practical filmmaking courses offered classes on film analysis or 'appreciation.' At UCLA, for example, both production training and theoretical study were taught at undergraduate and graduate level. Graduate seminars were offered in documentary, fiction, ethnographic and experimental film as well as 'Advanced Design for Motion Picture and Motion Picture Direction,' but there were also seminars available on Film Structure, Film Aesthetics and American or European Motion Picture History.¹¹⁶ Several of *Women & Film's* contributors were students in these early, pioneering film courses. After completing his Master's Degree in the Theatre Arts department at UCLA, Bill Nichols (b. 1942) became one of the first doctoral students in the department's history in 1972.¹¹⁷ Most of the group were interested in Leftist politics and political film and he and his colleagues were in the unique position of being able to hire their own instructors since the faculty could not produce staff qualified to teach the new discipline of film studies.¹¹⁸

Betty Friedan, The Feminine Mystique and NOW

Second-wave feminism is undoubtedly the most crucial political movement in *Women & Film's* historical conjuncture. A sense of incipient change was apparent early on in the sixties: in 1963, Kennedy signed the amendment to the Equal Pay Act that outlawed gender discrimination in the workplace in response to the findings of the President's Commission on the Status of Women, instigated in 1961. But these developments were overshadowed by the publication of *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) by the former labour journalist Betty Friedan.¹¹⁹

¹¹³ Colin Young, 'U.S. Film Teaching: A Survey,' *Film Quarterly* 14, no. 3 (1963), 46-47.

¹¹⁴ Zryd, 183.

¹¹⁵ *The AFI's Guide to College Film Courses 1970-71*, ed. Linda B. Greensfelder, 2nd ed. (Chicago: American Library Association; American Film Institute, 1970), 24.

¹¹⁶ *The AFI's Guide to College Film Courses 1970-71*, 26.

¹¹⁷ Bill Nichols, interview with the author, San Francisco, CA, 14 October 2013.

¹¹⁸ Nichols recalled inviting Rob Rosen and Brian Henderson to teach the doctoral group.

¹¹⁹ Daniel Horowitz has argued that Friedan's oft-overlooked earlier career covering labour union struggles for leftist papers reveals significant continuities between her conception of feminism articulated in *The Feminine Mystique* and later writings. According to Horowitz, both

In the late fifties, Friedan had begun researching the link between education and the personal fulfilment experienced by women of the postwar generation, an era during which women were encouraged to embrace full-time homemaking and childrearing regardless of background or education.¹²⁰ She discovered what she coined a 'feminine mystique' that indoctrinated women, compelling them to choose a life of servitude to men and male desires and submission to consumer society, instead of promoting women's ambition and self-determination through education or paid employment. Women's magazines, mainstream film and television, popular psychology, social theory, advertising and consumer culture reinforced this 'mystique.' As a journalist for magazines such as *Cosmopolitan*, *Good Housekeeping*, *Mademoiselle* and the *Ladies Home Journal*, Friedan acknowledged her own complicity in helping to create and perpetuate this feminine ideal: 'I started to write *The Feminine Mystique*' she explained, 'because the very assumptions of the articles I was then writing for women's magazines no longer rang true to me.'¹²¹ Her book sold over a million copies, reignited American feminist politics and reinitiated the analysis of women's position in contemporary society, albeit one initially centred on white, educated, middle class women.¹²²

In 1966, Friedan became the first president of National Organization for Women (NOW), which was formed in response to the federal inaction displayed at the National Conference of State Commissions on the Status of Women in Washington, D.C.. Writing her memoirs, she recalled that 'in 1966 I saw that nothing was going to happen to most women except talk, words, words, words, unless we organized a movement to change society.'¹²³ NOW acted as a political pressure group, tackling social issues such as the illegality of abortion and sexual discrimination in employment, as well as negative representations of women in newspapers, television and film. Its members asserted their mission in the organization's 'Statement of Purpose':

In the interests of the human dignity of women, we will protest, and endeavor to change, the false image of women now prevalent in the mass media, and in the texts, ceremonies, laws, and practices of our major social institutions. Such

Friedan and subsequent biographers have repeatedly omitted this aspect of her career as a journalist, which contradicts the frequent criticism that Friedan lacked any kind of radical political consciousness. See Horowitz, 'Rethinking Betty Friedan and *The Feminine Mystique*: Labor Union Radicalism and Feminism in Cold War America,' *American Quarterly* 48, no. 1 (March 1996): 1-42.

¹²⁰ Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (New York: Laurel Books, 1983).

¹²¹ Friedan, *It Changed My Life* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), xvii.

¹²² The first paperback printing sold 1.4 million copies, Louise Menand, 'Books as Bombs: Why the Women's Movement Needed *The Feminine Mystique*,' *The New Yorker*, 24 January 2011, http://www.newyorker.com/arts/critics/books/2011/01/24/110124crbo_books_menand?currentPage=all, (13.02.2014).

¹²³ Friedan, *It Changed My Life*, xix.

images perpetuate contempt for women by society and by women for themselves.¹²⁴

Following the publication of *The Feminine Mystique* and her role in NOW, Friedan quickly rose to prominence as a spokeswoman for a growing women's movement. Simultaneously, young women working in the civil rights movement began to articulate a feminist critique of the sexual politics at work in the everyday organization of the loose coalition of left, anti-war and anti-racist activists known as the Movement.

Grassroots Activism and Radical Feminism

In November 1964, two members of the civil rights group the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, Mary King and Casey Hayden (wife of *Port Huron Statement* co-author, Tom Hayden), put forward an anonymously authored position paper entitled 'Women in the Movement' at an SNCC conference. Written by former Freedom Summer volunteers, the paper voiced their growing dissatisfaction with the treatment of women by their colleagues: their relegation to clerical work; their exclusion from decision-making; and the general, pervasive assumption of male superiority.¹²⁵ At this same conference, SNCC president Stokely Carmichael reportedly declared that women's only position in SNCC was 'prone.' A comment that some argued was simply an offhand in-joke nonetheless came to stand for the perceived denigration of women in the Movement.¹²⁶ Saundra Salyer echoes King and Hayden's complaints in her recollection that

While women were participating side by side – making decisions and carrying out the necessary actions – when the spotlight came on, when somebody was asked to be interviewed by the press, [...] the women were shoved aside. It was [...] 'fetch the coffee, run the mimeograph machine, and spread the legs.'¹²⁷

In the fall of 1965, Hayden and King began drafting 'Sex and Caste - A Kind of Memo.' In it, they drew comparisons between sexism in the Movement and racism in society, and underlined the hypocrisy of their male movement counterparts. 'Many people,' they observed, 'who are very hip to the implications of the racial caste system, even people

¹²⁴ 'NOW Statement of Purpose,' [1966], *It Changed My Life*, 114.

¹²⁵ Evans, *Personal Politics*, 86. See her discussion of women's roles in groups like SDS and SNCC, 110-119.

¹²⁶ See Alice Echols, *Daring To Be Bad: Radical Feminism in America 1967-1975* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), 31, for a discussion of this debate.

¹²⁷ Saundra Salyer, interview with author, Montclair, CA, 11 October 2013.

in the movement, don't seem to be able to see the sexual caste system.'¹²⁸ The memo circulated among Movement women and was later included at a SDS National Council Meeting in December 1965.¹²⁹ A workshop was organized in response to the paper but was hampered by disagreements between its male and female participants, particularly on the issue of separatism.¹³⁰

Between 1965 and 1967, other women began to explore the issue of sexism and women's status in society more generally: several articles were published in the radical press and more workshops were held on campuses and community spaces around the country. In 1967, a workshop was held at the National Conference for New Politics in Chicago, attended by around seventy women, which resulted in a resolution being drafted.¹³¹ However, the conference's chairman rejected the resolution, forcing its authors to merge their demands with the Women Strike for Peace group. Outraged, activists Jo Freeman and Shulamith Firestone formulated a new resolution, centred not on antiwar issues but women's social and political equality and greater access to abortion and childcare, but it was again excluded from the agenda.¹³² The chairman reportedly patted Firestone on the head saying 'Move on little girl; we have more important issues to talk about here than women's liberation.'¹³³

In response, Firestone and Freeman penned a manifesto, 'To The Women on the Left,' that was published in *New Left Notes* in November of that year.¹³⁴ It called for women's equal representation and 'full participation in the decision-making processes and positions of our political, economic and social institutions,' an end to discrimination from labour unions and employers, and for greater access to education, birth control and abortions for women.¹³⁵ It also condemned the mass media for perpetuating the submissive and sexualized image of women and suggested a boycott of 'the thriving women's magazines, such as *McCall's*, *Good Housekeeping*, *Vogue* (etc., etc.) for romanticizing drudgery and promoting a false mystique of emancipation' and proposed a fundamental re-evaluation of marriage and traditional family organization.

¹²⁸ Casey Hayden and Mary King, 'Sex Caste - A Kind of Memo' [1965], Chicago Women's Liberation Union Herstory Project website, 2016, <https://www.cwluherstory.org/classic-feminist-writings-articles/a-kind-of-memo> (27.01.2017).

¹²⁹ Echols, 34.

¹³⁰ Evans, 162-3.

¹³¹ Echols, 48.

¹³² Jo Freeman, 'On Shulamith Firestone, Part One,' *n+1*, 26 September 2012, <http://nplusonemag.com/on-shulamith-firestone-part-one> (20.03.2014).

¹³³ Evans, 199.

¹³⁴ Echols, 48-49.

¹³⁵ Freeman and Firestone, 'To the Women on the Left,' *Dear Sisters: Dispatches from the Women's Liberation Movement*, ed. Rosalyn Baxandall and Linda Gordon (New York: Basic Books, 1967), 28-29.

Consciousness-raising and the feminist press

In the aftermath of the National Conference for New Politics, a group of women based in Chicago began meeting to discuss and organize around women's issues, in addition to leftist concerns such as resisting racism, capitalism and American imperialism. The group included Shulamith Firestone; in October 1967, she moved to New York where she subsequently formed New York Radical Women (NYRW) with Pam Allen, a veteran civil rights organizer. Sara Evans, a member of the Chicago group, later commented that it 'formed almost instinctively at first as radical women gathered in each other's living rooms to discuss their needs, these small groups quickly became the primary structure of the women's revolt.'¹³⁶ Unlike NOW and its growing number of national chapters, these groups often had little organizational structure or hierarchy, frequently barred men from joining, and were often independent of one another.¹³⁷

As Mary D. Garrard illustrates, 'sisterhood produced a form of growth for which the best analogy is cell division.'¹³⁸ As more articles on women's liberation appeared in the underground – and eventually, mainstream – press, and with an increasing number of feminist conferences taking place at campuses across the country, women responded by forming discussion groups. Evans recounts that following the Jeanette Rankin Brigade protest, the movement's earliest organized demonstration,

New left women from all over the country met to talk about organizing women's groups. Women came from New York and Chicago to proselytize their new movement. They met with fifty women from fourteen cities and shared their experiences. Immediately afterwards collectives formed in Washington, DC, Berkeley, California, and several other cities.¹³⁹

Chuck Kleinhans remembered how, during his time as a graduate student at Indiana University, his then wife and numerous female friends became involved in the women's movement following a talk given by Chicago member Marlene Dixon around 1967-68.¹⁴⁰ A women's centre was set up in his apartment building, with a feminist reading group and an abortion counselling service, the latter providing

¹³⁶ Evans, 215.

¹³⁷ Freeman, *The Politics of Women's Liberation: A Case Study of an Emerging Social Movement and Its Relation to the Policy Process* (New York: David McKay Company, 1975), 103.

¹³⁸ Mary D. Garrard, 'Feminist Politics: Networks and Organizations,' *The Power of Feminist Art: Emergence, Impact and Triumph of the American Feminist Art Movement*, ed. Norma Bourde and Garrard (London: Thames and Hudson, 1994), 90.

¹³⁹ Evans, 209.

¹⁴⁰ Kleinhans, interview.

advice, financial assistance and transport to women needing abortions, then still illegal.

The women's movement drew a large portion of its membership from the civil rights groups and the New Left, and was similarly reliant on a large number of young organizers. According to activist Jo Freeman, 'few were students, [but] all were "under 30" and had obtained a political education as participants or concerned observers of the social-action protests of the 1960s.'¹⁴¹ According to Sara Evans, 'for women, the movement became more alienating, more massive, competitive, and sexually exploitative. At the same time, it opened up the process of radicalization to thousands and sharpened the ideology women would eventually use to describe their own oppression.'¹⁴² Many women deployed the organizational skills and contacts they had made during their time working in the Movement.¹⁴³ Their former experiences also provided them with the 'network of communication [...and] framework of analysis' necessary for radical organizing.¹⁴⁴ Furthermore, they made use of the radical and underground press to disseminate the earliest feminist critiques of society and politics, publishing in magazines such as *New Left Notes*, *Ramparts* and *Radical America*, despite these publications' ambivalence about the cause.¹⁴⁵

Women were encouraged to reflect on their own sexual conditioning and oppression in consciousness-raising groups, a practice pioneered by NYRW and Redstockings (formed by Firestone and music journalist Ellen Willis in February 1969). Originally formulated by Kathie Sarachild and introduced at the First National Women's Liberation conference in November 1968, consciousness-raising used methods such as personal testimony and cross-examination in order to consider such problems as 'Anti-womanism; Glorification of the Oppressor [...]; Self Blame and Ultra Militancy.'¹⁴⁶ The outcomes of such sessions included the 'understanding and development of radical feminist theory' and the discussion of 'possible methods of struggle' in a historical, individual, and group context.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴¹ Freeman, *Politics of Women's Liberation*, 56.

¹⁴² Evans, 170.

¹⁴³ Echols, 52.

¹⁴⁴ Freeman, *Politics of Women's Liberation*, 59.

¹⁴⁵ See Warren and Marianne Hinckle, 'Women Power,' *Ramparts* (February 1968): 22-31; and *Radical America* IV, no. 2 (February 1970). Echols refers to the publication of the statement drafted by the Women's Liberation Workshop that appeared next to a mocking cartoon of a female activist. Echols, 45.

¹⁴⁶ Kathie Sarachild, 'A Program for Feminist "Consciousness Raising",' *Notes from the Second Year* (1970), 79. Sarachild, née Amatniek, adopted her feminist surname after following her encounter with the women's movement. Evans, 203.

¹⁴⁷ Sarachild, 80.

In a 1969 exposé, a *Life* journalist describes a typical Redstockings gathering in which '30 young women sit crowded on the floor of the small, stuffy room for five to six hours.'¹⁴⁸ It reports: 'a question is posed, such as, "Did you choose to stay single or marry?" Each girl relates specific incidents in her life, and at the end, the "testimony" is analyzed.'¹⁴⁹ These 'rap' or 'bitch' sessions proliferated across the country via student and community groups. One Chicago-based group described 'CR' (as it also came to be known) as 'the backbone' of the movement:

All over the country women are meeting regularly to share experiences each has always thought were "my own problems" [...]. Through consciousness-raising we begin to understand ourselves and other women by looking at situations like this in our own lives. We see that personal problems shared by so many others [...] are really political problems. Understanding them is the first step toward dealing with them collectively, whether in forming a day care center, exploring job possibilities, or planning the best strategy for getting our husbands to help with the housework.¹⁵⁰

Whereas NOW lobbied Congress for legal change, organizations such as New York Radical Women emphasized the grassroots activism of civil rights and student protest. As Evans notes, 'By 1967-1968 hundreds of thousands of young women had been to a march, a meeting, a sit-in, a rally.'¹⁵¹ The first notable event was the Jeannette Rankin Brigade protest, which took place on 15 January 1968, and was organized by a coalition of women's groups united in their opposition to the war in Vietnam. The event was not initially conceived as a feminist protest but brought together anti-war and leftist women, such as Women's Strike for Peace, with younger groups like NYRW and the Chicago-based Westside women's group organizing for women's liberation.¹⁵² Over five thousand women participated, but the protest came under fire for reinforcing female stereotypes, with the event seen by Firestone as a gathering of 'wives, mothers and mourners [...] tearful reactors to the actions of men.'¹⁵³ An alternative event, a 'Funeral for Traditional Womanhood' organized by women from NYRW, was held nearby at the

¹⁴⁸ Sara Davidson, 'An "Oppressed Majority" Demands its Rights,' *Life*, 12 December 1969, 70.

¹⁴⁹ Davidson, 70.

¹⁵⁰ Chicago Women's Liberation Union, 'How to start your own consciousness raising group,' leaflet [1971], Chicago Women's Liberation Union Herstory Project, <https://www.cwluherstory.org/conscious/how-to-start-your-own-consciousness-raising-group> (27.01.2018).

¹⁵¹ Evans, 170.

¹⁵² Echols, 54-55.

¹⁵³ She continues: 'the Brigade was playing upon the traditional female role in the classic manner [...]. Rather than organizing as women to change that definition of femininity to something other than a synonym for weakness, political impotence, and tears.' Firestone, 'The Jeanette Rankin Brigade: Woman Power? A Summary of Our Involvement,' *Notes from the First Year* (June 1968), 18.

Arlington National Cemetery in Washington, at which the slogan 'Sisterhood is Powerful' made its first appearance.¹⁵⁴

Nine months later, NYRW staged a protest at the Miss America Beauty Pageant in Atlantic City, an action that garnered the movement its highest press exposure. Interestingly, the protest's organizer Carol Hanisch cites a CR group screening of the 1966 film *Schmeerguntz* by the West coast filmmaker Gunvor Nelson as her inspiration for the action:

We were watching *Schmeerguntz* [sic], a feminist movie, one night at our meeting. The movie had flashes of the Miss America contest in it. I found myself sitting there remembering how I had felt at home with my family watching the pageant as a child, an adolescent, and a college student. I knew it had evoked powerful feelings.¹⁵⁵

On the day of the protest, around a hundred women, mostly from Eastern cities, formed picket lines, performed guerrilla theatre sketches and even crowned a live sheep with a Miss America crown. Sixteen women were arrested after they staged a demonstration inside the auditorium where they unfolded a large banner that read 'Women's Liberation' and heckled the stage with feminist slogans.¹⁵⁶

While feminists initially made use of the radical and underground press to disseminate the early feminist critiques of society and politics, they soon developed their own print culture. According to Rosalyn Baxandall and Linda Gordon, 'mimeographed pages stapled together into pamphlets were the common currency of the early years of the movement.'¹⁵⁷ The first national women's liberation newsletter appeared in March 1968. Made up of three mimeographed sheets, it included writing by women activists from New York, Chicago, and Washington D.C.¹⁵⁸ Its debut editorial stated that 'this newsletter, like its sponsoring organizations, has no name'; consequently, the newsletter's title banner was left blank. The newsletter was eventually christened the *Voice of the Women's Liberation Movement*.¹⁵⁹ June 1968 saw the publication of *Notes from the First Year*, edited by Shulamith Firestone. In December, *Lilith* (1968-1970), from Seattle, Washington was issued by the Women's Majority Union. These were followed by magazines such as *off our backs* (1970-2008)

¹⁵⁴ Echols, 57.

¹⁵⁵ Carol Hanisch, 'A Critique of the Miss America Protest,' *Notes from the Second Year* (1970), 86.

¹⁵⁶ Echols, 93-94.

¹⁵⁷ Rosalyn Baxandall and Linda Gordon, 'Introduction,' *Dear Sisters*, 15.

¹⁵⁸ Freeman, *Politics of Women's Liberation*, 109.

¹⁵⁹ It goes on to explain: 'We felt its readers, the various radical women's groups and organizations for women's liberation around the country, should decide its name when they are ready,' Freeman, 'Editorial,' *Voice of the Women's Liberation Movement* 1, no. 1 (March 1968), 1.

in Washington D.C., and *It Ain't Me Babe* (1970-71), a woman-run comic, out of Albany, California.

According to Winifred D. Wandersee, between 1968 and 1972, the number of feminist periodicals in the U.S. went from around two to over sixty.¹⁶⁰ Lauren Kessler argues that 'without the feminist press a host of dissident ideas – from women's political equality to reproductive freedom – would not have received a public forum.'¹⁶¹ Furthermore, Freeman argues, 'it was not *until* a communications network developed among like-minded people beyond local boundaries that the movement could emerge and develop past the point of occasional, spontaneous uprising.'¹⁶² In her book *The Politics of Women's Liberation*, she writes: [*The Voice of the Women's Liberation Movement's*] purpose was to reach any potential sympathizer in order to let her know that there were others who thought like she did and that she was not isolated or crazy.'¹⁶³

The Women's Film Movement

By the early 1970s, alternative feminist cultures, which sought to challenge the male-dominated cultural status quo, had developed alongside the political activism of the movement. Filmmaking and its study was no exception; women confronted their exclusion from Hollywood's commercial film industry as well as underground and avant-garde circles. They also questioned the messages and media being used: How were women represented in films? Were women represented a certain way because the directors were male or were they simply products of a patriarchal society? Given the opportunity, would women make films differently?

Women & Film's emergence coincided with an explosion in women's filmmaking that took place during the early seventies in response to women's liberation. Jan Rosenberg claims that in 1970 there were around 14 feminist films; by 1977, this number had risen to 250. Likewise, the number of feminist filmmakers in 1976 is estimated at around 200, compared to 30-35 in 1972.¹⁶⁴ Many of these early films were documentaries 'by, for and about' women such as *Growing Up Female: As Six Become One* (Jim Klein and Julia Reichert, 1971), *The Woman's Film* (San Francisco Newsreel,

¹⁶⁰ Winifred Wandersee, *On the Move: American Women in the 1970s* (Boston: Twayne, 1988), 4.

¹⁶¹ Lauren Kessler, *The Dissident Press: Alternative Journalism in American History* (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1984), 86.

¹⁶² Freeman, *Politics of Women's Liberation*, 67.

¹⁶³ *Ibid*, 110.

¹⁶⁴ Jan Rosenberg, *Women's Reflections: The Feminist Film Movement* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1983), 17.

1971), *Janie's Janie* (Geri Ashur, 1971) and *Anything You Want to Be* (Liane Brandon, 1971). 1972 saw the establishment of the first women's film and video festivals (New York and Edinburgh) and distribution companies. Rosenberg uses the term feminist film movement to describe this period of heightened activity. But here I use 'women's film movement' in order to include the output by established filmmakers, some of whom did not align themselves with feminism, whose work received renewed interest during this period: contemporary directors such as Nelly Kaplan and Agnès Varda, but also historical figures such as Alice Guy Blaché and Dorothy Arzner whose films were rediscovered in part thanks to feminist film scholars.

The ideals of participatory democracy and non-hierarchical organizing enshrined in the new left also shaped grassroots 1970s feminism. It can be seen in the way some consciousness-raising groups were conducted as well as in the operation of certain women's liberation groups and the planning of some demonstrations. The rejection of hierarchy and individualism is reflected by many women's liberation writers' preference for publishing under pseudonyms or first names only (*Everywoman; Ain't I a Woman*, 1970-74; *It Ain't Me Babe*; *Off Our Backs*). According to Kessler, almost two-thirds of women's liberation publications were collectively run.¹⁶⁵ Group work was emphasized by many women artists, like those who worked on projects such as *Womanhouse* (1972), a collaborative work composed of numerous installations and sculptural pieces housed in an abandoned Los Angeles mansion.¹⁶⁶

Women's filmmaking collectives were also common during this era. Some attempted to do away with the specific roles and job titles of the Hollywood industry, such as director, cameraperson or sound recordist, entirely. This was the case for San Francisco Newsreel's *The Woman's Film* (1971): as one of its makers explains, 'there aren't any directors [...] in Newsreel.'¹⁶⁷ Other groups retained these specialized roles. *Three Lives*, for example, was made by a group of women working under the banner Women's Liberation Cinema Company, which included the feminist author and campaigner Kate Millett. But despite their espousal of the ideals of collective filmmaking and profit-sharing, the women took on the traditional, skill-specific roles of

¹⁶⁵ Kessler, 84.

¹⁶⁶ The installations were created by 24 students from the California Institute of the Arts, led by their tutors Judy Chicago and Miriam Schapiro. Local filmmaker Johanna Demetrakas directed a documentary about the project in 1974. See the *Womanhouse* website, <http://www.womanhouse.net/> (23.01.2018).

¹⁶⁷ Judy Smith in Mitch Tuckman, 'Interview with Judy Smith, S.F. Newsreel,' *Women & Film* 1 (1972), 32.

a film crew, reflected in the film's credits.¹⁶⁸ This ultimately led to disputes over royalties and creative ownership of the film. Such experiments with alternative forms of leadership and organization were often fraught with difficulties as their participants struggled to adapt to the new ways of working and conceptions of authorship they demanded. Such issues arose within *Women & Film*, but also in the organizing of women's film festivals, collaborative writing and collective filmmaking projects.

This Thesis

This historical survey is an attempt to situate *Women & Film's* conjunctural moment and to provide the reader with an understanding of the eclectic political, social and cultural forces that brought it into being. Over the coming chapters, many of these moments will be revisited in more detail, as I reapply this approach to consider the specific cultural and theoretical conjectures that gave rise to the various forms of feminist film writing found in the magazine, often through the lens of a particular contributor's work.

Chapter I begins with Beh's early life and her experiences leading up to the publication of *Women & Film's* first issue; her arrival in the United States as a young woman from Penang in Malaysia and her immersion in 1960s American youth culture, radical politics, feminism and California counterculture. As well as providing a detailed account of *Women & Film's* founding, I examine how these aspects of Beh's experience informed the look and content of the magazine's first issue, using both the magazine as a whole as well as its debut editorial, before focusing on Beh's own writing.

In chapter II, with the details of the magazine's establishment already laid out, I shift my attention to Salyer and her unique influence on the magazine. While Beh's contributions appear to be informed more explicitly by radical politics of the era, Salyer's input draws on her background in literature and her deeper involvement in the counterculture of the 1960s and early 1970s, particularly radical psychology, psychedelia, and the women's liberation movement.

¹⁶⁸ When it came to her own credit, Millett found it hard to reconcile with her earlier training as a sculptor in Western Romantic artistic tradition. Millett financed the film and was officially a producer, but she also edited it, and in the end, gave herself a possessory credit (a film by Kate Millett), which usually identifies the director but can also refer to a producer, as in David O. Selznick's *Gone with the Wind*. Millett, *Flying* (St Albans: Paladin, 1976), 253. In 1974, Louva Irvine (co-director), Jeanne Carballo (lighting technician), and Leonore Bode (the camerawoman), sued Millett for violating the profit-sharing terms of their contract, which originally stated that the crew was on the same basic salary, with each receiving 5% of the net profits from the film. Susan Kleckner, 'A Personal Decade,' *Heresies* 4, no. 16 (1983): 77-78.

Taken together, these two chapters reestablish the link between the leftist activism and political movements of the late 1960s and feminist film theory of the mid-1970s, positioning *Women & Film* as a potential bridge between the two. Early feminist film criticism is revealed as being both motivated and empowered by the women's liberation movement but equally informed by the (mostly male) political thinkers and filmmakers of the counterculture.

Women's film festivals were a central aspect of feminist film activism during *Women & Film's* era. Throughout the first half of the 1970s, the number of women's film festivals rose dramatically, beginning with small one-off screenings arranged by feminist groups or student film clubs but very quickly developing into ambitious high-profile events that showed hundreds of films by women filmmakers from around the world to large audiences. Undoubtedly, these were legitimizing events for historians of women's cinema as well as for the wider feminist film movement, as they often showcased films by directors who had been forgotten or overlooked in the past, or emerging contemporary filmmakers seeking recognition. Unfortunately, it is beyond the scope of this thesis to reconstruct all the festivals covered by *Women & Film*. Instead, my discussion is restricted to the first major event, the First International Festival of Women's Films, conceived and held almost simultaneously with *Women & Film's* first issue, in 1972 in New York. The magazine was one of the few publications to cover events like these consistently and in detail. Barbara Martineau, whose work this chapter concentrates on, provided distinctly rich and eclectic reportage that, at the time, helped extend the impact of these ephemeral events as well as retrospectively preserving their history. Moreover, Martineau's work evokes the important role these festivals played in bringing women together and building networks.

My fourth chapter begins to consider one of the central problematics of this thesis by embarking on a detailed investigation of the kinds of film criticism published in *Women & Film*. As my earlier historiographical framing makes clear, *Women & Film* is most frequently associated with 'images of women' or 'sociological' feminist film criticism. My purpose in this chapter is not to refute this designation but rather to question its characterization as 'untheoretical.' I therefore consider a selection of articles from the magazine and the theoretical frameworks that inform them: their literary and sociological influences, and the ways in which these methodologies are refracted through the lens of 1970s feminism. I also consider how the auteur theory – then the dominant approach in the nascent field of film studies – is employed by some *Women & Film* contributors and evaluate its potential for forging a feminist critique of film. Ultimately, this chapter also offers a sketch of the landscape of US film studies

before the transformations brought about by structuralism, semiotics and psychoanalysis.

The chapter which follows this takes such transformations as its main subject. While often overlooked by historians of feminist film criticism, *Women & Film* not only contained the sociological criticism associated with writers like Molly Haskell and Marjorie Rosen, it also published early articles informed by the structuralist film theorists of the 1970s. This was the work of a new wave of contributors, feminists, scholars and cinephiles who were deeply engaged with these emerging critical approaches to film analysis. This chapter combines close readings of their articles as well as the intellectual backgrounds of these new contributors. In the process, I reconstruct one of the defining stories told about the magazine: the arrival, impact and departure of four women who would go on to found *Camera Obscura*, the influential journal that significantly shaped the development of feminist film theory in the latter half of the 1970s and early 1980s. A further and final objective of this chapter is to show that the magazine's engagement with 1970s film theory did not end with the departure of these women, but continued in its final issue 7 thanks to the publication of an influential essay on realism and feminist documentary. Taken together, these articles chart *Women & Film's* encounter with 1970s film theory and map out the debates that would define the discipline for at least the next decade. Each reveals ways in which 1970s film theory was transmitted between individuals and institutions in the United States and Europe (particularly France and the United Kingdom). They also position *Women & Film* as a bridge between the leftist and feminist cultural critique of the 1960s, and 1970s feminist film theory.

In order to follow the more compelling thematic narrative that I have chosen, a loose chronology is favoured over a strict one. Chapters I to IV pay particular attention to *Women & Film's* first two issues from 1972. Double issue 3-4 (1973) marks a significant shift in both personnel, outlook and approach for the magazine and is therefore the starting point for Chapter V. The magazine's shifting trajectory is tracked in this chapter through to issue 5-6 (1974), and finally, 7 (1975). For the sake of clarity, I have dropped the magazine's volume numbers, using just the issue numbers to refer to different installments.

Chapters VI and VII subsequently break away from this sequential account by providing overviews of the magazine's engagement with women filmmakers from the past and present. The penultimate chapter of this thesis similarly looks at the new priorities heralded by *Women & Film's* 1973 issue, in this instance, the call for feminists to dedicate their critical attention to women filmmakers instead of men. The

magazine's editors had noted early on that women appeared to be absent from cinema history and it went on to publish several significant early contributions to the recovery of women's film history. I look here at some examples for the magazine's two double issues from 1973 and 1974 respectively. I begin with article- filmographies, one an extensive, international list of hundreds of women filmmakers throughout cinema's history, the other an article focusing exclusively on some of the forgotten women of Hollywood history. I end with two articles focusing on an individual woman filmmaker from the past, Germaine Dulac. My investigations into the research and writing that went into to these articles demonstrate the time, specialist skills and scholarly approach they necessitated and the unique contribution they made to what was then an emerging discipline.

My final chapter picks up on several themes present at the magazine's inception: the desire of its founders, as feminists and filmmakers themselves, to challenge the discrimination against women working in the film industry at the time and for the development of a feminist cinema. In this Chapter, I examine writing on women's film and discussions with some potential 'feminist auteurs' of the time. Returning to the notions of authorship and auteurism laid out in Chapter IV, I consider how these contributors deploy an auteurist conception of filmmaking, not only in their emphasis on the director's role over other filmmaking roles, but also in the notion that these women may have managed to make films that are different from men's, and potentially more interesting to feminists, by subtly overriding some of the conventions of representation present in commercial cinema. As with the reportage on festivals discussed in Chapter III, this engagement with contemporary women's work played an important role in legitimizing feminist film and the women's film movement as a whole.

My appendices contain a selection of the data generated in the course of my research. Appendix A contains reprints of the tables of contents from each issue; these also show the names of the various contributors and editorial associates. I provide some biographical information, where possible, for some of these names in Appendix B. Appendix C presents two timelines, one detailing key dates relating to the magazine and its founders; the other mapping the women's film festivals of the early 1970s and their coverage in the magazine. Finally, Appendix D provides an index of films by women discussed in the magazine, where information on countries of production can be found as well as which articles these films are discussed. These materials alone testify to both the magazine's eclecticism and its significant position as a pioneering publication on feminism and cinema.

Radical Beginnings: Siew-Hwa Beh and the founding of *Women & Film*

We dare attempt to tear down the old vicious structures and assumptions that victimize us. [...] We want to take charge over our minds, bodies, and image.

The editors, 'Overview,' *Women & Film* 1 (1972)

Before one has even read the articles in *Women & Film's* first issue, published in the spring of 1972, its creators' immersion in the revolutionary politics and culture of the era is visually apparent. The front and back cover images of this first issue immediately signal the magazine's and many of its contributors' preoccupation with the work of Jean-Luc Godard by invoking his famous pronouncement that 'all you need to make a movie is a girl and gun.'¹ On the front is a still from his 1963 film *Les Carabiniers* showing a woman resignedly unbuttoning her shirt while a man points a rifle at her, an image that encapsulates the violence endured by women that typically results from the 'girl and a gun' formula (see fig. 1).² The cinematic specificity of this violence is emphasized by its placement within a hand-drawn strip of celluloid. However, Godard's frame is disrupted by a tear that rips – both literally and metaphorically – the aggressor from his victim. The themes of gendered violence and patriarchal oppression suggested by the magazine's front cover are somewhat inverted on its reverse by an image of a woman dressed in a denim jacket and fishnet stockings, holding a shotgun, which she points to the camera's left (fig. 2). Her face is obscured by a movie clapperboard, held by a hand extended from the outer left of the frame. Together, these

¹ Although Godard made this phrase famous, it is in fact attributed to D.W. Griffith, as Godard himself has stated. Roland François Lack, 'All you need is... a girl and gun,' The Cine-Tourist blog, <http://www.thecinetourist.net/a-girl-and-a-gun.html> (23.02.2017).

² *Les Carabiniers* (1963) was released in the United States in 1968. In it, two young men, Michel-Ange and Ulysses, are recruited to fight in a war. Promised glory and wealth, they travel the world. The still depicts a scene in which Michel-Ange (Patrice Moullet) captures a young mother and forces her to undress at gunpoint. According to Salyer, the majority of the images used in the magazine were publicity stills. The San Francisco International Film Festival was another 'generous source,' although some images were provided by article authors themselves. Salyer, email to author, 21 January 2013.

cover images evoke the themes of oppression and resistance that are central to the magazine's consideration of its topic: women and film.

From the outset then, *Women & Film's* interest in revolutionary politics and political filmmaking, as well as a concern with women's resistance and their image on screen, are immediately and explicitly evoked by these cover images. In this chapter and the next, I examine how these ideas come into play inside *Women & Film's* first issue and how they shaped the magazine's development of a then nascent feminist critique of cinema. The magazine's debut editorial is a useful starting point for an investigation into the magazine's critical outlook and the editors' combined political and cultural influences.³ Its invocation of Herbert Marcuse links the project back to the broader social and cultural critique informed by 1960s Marxism and the Frankfurt School of Critical Theory. The back cover image also summons up another cinematic metaphor relevant to this opening text: that of the camera as weapon. In 1969, two independent South American directors, Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino, equated the filmmaker with a guerrilla fighter and the camera with a rifle in their essay 'Toward a Third Cinema,' a text that was widely reproduced and referenced in leftwing US film journals.⁴ Within the context of feminism and film, the anonymous girl with a gun perhaps asks: does it matter who is holding the gun? Or put another way, can women use the camera to liberate themselves and others?

These ideas are further explored in the editors' individual contributions. This chapter will focus on Siew-Hwa Beh's writing for the magazine, which only appears in its first two issues. Her article on the film *The Red Detachment of Women* (Jie Fu and Wenzhan Pan, 1970) and her review of Godard's *Vivre sa Vie* (1962) demonstrate her interest in politics and cultural resistance, as well as the role of women's bodies in both art and revolution. Before undertaking close readings of these articles, I look at Beh's political and intellectual education in the run up to the magazine's inception, as well as some of the details of its founding. Ultimately, this investigation seeks to establish *Women & Film* as a missing link in the story of feminist film studies, bridging the gap between the leftist activism and political movements of the late 1960s with feminist

³ The authorship of the editorials is somewhat contentious. While Salyer states that all were written collectively (email to author, 18 March 2013), Beh has claimed that she wrote the first alone (email to author, 16 June 2012; email to author, 28 May 2017), although she has acknowledged that Salyer, Nichols and Salyer's then partner Mike Shedlin contributed feedback (email to author, 4 September 2013). Given that all are unsigned and make use of the first person plural, I have credited 'the editors' throughout. However my impression is that Beh's authorial presence is felt more strongly in the earlier editorials, whereas Salyer's is more apparent in the latter ones. This corresponds to Beh's absence from the magazine while in Canada between 1974-75.

⁴ Solanas and Getino, 'Toward A Third Cinema,' *Cineaste* IV, no. 3 (1970-71), 7.

film theory of the mid-1970s. What is revealed is a feminist film criticism motivated and empowered by the women's liberation movement but initially informed by the work of mostly male political thinkers and filmmakers. For Beh, these thinkers primarily include Godard, Marcuse and Solanas and Getino.

Welcome to California

Born in 1945 on the island of Penang in Malaysia, Siew-Hwa Beh first visited the United States in 1963 on an American Field Service exchange programme, swapping her traditional rural upbringing and convent school for a year as a senior at Laguna Beach High, where she discovered Western fashion and make-up, and was crowned homecoming queen.⁵ She returned to the West Coast the following year, aged 19, thanks to a Presidential Scholars grant to attend the women-only Mills College in Oakland, California, where she studied dance, acting and art history.⁶ Thanks to the campus's proximity to San Francisco and Berkeley, Beh was exposed to the burgeoning counterculture of Haight-Ashbury and the anti-war movement. As a witness to California's 'summer of love' of 1967 – an influx of thousands of young people looking to experience the counterculture and hippie lifestyle – she became both politically and culturally radicalized.

Dissatisfied with the small campus and limited course offerings at Mills College, in 1965 Beh transferred to the Film and Theatre Arts Department undergraduate programme at UCLA.⁷ Founded in 1947, the UCLA filmmaking programme was by then well-established compared to the many new courses being set up in English, Foreign Language and Drama departments across universities nationwide, as filmmaking and film studies emerged as disciplines in their own right; from the mid-sixties onwards they would become the fastest growing area within the arts.⁸ The school offered both practical tuition as well as classes on film history and style. It favoured an artisanal filmmaking approach over the traditional specialized model dictated by Hollywood that could be found on more industrial filmmaking courses like those on offer at the

⁵ Siew-Hwa Beh, interview with author, Berkeley, CA, 10-13 October 2013. First founded in 1915 as an international voluntary ambulance service, the American Field Service is an international scholarship organization bringing students from around the globe to the US to promote a more peaceful world. 'AFS timeline,' American Field Service website, <http://afs.org/archives/timeline/> (18.04.2017).

⁶ The Presidential Scholars Program was founded in 1964 by president Lyndon Johnson.

⁷ Beh, interview.

⁸ Zryd, 'Experimental Film and the Development of Film Study in America,' *Inventing Film Studies*, 183.

University of Southern California (USC). One contemporary study describes UCLA as promoting ‘the individual concept [... where] one film maker learns how to make films by being his own writer, camera man, editor, and producer.’⁹ One student remembers ‘it was very hands off at UCLA. There were people who taught technical things like lighting and camera, editing, [...]. But a lot of it was like “here’s some equipment, do what you can”.’¹⁰ Beh claims that ‘nobody got much real teaching or direction [...] about film, or filmmaking [...]. We had to basically teach ourselves.’¹¹ Nonetheless, as a filmmaking student, she crossed paths with visitors to the department such as directors Josef von Sternberg and Francis Ford Coppola, critic Pauline Kael, as well as screening work alongside fellow students from the University of Southern California, a class that included George Lucas, who showed an early version of his *THX 1138*.¹²

It was at UCLA that Beh met Bill Nichols: ‘we were both students,’ she remembers, ‘we had several similar classes and then he asked me out and [...] we started dating.’¹³ Nichols had dropped out of Stanford Medical school in the mid-1960s and become politically radicalized by his experiences in Kenya with the Peace Corps. Beh and Nichols became a couple and married in 1970, although, according to Nichols, this was largely kept secret as it didn’t conform to their anti-establishment outlooks.¹⁴ He had enrolled at UCLA hoping to pursue either screenwriting or filmmaking, and was also involved with the filmmaking collective Newsreel, which he first discovered in the late 1960s while working for the film critic Judith Crist in New York.¹⁵ Once in Los Angeles, he began attending regular meetings of the local Los Angeles chapter, sometimes accompanied by Beh, where veterans of the Old Left would mix with the New Left’s younger adherents.¹⁶ Nichols wrote his Masters’ dissertation on Newsreel’s New York and San Francisco chapters, their collective working methods and their films. He also wrote about film for Los Angeles-based papers such as *The Staff* and *LA* as well as journals *Film Quarterly*, *Cineaste*, and *Cinema*.¹⁷ Between 1971-2, he even presented

⁹ Thomas Fensch, *Films on the Campus* (New York: A.S. Barnes, 1970), 59.

¹⁰ Bill Nichols, interview with author, San Francisco, CA, 14 October 2013.

¹¹ Beh, email to author, 15 June 2012.

¹² Beh, email to author, 28 May 2017.

¹³ Beh, interview.

¹⁴ Beh, email to author, 21 January 2018. Nichols, email to author, 4 October 2011.

¹⁵ Nichols, email to author, 2 February 2013; Nichols, interview. Crist (1922-2012) was one of the first women film critics to gain a position in the national press and *New York* magazine’s first film critic. Douglas Martin, ‘Judith Crist, a Blunt and Influential Film Critic, Dies at 90,’ *New York Times*, 7 August 2012.

¹⁶ Nichols, interview.

¹⁷ Nichols, ‘The Film School and Political Action,’ *Cineaste* IV, no. 1 (1970): 26-28; ‘Revolution and Melodrama: A Marxist View of Some Recent Films,’ *Cinema* 6, no. 1 (1970): 42-47.

film reviews for the popular LA radio station KMET-FM.¹⁸ By the time *Women & Film's* first issue appeared, Nichols was continuing his research on Newsreel and political filmmaking as one of the first doctoral students in the Film and Theatre Arts Department at UCLA.

Beh found the film department at UCLA politically sterile and 'felt isolated because nobody [...] care[d] about the anti war movement, [...] about the left. There were a lot of liberals but they were quiet, and women just wanted to be left alone.' 'Nobody took us seriously as legitimate students,' she asserts.¹⁹ Male students would refuse to crew for her and the other female students on her course; the men hid equipment and 'kept asking us to make sandwiches for them or crew for them in their student films.'²⁰ She also became 'disillusioned' by the fact that, even in the anti-war movement, many of her male friends' belief in 'love, peace and equality' did not 'extend to women.'²¹ Such experiences led her to join other 'disgruntled' women and form a reading group where they could study early feminist writers.²² Santa Monica, where she had moved, and nearby Venice, were hives of feminist activity at this time. She recalls, for example, one group of local women producing an independent publication about issues such as single parenting and childcare.²³ She was also aware of the emerging national women's liberation movement and events such as the Miss America demonstration in Atlantic City in 1968.

Beh channeled her nascent feminism into her film work by writing scripts about women's lives and producing a short called *The Stripper* (fig. 3). In this fifty-second film, a spotlight reveals the legs of a woman as she performs a striptease over a series of jump cuts. Feather boas, silky dresses, a string of pearls and other garments fall to the floor, accompanied by the sound of applause, whistling, police sirens, cash registers and a big band version of jazz standard 'I Cried for You.' With the frame rate slightly slowed, the feathers and fabrics glide to the ground; eventually this includes a mannequin's arms and bare-breasted torso. As the female vocalist sings the final verse, the body appears to crumble entirely, its legs breaking in half and tumbling to the floor along with a flurry of white feathers. Made for a class assignment, Beh conceived of the film as 'a metaphor for a woman's situation in the world' after spotting a pair of shoes in a thrift store:

¹⁸ Nichols, interview.

¹⁹ Beh, interview.

²⁰ Beh, email to author, 13 May 2012.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*

²³ Beh, interview.

The film professor wanted us to make a 60 second commercial. I told him I did not want to do a commercial. So he told me he did not care what I did as long as I got my message out in 60 seconds. That afternoon in Santa Monica as I was shopping in a small second hand store I saw this pair of shoes made of coral covered with gold glitter and adorned with colorful rhinestones. I thought: 'What woman wore these shoes?'

Shot on 35mm in 'as luscious a color as possible,' *The Stripper* was screened at the San Francisco Film Festival in 1972 alongside *Solaris* (Andrei Tarkovsky, 1972).²⁴

That same year, Beh was offered an American Film Institute directors' grant to make a thirty-minute film. Her plan was to make a short film based on a story by Doris Lessing about 'two aging beauty queens in conversation.' 'It didn't look like it was something that was good for film as a medium,' she remembers, 'but I saw it in very filmic terms.'²⁵ She was given the green light, but, she alleges, when she requested the money, the male administrator in charge of dispensing the funds would not release it unless she 'spent a weekend with him.'²⁶ Ultimately, she never received her grant, and sued the American Film Institute for \$311,000 on the grounds of sexual discrimination.²⁷ With the help of a recent law graduate from her women's group, Beh eventually settled the case for \$15,000.²⁸

With her aspirations to become a director frustrated by both institutional and everyday sexism, Beh decided to approach a local feminist newspaper, *Everywoman*, hoping to collaborate on a special issue about women and film. She invited friends from her women's group and UCLA to contribute articles and was put in touch with *Everywoman's* resident film critic: Sandra Salyer (fig. 4). Salyer recalls thinking at the time, that 'with our mutual passions and concerns and ideas and skills (whatever they were worth!), [...] we should [...] not just do a special issue of *Everywoman* but *create* a magazine.'²⁹ It also soon became apparent to Beh that they had 'enough material to make [...] our own magazine, and maybe have more than one issue!'³⁰

²⁴ Beh, email to author, 18 May 2017. Beh lost her copy of the film after lending it to an Australian women's film collective in the 1970s; she recovered it in 2017 after a print was discovered at Queen's University in Canada.

²⁵ Beh, interview.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid; Michael Goodwin, 'The Castle on the Hill,' *Take One* 6, no. 4 (March 1978), 19.

²⁸ Beh, email to author, 28 May 2017. She estimates that the suit was settled between 1975-76. Email to author, 21 January 2018.

²⁹ Sandra Salyer, interview with author, Montclair, CA, 11 October 2013.

³⁰ Beh, interview.

Women & Film No. 1

Women & Film was first published out of 2802 Arizona Avenue, Beh's small cottage in Santa Monica, in the midst of Los Angeles' counterculture (fig. 5). What had originally been planned as a special issue of *Everywoman* evolved into a new, 38-page magazine, priced at 75 cents (fig. 6). The militant feminism embodied by the image on *Women & Film*'s back cover, and the iconoclasm symbolized by the tear on its front, are carried over onto the pages of the magazine. Its creators were steeped in the alternative press, which had exploded during the previous decade. The 'Offset Revolution' made printing more accessible and affordable, enabling the proliferation of these papers.³¹ The ethos of this movement was to 'do-it-yourself' and break with the stylistic conventions of mainstream journalism and traditional reporting. Many publications – *The LA Free Press* (1964-78), *The Berkeley Barb* (1965-80), *The San Francisco Oracle* (1966-68) – were based in California, also home to several new feminist, lesbian and gay liberation papers: *The Ladder* (1960-72), *Tooth and Nail* (1969-72), *It Ain't Me Babe* (1970-71), *Goodbye to All That* (1970-73), and *Lesbian Tide* (1971-80). 'Even when they were barely solvent,' observes John McMillian, 'the papers were often highly visible in their communities. They lined the shelves of headshops and off beat bookstores, and street vendors sold them in hip stores or at public gatherings.'³²

A key aspect of this DIY culture was to make such knowledge accessible to all; *Amazon Quarterly*, a lesbian-feminist magazine published concurrently with *Women & Film*, shared the intricacies of this process for its readers in a three-part series. The guide covers the numerous stages, from typesetting copy, planning and 'pasting up' layouts, using Letraset lettering to create headlines, proofing and making corrections – all done by hand – to printing, binding and distribution.³³ Another publisher describes this painstaking process as follows:

The first step was to write the copy with an electric typewriter, manually correcting all typos and other errors. The copy and photos were pasted up and then sent out to be burned onto offset plates. The plates were put on a printing press in the office that produced the pages individually, often breaking down along the way. Then the pages had to be manually collated and stapled.³⁴

³¹ Russell, James W., 'The Origins of *New Left Notes*,' *Next Left Notes* website, 2 March 2011, <http://antiauthoritarian.net/NLN/?p=900> (28.05.2012).

³² John McMillian, *Smoking Typewriters: The Sixties Underground Press and the Rise of Alternative Media in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 7.

³³ Laurel [pseud], 'How to Make a Magazine,' *Amazon Quarterly* 2, no. 3 (March 1974), 66-70; 2, no. 4 (July 1974), 63-66; and 3, no. 1 (November 1974), 71-72, reprinted in *Power to the People: The Graphic Design of the Radical Press and the Rise of the Counter-Culture, 1964-1974*, ed. Geoff Kaplan (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), 8-19.

³⁴ Russell, 'The Origins of *New Left Notes*.'

Beh recalls: 'the magazine looked very homemade with the use of rubber stamps [...]. It certainly was pre-computer days. It was literally made in the living room and kitchen!'³⁵ Nicole Morriset, Beh's roommate, oversaw layout and graphic design, while Salyer, an experienced typist, typeset articles on a mimeograph with the layouts planned and paste-ups done on a large wooden-block-cum-coffee-table in Beh's apartment.³⁶ Chuck Kleinhans, a contributor and, later, founder of *Jump Cut*, also comments that 'the funky DIY look of the first issues of *Women & Film* was part of the ethos: definitely *not* an academic publication.'³⁷ Aesthetically, it combined the visual style of a countercultural publication with more mainstream touches. It maintained its ties to the underground press through its typesetting and design. However, the editors chose not to use the cheapest, unbound, folio format used by *Everywoman* or *Jump Cut*. Instead, its pages were trimmed and saddle-stitch bound by a professional printing company, and its cover specially coated.

Many radical publications were run by groups or collectives and relied on the labour of a dedicated handful of volunteers. The articles they published were sometimes written collectively, and frequently authored anonymously or under a pseudonym. *Women & Film's* contributors were unpaid, with printing and other costs financed by Beh.³⁸ Unlike many of its countercultural forerunners, the magazine credited authors, with their full names almost always printed.³⁹ But a trait the magazine did share with many of its sixties predecessors was its collaborative operation: Beh and Salyer were its editors, but they acknowledge much help from Nichols and Salyer's then boyfriend Mike Shedlin, as well as Morriset. As Salyer recalls, in the magazine's early days, she, Morriset and Beh would 'meet regularly when most articles were in final form for the next issue to discuss design, features, covers, paper stock, costs.'⁴⁰ The debut editorial states 'structurally, we differ from the staff organization of other film magazines. We do not function in the usual editor/staff contributor relationship. Everyone participates in manuscript meetings [...] decisions are by consensus.' But they aspired beyond this, suggesting that 'hopefully a collective

³⁵ Beh, email to author, 16 June 2012.

³⁶ Salyer, interview; Nichols, email to author, 4 October 2011.

³⁷ Chuck Kleinhans, email to author, 16 February 2012.

³⁸ Beh, email to author, 4 September 2013.

³⁹ The editorials are an obvious exception, although Beh and Salyer are named co-editors in the masthead. Others include: 'Donnie,' a contributor to issue 2 and double issue 3-4; 'Sashi' (3-4); and the Madison Women's Media Collective and the Women in Media Collective (both 5-6). No other editorial personnel are listed in issue one, however, special thanks are extended to Morriset, Nichols, filmmaker Donna Deitch (*Deserts Hearts*, 1985), Aida Pavletich, Bill Lopez, Derek van Pelt, and *Everywoman*. Unlike later issues, issue 1 does not contain a section about its contributors.

⁴⁰ Salyer, email to author, 15 February 2013.

will emerge.⁴¹ As we shall see later in this thesis, the challenges of collective working practices would prove a formidable obstacle for the magazine, its founders, and its later contributors, with conflicts over the implementation of collective organizing leading to the resignation of four contributing editors (Janet Bergstrom, Sandy Flitterman, Elisabeth Lyons and Constance Penley). Alongside the financial burden of independent publishing and burnout on the part of overworked and mostly unpaid staff, the departure of these four women, who founded *Camera Obscura* magazine in 1975, played a significant role in the magazine's demise. This will be examined in more detail in Chapter V.

The first issue of *Women & Film* had a print run of 5,000, although the first batch was faulty and had to be discarded.⁴² With no formal distribution network, the magazine had to be circulated entirely by its editors.⁴³ Copies were delivered to bookstores and newsstands around the San Fernando Valley, sometimes by Beh in her battered, blue VW van.⁴⁴ In a radio interview with the artist Judy Chicago in early 1972, Beh lists several LA bookstores that stock the magazine, including Larry Edmund, Papa Bach, Midnight Special and Everywoman, as well as newsstands.⁴⁵ Beh recalls that one seller at a popular newsstand on Hollywood Boulevard was initially reluctant to stock the magazine due to its lack of 'tits and ass,' despite its promising title. According to Beh, this seller called later that same day to order more copies, as he sold out almost immediately.⁴⁶

Aside from its editorial, issue one features nine individual articles (see Appendix A). Three are by men: an interview with a member of San Francisco Newsreel, Judy Smith, by Mitch Tuckman, and 'Confronting the Consciousness Industry: Two Analyses of Women's Role in the Media,' made up of two separate but conceptually linked articles by Irwin Silber and Bill Nichols. During his time in New York, Nichols had come across the work of the Leftist campaigner, then cultural editor for the radical weekly newspaper, the *Guardian*, where he wrote most of the publication's film reviews.⁴⁷ As a

⁴¹ Editors, 'Overview,' *Women & Film* 1 (1972), 6.

⁴² Beh, interview by Judy Chicago, Pacifica Radio, broadcast 3 February 1972, https://archive.org/details/pacifica_radio_archives-BC0612, (02.02.2018). As the broadcast date of this interview suggest, the magazine was likely first published in late January.

⁴³ Beh, email to author, 16 June 2012.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ Beh, interview by Judy Chicago.

⁴⁶ Beh, interview with author.

⁴⁷ Nichols, interview. In 1950, Silber founded and edited the folk music magazine *Sing Out!*, where he promoted singers such as Woody Guthrie and Joan Baez, and supported the civil rights and student movements. He was cultural editor at the *Guardian* from 1968. William Grimes, 'Irwin Silber, Champion of the Folk Music Revival, Dies at 84,' *New York Times* online, 11 September 2010, http://www.nytimes.com/2010/09/11/arts/music/11silber.html?_r=0

champion of folk and protest music, Silber argued for a revolutionary culture to support a revolutionary politics. In his polemic 'USA: the Alienation of Culture,' written for the journal *Tricontinental*, he proclaimed:

There is a new art in the United States today [...]. It is an art produced by a generation grown conscious of the hypocrisy of the "American dream." [...] It is the theatre of [Edward] Albee and the music of Bob Dylan. It is the poetry of Alan Ginsberg [sic] and the painting of Andy Warhol. It is the art of the underground.⁴⁸

Nichols invited Silber to contribute to *Women & Film's* first issue. Sadly, a full discussion of these two texts is beyond the scope of this chapter, but their contributions offer meditations on the relationship between politics and art, and the possibility for a radical feminist film praxis. A review section in the final pages includes pieces on four separate films: *Three Lives* (Women's Liberation Cinema, 1971); *Dirty Mary* (aka *La fiancée du pirate*, Nelly Kaplan, 1969); *Les stances à Sophie* (Moshe Mizrahi, 1970); and *Vivre sa vie*. Most of these articles can be categorized as 'images of women criticism,' a form of feminist critique that emphasizes gendered characterization, including women (and men's) respective roles in a film's narrative (discussed more fully in Chapter IV). This eclectic mix of articles was the result of its founders' rationale; as Beh remembers, 'my intention was to have a large enough umbrella to invite all types of women's writings on film and media and television [...]. I didn't want to leave anybody out.'⁴⁹

Women & Film's debut editorial

Women & Film's debut editorial acts as a mission statement for the magazine, outlining its intentions to challenge the male-dominated status quo in film and setting the critical and political tone for their engagement with capitalist culture, film as a medium, and patriarchal society. The unsigned piece is written in first personal plural. The editors state they are 'non-professionals who dare to put a magazine together because there is a real need for an arena for debate and presentation of views especially from a feminist-marxist-anarchist direction.'⁵⁰ Perhaps surprisingly, the authors do not cite any feminist texts and anarchism is only briefly mentioned by Salyer in her own writing (see the next chapter). The absence of references to feminist theory is

(19.02.2013); Irwin Silber: *Writer, Editor, Activist*, website,

<http://www.irwinsilber.com/IrwinSilber/Welcome.html> (19.02.2013).

⁴⁸ Silber, 'USA: The Alienation of Culture,' *Tricontinental* 10, no. 8 (1969), 118.

⁴⁹ Beh, interview.

⁵⁰ Editors, 'Overview,' 6.

testament to Beh and Salyer's immersion in leftist political thought but also perhaps down to the lack of specifically feminist analyses of cinema. Instead, the editorial articulates a feminist critique of commercial cinema, particularly Hollywood, informed by the Marxism of Herbert Marcuse, Jean-Luc Godard and the Marxist-Leninism of Third World film theorists Solanas and Getino.

Once again, the ferocity of the magazine's stance is not only articulated by the editorial's militant language; it is visually emphasized by the continuing motif of rips and tears, with torn reproductions of *Cinema* magazine (Los Angeles, 1962-1976) covers decorating the pages like the marginalia of an illuminated manuscript (fig. 7). These covers show actresses such as Ursula Andress, Nathalie Wood, Bridget Bardot and Sophia Loren in extreme close-up or in various states of undress and help to illustrate the critique expressed in the accompanying text: that woman's typical role on screen is restricted to that of 'movie glamour queen' and sex object.⁵¹ This tearing motif is of course carried over from the magazine's cover and further illustrates the magazine's promise to tear into sexist film culture.

The editorial opens by describing the global hegemony enjoyed by American film culture. 'Give me the cinema and I'll rule the world': this quotation, attributed to Stalin, marks the beginning of the editorial's 'Overview' section and a discussion of the pervasive influence of both Hollywood film and its production model, the Hollywood studio system, or what the authors refer to as simply 'System Cinema.'⁵² The American studio system emerged in the late 1910s and came to dominate the industry as an organizational model, at home as well as abroad.⁵³ The 1930s and 1940s saw the 'golden age' of this set-up, when many studios controlled the production, distribution and often the exhibition of their films, a system known as vertical integration. For the authors, the legacy of Hollywood's 'movie barons' – Zukor, Fox, Mayer, Laemmle, Goldwyn and the Warner Brothers all get a mention – includes not only economic exploitation and 'destructively competitive patterns in the film industry' but also the manufacture of an 'oppressive ideology.'⁵⁴ During Hollywood's golden age, the studios

⁵¹ *Cinema* often accompanied its feature articles and interviews with photo shoots of female stars in various states of undress. See 'The Pagan Bardot' illustrated by Guy Deel in *Cinema* 1, no. 1 (1963), 17-21; 'Lola Bright... First A Woman,' and 'Natalie Strips...Sophie Explodes' in *Cinema* 1, no. 3 (1963), 16-22 and 7-9; 'Beauty' by J.R. Silke, featuring Jackie Lane, *Cinema* 2, no. 3 (1964), 12-14.

⁵² Editors, 'Overview,' 3.

⁵³ See Schatz, *The Genius of the System*, David Bordwell, Janet Staiger and Kristin Thompson, *The Classical Hollywood Cinema* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 2006), and Douglas Gomery, *The Hollywood Studio System: A History* (London: BFI, 2005).

⁵⁴ Editors, 'Overview,' 3. They cite 'the Hollywood top echelon': Adolph Zukor, founder of Paramount Pictures; Carl Laemmle (presumably senior), founder of Universal Pictures (1912); Fox referring to both William Fox, founder of Fox Film Corporation in 1915 and Twentieth

developed cost-efficient, standardized production methods, and often, standardized products, in the interests of profit maximization. The Fordist principles of mass production that shaped this process unsurprisingly lead its critics to comparisons between Hollywood and mass production. Here the editors join the long line of critics of Hollywood's capitalist nature. They later refer to Hollywood as 'a dream machine,' a term that evokes an earlier generation of commentators, specifically Hortense Powdermaker's *Hollywood, The Dream Factory: An Anthropologist Looks at the Movie-makers* (1950).

However, the authors' mistrust of Hollywood can be more closely linked with the work of critical theorists and New Left writers of the late 1950s and 1960s. In the editorial's indictment, the Hollywood mode of production 'viciously generates enormous surplus value off the labor and talents of thousands of workers with an inherent hierarchy of exploitation according to education, color, and sex – no different from the Detroit assembly lines.'⁵⁵ Moreover, 'whatever is peculiar to American film,' the editors venture, 'is easily transplanted (where there is the same pattern of exploitation and monopoly film conglomerates) in other countries for local audiences.'⁵⁶ Their conclusion: 'Hollywood rules the world.'

Herbert Marcuse

In the editors' eyes, not only are film workers exploited by the studio system, its consumers are also manipulated. The American film industry, together with those in other capitalist nations, is accused of 'deform[ing] peoples everywhere forcing them to be passive consumers of an alienating ideology but not creators of their own ideology.'⁵⁷ They argue that, once excluded from the production model, women, children, and people of colour are subject to 'derogatory and stereotyped' representations.⁵⁸ They decry the hypocrisy of censorship boards and 'guardians of public morality,' 'diligent over maintaining public "morality and decency" and System safety' but failing to question the oppressive stereotypes of the disenfranchised.⁵⁹ As the editors reveal, their thinking is informed by the work of Marxist critical theorist

Century Fox (created in 1935); the Warner brothers, founders of Warner Bros. Pictures (1918) and at that time, Warner Brothers – Seven Arts; Goldwyn, referring to Goldwyn pictures founded by Samuel Goldfish (originally Gelbfisz), Archibald and Edward Selwyn in 1916; Louis B. Mayer of Metro-Goldwyn-Meyer (1924) and its founder Marcus Loew.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid, 3-4.

⁵⁹ Ibid, 4.

Herbert Marcuse. They quote the following passage from *One-Dimensional Man* (1964), Marcuse's examination of advanced industrial capitalism and cultural production:

Institutionalized desublimation thus appears to be an aspect of the "conquest of transcendence" achieved by the one-dimensional society. Just as this society tends to reduce, and even absorb opposition (the qualitative difference!) in the realm of politics and higher culture, so it does in the instinctual sphere. The result is the atrophy of the mental organs for grasping the contradictions and the alternatives and, in the one remaining dimension of technological rationality, the Happy Consciousness comes to prevail.⁶⁰

Institutionalized desublimation is Marcuse's reformulation of 'sublimation,' the process identified by Freud whereby unconscious drives are translated into socially acceptable forms of behaviour. Marcuse argues that previously such sublimation was required by repressive or intolerant societies, whereas in advanced industrial society, permissive attitudes and liberal laws lead to *desublimation*. He posits that sublimation was at work in high culture of the past: 'always in contradiction with social reality' but enjoyed and enacted by a privileged few.⁶¹ Literature and fine art were 'essentially alienation, sustaining and protecting the contradiction – the unhappy consciousness of the divided world.'⁶² 'Artistic alienation,' he explains, 'is sublimation. It creates images of conditions which are irreconcilable with the established Reality Principle but which, as cultural images, become tolerable, even edifying and useful.'⁶³ However, Marcuse asserts, in contemporary society, there now exists a 'flattening out of the antagonism between culture and social reality through the obliteration of the oppositional, alien and transcendent elements in higher culture.'⁶⁴ Higher culture has become integrated into mass culture and thus, is now a commodity, an 'instrument of social cohesion.'⁶⁵ Marcuse sees advanced capitalist societies such as the United States actively 'reducing the sublimated realm in which the condition of man was represented, idealized and indicted.'⁶⁶ As a result, the products of artistic alienation are 'invalidated. Its [imagery's] incorporation into the kitchen, the office, the shop; its commercial release for business and fun is, in a sense, desublimation – replacing mediated by immediate gratification.'⁶⁷ This, he argues, is to the detriment of social dissent and the creation of revolutionary culture.⁶⁸ The editors thus employ this paradigm to support their

⁶⁰ Ibid, quoting Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man*, 82, original emphasis.

⁶¹ Marcuse, 60.

⁶² Ibid, 64; 66.

⁶³ Ibid, 75.

⁶⁴ Ibid, 60.

⁶⁵ Ibid, 61; 60.

⁶⁶ Ibid, 61.

⁶⁷ Ibid, 75.

⁶⁸ Editors, 'Overview,' 4. It may seem unhelpful to a contemporary reader that the editors provide little explanation of the quotation or Marcuse's term institutionalized desublimation.

argument that the products of a liberal Hollywood undermine opposition and reinforce one-dimensional thinking rather than bring about radical social change.

The editors also complain that ‘movies become a dangerous vehicle of false sentiments when people begin to live by movie standards, cite movie characters as exemplary figures, and adhere to movie values for definitions of what is good [or] bad.’⁶⁹ Los Angeles – ‘largely founded by Hollywood and lived according to its values’ – is the epitome of a city shaped by ‘movie values,’ with its actor-turned politician state governor, Ronald Reagan, first elected in 1967 and again in 1971. Movie standards also dictate rigid gender roles: the all-American, ‘super patriotic’ male, as played by Reagan in his films of the 1940s and 50s. This has significant implications for women, with icons such as Jean Harlow or Marilyn Monroe, and ‘the screen, supported by magazines, set[ting] up ideals impossible to imitate.’⁷⁰ But it is also harmful to the actors embodying these ideals, with the death of Monroe in 1962 seen as a prime example of this by some feminists.⁷¹ ‘A handful of [...] stars,’ the authors recount, ‘made it materially, but most were ultimately destroyed by the roles they had to play and perpetuate [...] child/woman, whore, bitch, wife, mother, [...] vamp, etc.’⁷²

These ideas are reflected not only in the torn covers of *Cinema* but also in the image at the editorial’s close. It shows the head and shoulders of a young woman situated in the lower quarter of the frame; the rest is taken up by a large advertisement for Triumph underwear featuring an illustration of a bra-clad woman, suggestively lifting her bra strap and seemingly pointing to her lips (fig. 8). The image is in fact from another Godard film, *Une femme mariée* (1964), which examines the objectifying effects of the superficial world of beauty advertising and fashion on Charlotte (Macha Méril), as she oscillates between her husband and her lover. The editorial also notes the complex intersections between race, class and gender, remarking on the pay discrepancies between the white women playing ‘men’s inferiors and stereotypes’ and ‘blacks, chicanos, Indians, Chinese, and Japanese playing niggers, chinks or gooks.’⁷³ Surprisingly, however, the editors do not develop these issues, despite their relevance to feminism. Instead they move on to a different, albeit connected, argument that links rigid gender roles to the psychological damage of spectators, asserting that ‘when the

Most likely, this testifies to the authors’ assumption that most of their readers would have been familiar with Marcuse’s work, given the popularity and impact of *One-Dimensional Man* (see my Introduction).

⁶⁹ Editors, ‘Overview,’ 4.

⁷⁰ *Ibid*, 4.

⁷¹ See Gloria Steinem, ‘Growing Up with Marilyn,’ *Ms.* (August 1972): 38.

⁷² Editors, ‘Overview,’ 4.

⁷³ *Ibid*, 4.

System movie image and System movie values are substitutes for real values, then schizophrenia, superficiality, perverted egocentricity, violence and other neuroses become rampant.’⁷⁴ The relationship between this psychoanalytic language and feminism is discussed in the following chapter.

Toward a Third Cinema

The first part of the editorial is followed by a subsection, entitled ‘About this Issue’; here, the battle lines are drawn for ‘the struggle on all fronts,’ specifically ‘the struggle with women’s image in film and women’s roles in the film industry.’⁷⁵ The editors identify potential obstacles: interference and deception by ‘the System and its accomplices dressed up as “progressives”’; the likelihood that they themselves will, at times, be their ‘own worst enemies’; and the fact that System cinema will undoubtedly produce its own ‘seeming[ly] “radical” or “women’s lib” films.’ They quote one of their contributors, Irwin Silber, from his earlier article ‘USA: The Alienation of Culture’ on the dangers of co-option:

In reality the area of ‘permitted protest’ is much greater than the system is willing to admit. This gives the artist the illusion that they are acting against the Establishment by going beyond certain narrow limits. They do not realize that even anti-system art can be absorbed by the system as both a break and necessary self-correction.⁷⁶

What is required then is a total critique of the current film industry and its products – the tearing down of the ‘old vicious structures’ – and the development of a new approach to filmmaking, encompassing new forms of production, distribution and consumption. Beh and Salyer call on women ‘to take charge over our minds bodies and image,’ and condemn the ‘presumptuous self-elected male interpreters who set the ground rules as to how women function or ought to function, how women think or ought to think.’⁷⁷

As Marxists interested in Third World struggles, Beh and Salyer look to the Third Cinema movement with its critique of mainstream, commercial Hollywood film and its promotion of alternative cinematic forms. They quote from the movement’s 1969 manifesto, ‘Toward a Third Cinema,’ by the Argentinean filmmakers Ferdinand Solanas and Octavio Getino:

⁷⁴ Ibid, 5.

⁷⁵ Ibid, 5.

⁷⁶ Silber, ‘USA: The Alienation of Culture,’ 112-20.

⁷⁷ Editors, ‘Overview,’ 5.

Revolution does not begin with the taking of political power from imperialism and the bourgeoisie but rather begins at the moment when the masses sense a need for change and their intellectual vanguards begin to study and carry out this change through activities on different fronts.⁷⁸

In 'Toward a Third Cinema,' Solanas and Getino identify three kinds of cinema: First Cinema, created by the oppressors or colonizers and modelled on the Hollywood production and distribution system; Second Cinema, represented by the auteur cinema, a step forward in that it challenges the cinematic language of First Cinema and attempts cultural decolonization; and Third Cinema, '*films that the System cannot assimilate and which are foreign to its needs, or [...] that directly and explicitly set out to fight the System.*'⁷⁹ They argue for a revolutionary cinema, made possible by a 'new historical situation': a worldwide liberation movement originating from Third World countries. As evidence, they point to the work being done by US Newsreel collectives, international student and New Left film groups, and the work of Chris Marker, Joris Ivens and Santiago Alvarez. The filmmakers declare that 'once the front has been determined [by the intellectual], his next task is to find *within that front* exactly what is the enemy stronghold and where and how he must deploy it.'⁸⁰

Solanas and Getino's call for the strategic study of colonial culture by 'intellectual vanguards' leading to the creation of a 'culture *of and for* the revolution' lends itself well to the argument for a feminist cultural critique. Taking up the militant language of the manifesto, the editors suggest there is no need to wait for the overthrow of patriarchy: instead, feminist creative and intellectual work can be created and used now as a weapon against women's oppression. For them, as for Solanas and Getino, cinema is the key terrain for resistance. *Women & Film's* editors list the following problems facing women:

- 1) A closed and sexist industry whose survival is precisely based on discrimination [...].
- 2) The persistently false image of women on the screen [...].

⁷⁸ Solanas and Getino, 1. First published in the Havana-based journal *Tricontinental* in 1969, established by the Organization for the Solidarity with the People of Asia, Africa and Latin America (OSPAAL) founded in 1966.

⁷⁹ Ibid, 4. Original emphasis. Their analysis, informed by the work of Franz Fanon on colonialism and culture, is specific to the situation in post-war South America, and an extension of the analysis undertaken in their film, *The Hour of the Furnaces* (1968). Made with the Ciné Liberation Group, the 208 minute-long-film is divided into two parts and numerous subchapters that dissect the social, political and economic structure of Latin America and its colonial history. It combines moving images and stills of political demonstrations, riots, wars, industry and everyday life, accompanied by music (drumming, opera, indigenous music), a didactic voice-over, and archive audio extracts. This is intercut with text quoting Latin American poets, philosophers such as Jean-Paul Sartre and Fanon, and revolutionary leaders, such as Che Guevara and Fidel Castro.

⁸⁰ Solanas and Getino, 2.

- 3) The persistence and consistency of the publicity department's packaging of women as sex objects [...].
- 4) The auteur theory which has evolved into male and masculine theory on all levels (e.g. p.216 of Andrew Sarris' *The American Cinema*) [...].
- 5) The process of System Cinema filmmaking itself, which is inhuman, involving an elitist hierarchy, destructive competition, and vicious internal politics.
- 6) The prejudice on the part of film departments in universities and film institutes in accepting women in the faculty or as production students.⁸¹

This multi-pronged attack is carried out in the broad range of approaches encompassed by the articles and other materials published in *Women & Film* 1.

As supporting evidence for item one, a statistical table featuring illustrations – what we might today call an ‘infographic’ – appears in the final pages of the magazine (fig. 9). It shows the membership figures of men and women in two major Hollywood labour unions established in the 1890s – the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE) and the Motion Picture Machine Operators (MPMO) – as well as those of the Screen Writers,’ Producers’ and Directors’ Guilds of America, most of which were founded during the 1930s.⁸² As the table makes clear, certain areas appear to be more hospitable to women than others: costume (58%), script supervision (66%), and, interestingly, cartoonists (49%) are roles where around half the membership is female, whereas those employed as grips, electricians, gaffers or projectionists are exclusively male (all at 0%). Very few women are numbered among photographers (0.4%), art directors (1%) and scenic and title artists (5%) and a small minority are listed as film technicians (19%) and publicists (15%). According to the membership figures related to the Guilds, 1% of directors, 2% of assistant directors, 12% of writers, and 3% producers are women. In Television production, women make up 8% of associate directors or stage managers.

These figures appear above an illustration of a woman in the process of cutting film, surrounded by branded food products such as Clorox and Wonder Bread, apparently cut and pasted from magazines. As the illustration hints, the dearth of female film professionals may be attributed to women's continued relegation to the domestic realm, signified by the various household products that litter the table on which the woman is trying to do her editing. The focus of the second and third items, the image of women on the screen, is the subject of several articles, particularly Christine Mohanna's 'A One-Sided Story: Women in the Movies' and Sharon Smith's

⁸¹ Editors, 'Overview,' 5-6.

⁸² No date or source is given for this data but I estimate it was collected between 1970-1972.

'The Image of Women in Film: Some Suggestions for Future Research,' both discussed in Chapter IV.

With its frequent ranking of directors, the auteur theory, as practiced by the critics of *Cahiers du cinéma* and later English-language magazines such as *Movie*, easily lent itself to the development of a canon of almost exclusively male filmmakers.⁸³ So it comes as no surprise that Beh and Salyer are particularly critical of auteur theory, singling out Andrew Sarris. Page 75 of the magazine features a reprinted page literally torn from his book, *The American Cinema: Directors and Directions* (New York: Dutton, 1968) to further illustrate their critique (fig. 10).⁸⁴ Sarris, the editors note, subsumes several women directors, including Leni Riefenstahl and Agnès Varda, within his entry on Ida Lupino, foregoing any in depth discussion of their respective films or their contributions to filmmaking. Moreover, 'even if the auteur theory should include an equal number of women directors,' they argue, 'it is still an oppressive theory, making the director a superstar as if film-making were a one man show.'⁸⁵ They urge women, as the victims of oppressive forms of representation, to 'initiate a form of film history and criticism that is relevant and just to females and males.' 'We cannot,' they conclude, 'afford to indulge in illusions of art for art's sake.'⁸⁶

Here, the editors take their lead from Solanas and Getino, proposing a 'People's Cinema' in opposition to System Cinema, 'where human beings are portrayed as human beings and not as servile caricatures. A cinema that is close to the masses who watch it.'⁸⁷ And as Solanas and Getino reason, a revolutionary cinema must reject the conventions of production and distribution imposed by the Hollywood movie model as defined by American capitalist and imperialist ideology. The editors instead espouse collective filmmaking like that of the Newsreel groups, with the added goal of evading a 'sexist-elitist hierarchy.'⁸⁸ The authors sign off by declaring their support of 'the liberation of workers, blacks, third world people and children' but by also underlining the centrality of women's liberation to a successful revolution: 'No movement today is sufficiently radical unless women's liberation is on the top list of priorities – for under every oppressed male/colored/worker there usually lies a woman.'⁸⁹

⁸³ Barry Keith Grant, 'Introduction' to *Auteurs and Authorship: A Film Reader*, ed. Grant (Oxford: Blackwell, 2008), 3.

⁸⁴ Editors, 'Overview,' 5.

⁸⁵ *Ibid*, 5-6.

⁸⁶ *Ibid*, 6.

⁸⁷ *Ibid*, 6.

⁸⁸ *Ibid*, 6, my emphasis.

⁸⁹ *Ibid*, 6.

Yet despite the stated significance of women's liberation to their outlook, the writings of male thinkers appear to dominate the worldview articulated by Beh and Salyer in this editorial. Particularly surprising is the lack of engagement with their feminist contemporaries writing in left-leaning journals, such as Ruth McCormick's writing on feminist documentaries in *Cineaste* or Regina Cornwell on avant-garde women filmmakers like Germaine Dulac, Maya Deren and Joyce Wieland (published in *Film Library Quarterly* and *Artforum* respectively).⁹⁰ This testifies to the overriding influence of New Left and Third World Liberation political theory on both editors, but it also points to their pioneering position in writing about women and film at this time, and the magazine's unique status as – for a time – the only forum for the exclusive discussion of feminism and film in print. Most of the articles that deal with women and cinema published in this early period appeared just before or at the same time as *Women & Film's* first issue: McCormick and Cornwell's articles appeared between 1971-1972 for instance. This strengthens the case for viewing the magazine as a stepping stone in the development of feminist film criticism, bridging the gap between the political Left and activism of women's liberation with the feminist film theory of the mid-1970s and beyond. As Bill Nichols, later editor of one of the earliest anthologies of film theory and criticism, *Movies and Methods* (1976), recalls

There was little feminist film theory or criticism of any kind, little film theory or criticism of any kind [at that time]. UCLA's holdings in film studies was probably one good-sized stack in the library rather than a mini-library of its own as it is now.⁹¹

Nonetheless, the magazine's founding and its initial outlook were clearly instigated by experiences of casual and institutional sexism that the women's liberation movement recast as forms of patriarchal oppression. Indisputably, a feminist intent to question, challenge and disrupt the patriarchal status quo on and off screen motivates *Women & Film*; one that had to make do with the tools available at the time. In the following section, I examine how Siew-Hwa Beh engages with the works of male artists and thinkers – namely Godard – in concert (finally) with another woman critic of the period, and how she develops this into her own feminist critique of cinema.

⁹⁰ McCormick was an editorial associate at *Cineaste* and a feminist activist with the Women's Bail Fund, an organization founded in 1970 to fundraise for women political prisoners. 'Review: Woman's Film,' *Cineaste* 4, no. 3 (Winter 1971): 40-41; 'Women's Liberation Cinema,' *Cineaste* 5, no. 2 (Spring 1972): 1-7. Cornwell was an art and film critic; "'True Patriot Love": The Films of Joyce Wieland,' *Artforum* 10, no. 1 (September 1971): 36-40; 'Maya Deren and Germaine Dulac: Activists of the Avant-Garde,' *Film Library Quarterly* 5, no. 1 (Winter 1971/72): 29-38.

⁹¹ Nichols, email to author, 2 February 2013.

Cinema of Revolution: Siew-Hwa Beh's writing for *Women & Film's* first

issue

In the late 1960s, Beh started attending a reading group in Los Angeles called the Long March where she began reading Marxist theory, including the works of Mao Tse-tung. This literature, banned in her former home of Malaysia, now 'filled the void of disillusionment' she and others around her were experiencing in response to the bloodshed in Vietnam and America's seemingly rampant cultural imperialism.⁹² Beh's then partner, Nichols, had also become interested in Marxism through his involvement in the anti-war movement, as a conscientious objector, and through his participation in Newsreel's San Francisco group.⁹³

Beh and Nichols' experiences were not unique; during the late 1960s, many young radicals were becoming increasingly disillusioned, not only with American politics and society, but also with existing political campaigns for change. The failure of traditional processes to bring about significant transformations in America led a large contingent of its politicized youth to seek more effective methods for challenging the status quo. In the wake of Malcolm X's assassination in 1965, the civil rights movement had become increasingly militant; the advent of Black Power meant that more and more activists were weighing up the previous strategy of non-violence against more direct, confrontational forms of engagement. It was becoming apparent to many in the New Left and anti-war movement that conventional protest was proving ineffective in bringing about real change, let alone revolution.

Many took inspiration from uprisings in Vietnam, Cuba, China and parts of Latin America, a phenomenon soon recognized as an international, Third World-driven movement against Western imperialism. And many joined the hundreds of reading groups being set up by other activists and students dedicated to Marxism, Marxist-Leninism and other forms of radical politics set up on campuses and community centres across the United States.⁹⁴ Here they studied the works of Marx, Friedrich Engels and V. I. Lenin, as well as living leaders such as Che Guevara, Ho Chi Minh, Fidel Castro and Mao.⁹⁵ Leninism in particular, with its emphasis on colonial imperialism, the

⁹² Beh, email to author, 13 May 2012. She remarks that, in retrospect, 'We did romanticize both, especially Maoism. Somehow we never got to read [about] the [...] extremism of Communism and Maoist practices!'

⁹³ Nichols, email to author, 2 February 2013.

⁹⁴ Max Elbaum, *Revolution in the Air: Sixties Radicals Turn to Lenin, Mao and Che* (London: Verso, 2002), 93.

⁹⁵ *Ibid*, 93.

need for solidarity among oppressed peoples and the necessity of armed struggle, appeared to address most directly the contemporary political situation.⁹⁶ The Leninist doctrine put forward by the Chinese Communist Party during the Cultural Revolution (1966-76) provided an appealing alternative to old-school Soviet communism. According to historian Max Elbaum, its emphasis on 'moral and ideological transformation' over economic reform was attractive to American radicals 'rebelling against alienation and consumerism.'⁹⁷ China's support of Vietnam in the face of US military intervention was also key.

Thanks to China's prolific Foreign Language Press, Mao's *Quotations* and his other writings, as well as those by other key Marxists, were cheaply available in bookstores on most campuses. These works also found their way on the reading lists of both radical 'free universities' and some new courses in the academy.⁹⁸ According to historians Isserman and Kazin, radicals on the West Coast could often be seen carrying the red plastic bound copy of Mao-Tse Tung's *Little Red Book* in their hip pockets during the latter half of the decade.⁹⁹ Maoism also had an important influence on black nationalist ideology; Bill V. Mullen writes that the book 'provided a recruitment tool [...] formatted so as to appear ready-made to the innumerable challenges facing new cadre: building a party, party discipline, [...] advancing the class struggle, fighting sexism.'¹⁰⁰

Thus, from the late 1960s onwards, a more militant, revolutionary Marxism became an influential political force among activists. Elbaum states that 'a version of Leninism identified with Third World movements – especially the Chinese, Cuban and Vietnamese Communist Parties – gained the largest following.'¹⁰¹ As he recounts, disillusionment with US foreign policy led leftist critics to examine American interference, performed covertly through the CIA, in other foreign conflicts, usually on behalf of US corporate interests. From a Marxist perspective, such investigations pointed to the 'economic imperatives of capitalism,' an analysis that paved the way for American radicals' re-evaluation of Marxist-Leninism, with its emphasis on capitalist

⁹⁶ Ibid, 43.

⁹⁷ Ibid, 45.

⁹⁸ Ibid, 62; 62-63.

⁹⁹ Isserman and Kazin, 185-186.

¹⁰⁰ Bill V. Mullen, 'By the Book: *Quotations from Chairman Mao* and Afro-Asian Radicalism,' 1966-1975,' *Mao's Little Red Book: A Global History*, ed. Alexander C. Cook, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 246. In 1967, Black Panther founders Bobby Seale and Huey Newton reportedly bought sixty copies of Mao's *Little Red Book*, also known as *Quotations from Chairman Mao*, from San Francisco's Chinatown to sell them to Berkeley students to raise funds for weapons. Mullen, 245-246.

¹⁰¹ Elbaum, 41.

imperialism.¹⁰² Large organizations such as the Progressive Labor Party (PLP) based in New York, local chapters of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), the Black Panther Party (BPP), the Bay Area Revolutionary Union (BARU), and nationalist groups like Wei Min She in San Francisco and the East Wind Collective in Los Angeles, were central to the promotion of Marxism-Leninism as well as 'Mao Tse-tung Thought' to young activists. Newspapers and journals were also key in disseminating ideas and facilitating debate. The Tricontinental Congress in Cuba in January 1966, saw the formation of the Organization of Solidarity with the People of Asia, Africa and Latin America (OSPAAL) and with it, the publication of its magazine *Tricontinental*. In the US, the *Monthly Review* and *The Guardian* played a major role in the promotion of Marxism-Leninism and Third World Marxism.¹⁰³ Film and filmmaking also played an important role in Third World liberation ideology. Mullen argues that for young activists, Mao's ideas of marrying artistic practice with social change, such as the 1942 'Talks on the Yan'an Forum on Literature and Art,' were particularly influential. Mao had declared that 'revolutionary culture' was an important weapon for mobilizing the masses and 'prepar[ing] the ground ideologically before the revolution.'¹⁰⁴ One Asian-American group in San Francisco's Chinatown, Leways, ran screenings of films about Third World liberation movements alongside its Little Red Book reading group.¹⁰⁵

As this brief discussion of her political influences and activities indicate, Beh's initial perspective was informed by the revolutionary Marxism espoused by Black Power and Third World Liberation movements, particularly Maoism. While her invocation of so many male critics may seem surprising, she was not alone in finding inspiration from the largely male scholarship of Marxism. What's more, Third World Marxism's dissection of American imperialism and racial oppression must have seemed particularly relevant to Beh as a Malaysian immigrant in the US. But its relevance to feminism is also hinted at by the uncredited and cropped reproduction of Salvador Dalí and Philippe Halsman's photomontage *Portrait of Marilyn Monroe as Chairman Mao* (1952) that appears in *Women & Film* (fig. 11).¹⁰⁶ This image, in which the actress's face

¹⁰² Ibid, 43.

¹⁰³ Ibid, 60-62.

¹⁰⁴ Mao Tse-tung, 'Culture and Art,' *Quotations from Mao Tse Tung* (1966), Marxists Internet Archive website, <https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/works/red-book/ch32> (30.07.2014).

¹⁰⁵ Mullen, 248. In its later incarnation as the Red Guard Party, the group collaborated with San Francisco Newsreel to organize screenings during the early 1970s. Mullen, 250.

¹⁰⁶ Philippe Halsman (1906-1979) was a Russian-born American photographer and frequent collaborator of the Spanish surrealist artist Salvador Dalí (1904-1989) during the 1940s-50s. The image had appeared on the cover of French *Vogue* (December 1971 - January 1972) guest-edited by Dalí and this might be *Women & Film*'s source. This image and Godard's text appear as a two-page spread bracketed within the section 'Confronting the Consciousness Industry: Two

appears to morph into the Chinese leader's, alerts us not only to the importance of women's images to the magazine, but also to the influence of Leftist thought of the 1970s, and of Mao's brand of Marxist-Leninism in particular, on the feminist theory of the period.

Feminism and Mao: Beh on The Red Detachment of Women (1970)

Beh's first solo article for the magazine focuses on *The Red Detachment of Women* (Jie Fu and Wenzhan Pan, 1970), a filmed performance of a Chinese ballet based on Jin Xie's 1961 film of the same name.¹⁰⁷ This short piece combines Beh's interest in Maoism and the art of the Chinese Cultural Revolution with her knowledge of dance. She highlights the differences between Chinese ballet techniques seen in the film with European forms, suggesting their political implications for women's bodies. Beh was not unique in considering dance a potent medium for feminist art. Several influential women filmmakers of the era drew on their training as dancers to experiment with narrative form and characterization. Maya Deren (1917-1961) began her career as a dancer with Katherine Dunham before her experiments with film between 1940-50. She maintained an interest in marrying the two mediums with films such as *A Study for Choreography for the Camera* (1945). Later, Yvonne Rainer translated the experimental dance philosophy that she had developed at New York's Judson Theatre in the 1960s to the screen in her film *Lives of Performers*, first screened in New York in 1972. By the end of the 1970s, the British filmmaker Sally Potter would also deconstruct the gestural language of ballet in her short film *Thriller* (1979) and apply dance as a Brechtian device in her 1983 feature *The Gold Diggers*.¹⁰⁸

In *The Red Detachment of Women*, set during the Second Revolutionary Civil War of 1927-1937, Wu Qionghua, an orphaned young woman, escapes from the cruel landlord and slave-owner Nan Pa-Tien, with the help of a stranger. Once free, she seeks out an all-female division of the Red Army, rumoured to exist in the mountains. She soon discovers that the stranger who liberated her was in fact the unit's party secretary, Hong Changqing, in disguise. Together, the detachment wage a guerrilla war against the despotic Nan Pa-Tien, eventually defeating him and liberating the village.

Analyses of Women's Role in the Media,' by Irwin Silber and Bill Nichols, *Women & Film 1* (1972): 34-42.

¹⁰⁷ The story itself originates from a 1958 novel by Liang Xi.

¹⁰⁸ In *Thriller*, fragments from various performances of Puccini's *La Bohème* are rearranged and reenacted in order to question the heroine Mimi's role. Rose English, playing a version of Mimi, is repeatedly shown frozen in balletic poses being lifted by male actors, a device which highlights her entrapment within the domain of feminine spectacle and exclusion from action and autonomy.

Becoming a full member of the Chinese Communist Party, Wu Qionghua takes command of the victorious unit, replacing the martyred Hong Changqing. Despite the centrality of Wu's personal journey, the victory is down to the unit itself. Collective action must take precedence over personal acts of heroism.

Beh wrote her article after seeing the film in 1971, possibly at the San Francisco International Film Festival, and screening notes from the US-China Friendship Association are reprinted as an introduction to her piece. This is followed by a quotation from Mao:

In the world today all culture, all literature and art belong to definite classes and are geared to definite political lines. There is in fact no such thing as art for art's sake, art that stands above classes or art that is detached from or independent from politics.¹⁰⁹

No further reference is given in the original, save its author, but the passage appears in Mao's *Quotations*. It originates from his Yan'an Forum on Literature and Art, mentioned above, in which he spelt out his views on the functions of art for socialist reform. Beh's invocation of Mao here can be related back to earlier references to a 'People's Cinema' in her and Salyer's editorial. She ventures that the film has particular relevance to the women's movement thanks to its 'combination of feminism and class analysis.'¹¹⁰ She points to the feminist potential of communist China, then recognized by many as being significantly progressive in regards to gender equality, by giving women a role in the military and in helping to dismantle the class structure. In *Quotations*, Mao writes

In order to build a great socialist society it is of the utmost importance to arouse the broad masses of women to join in productive activity. Men and women must receive equal pay for equal work in production. Genuine equality between the sexes can only be realized in the process of the socialist transformation of society as a whole.¹¹¹

As Beh remarks, 'China, North Vietnam [and] North Korea are revolutionary in recognizing women's equality.'¹¹² Mao is also considered an influential source in the development of consciousness-raising as theorized by Kathie Sarachild, and informed the political perspective of feminist groups such as Boston's Cell 16, who published the journal *No More Fun and Games*.¹¹³ Feminists were certainly interested in women's participation in socialist countries; in late 1970, *off our backs* published 'Rise Up My

¹⁰⁹ Beh, 'Red Detachment of Women,' *Women & Film* 1 (1972), 44. She is citing Mao's 'Culture and Art,' *Quotations from Mao Tse Tung* (1966).

¹¹⁰ Beh, 'Red Detachment of Women,' 44. Yan'an had been established as the home of a new wave of communist filmmakers in the late 1930s.

¹¹¹ Mao, *Quotations from Mao Tse Tung*.

¹¹² Beh, 'Red Detachment of Women,' 44.

¹¹³ See also Echols, *Daring to Be Bad*, 85; 158-159. See my Introduction for more on Sarachild and consciousness-raising.

Sisters,' a collection of writings on women in North Korea, Vietnam and China. Reviews of *The Red Detachment* appeared in other feminist publications such as the Iowa City women's liberation group's *Ain't I A Woman?*¹¹⁴

Although Beh does not designate *The Red Detachment of Women* as an example of Third Cinema as defined by Solanas and Getino, it is clear she is considering it within this context, and later commentators have applied this label to the film. Teshome Gabriel lists it as an example of Third Cinema in his book *Third Cinema in the Third World* (1982). He points out that in this filmed performance, the camera remains fixed throughout, emphasizing what he identifies as the collective point of view favoured by Third Cinema.¹¹⁵ While Beh identifies the ways in which the production challenges the conventions of traditional European ballet, she pays little attention to its formal innovations, other than noting that it is shot to showcase its choreography.

Beh does however reflect on the significance of ballet, a European dance tradition transformed by its appropriation for political ends. 'In the hands of the Chinese,' she says, 'the pointed toe has become a source of strength and aspiration.'¹¹⁶ Going beyond the 'rigid' and 'limited choreography' of European ballet styles, Beh points to the Chinese ballet's wide-range of sources for movement as a particular strength, citing Tai Chi Chuan, acrobatics, traditional folk dancing and Chinese opera. One in particular is the use of 'frozen poses' to emphasis a character's emotional state, a device originating from Peking Opera.¹¹⁷ Drawing on her own training as a dancer, Beh remarks 'There is no "balletic" nonsense.' Instead 'the choreography respects the subject matter' by favouring 'strong and angular movements' such as a clenched fist or a bent elbow and precise and direct facial expressions. By appropriating gestures and motifs from Chinese physical performance traditions, the result is 'radically different from the usual curved arms ending in soft wrists and dropped middle fingers and rounded body movements of other national ballets.'¹¹⁸ For Beh, this hybrid form of ballet challenges its traditional subject matter and plotlines, usually 'preoccupied with bourgeois fantasies' and in which its female characters 'dance themselves to death or insanity for the love of a man.'¹¹⁹ The pas-de-deux, often reserved to demonstrate male superiority

¹¹⁴ 'Rise Up My Sisters,' *off our backs* 1, no. 15 (31 December 1970), 6-7. 'Red Women's Detachment: Revolting Rhetoric and Revolutionary Questions,' *Ain't I a Woman?* 1, no. 4 (21 August 1970), 8-9.

¹¹⁵ Teshome H. Gabriel, *Third Cinema in the Third World: The Aesthetics of Liberation* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1982), 7.

¹¹⁶ Beh, 'Red Detachment of Women,' 44.

¹¹⁷ Louise Edwards, *Women Warriors and Wartime Spies of China* (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 2016), 201.

¹¹⁸ Beh, 'Red Detachment of Women,' 44.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid*, 45; *Ibid*.

and female dependency, is instead employed in scenes of confrontation between the women soldiers and their enemies. The costumes of the characters in *Red Detachment* differ radically from their European counterparts: 'there are none of the usual tutti-frutti powder-puff-like tutus.'¹²⁰ Instead the performers wear the utilitarian dress of Chinese peasants and Red Army uniform. The production has successfully 'revolutionized and revitalized the ballet' concludes Beh. She ends her article, saying: 'It has brought the international dance form close to the masses and has made it a People's Ballet.'¹²¹

Though this first piece by Beh is short, it provides a brief example of the way in which Maoist conceptions of art and gender presented models for feminists interested in film, as well as linking seemingly disparate topics: dance and revolution. While Beh sees the performers' military uniforms as a refreshing change from the ultra-feminine costuming of traditional ballets, subsequent commentators have pointed to their popularity because of their sexual appeal: Louise Edwards writes that the women soldiers' shorts (the men wear trousers) was an important draw for audiences.¹²² Recent performances of the ballet have incited protests, as in New York in 2015 and Australia in 2016 and 2017, due to its association with the violence of Mao's regime, which, at the time of Beh's writing, had gone unreported in the West.

Beh on Godard: political filmmaking and Vivre sa Vie

The cultural impact of European cinema on US film culture and criticism, and the central place of Godard within it, is manifest in *Women & Film's* sustained engagement with the new wave directors and Godard in particular. Championed by critics like Pauline Kael and Jonas Mekas during the early 1960s, Godard and his films became a regular fixture at the New York Film Festival from its inception in 1963. By the second half of the decade, his popularity, particularly with young leftists, cinephiles and students, had reached new heights. A retrospective of his films was held at the Museum of Modern Art in early 1968, he was cited as the inspiration for new generation of American independent filmmakers and courted for projects like *Bonnie and Clyde* (eventually directed by Arthur Penn) and by documentary filmmakers D.A. Pennebaker

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Edwards, *Women Warriors*, 200-205. See also Rosemary A. Roberts' in-depth study of gender and the gaze in this film in *Maoist Model Theatre: the Semiotics of Gender and Sexuality in the Chinese Cultural Revolution (1966-1976)* (Leiden: Brill, 2010).

and Richard Leacock.¹²³ But as this issue's cover testifies, *Women & Film's* engagement was not one of simple admiration. The torn still from Godard's *Les Carabiniers* hints at the magazine's intent to shed light on the sexism and misogyny prevalent not just in Hollywood, but in the films of the European avant-garde. Nonetheless, Godard's films were clearly of great interest to the magazine's editors, providing examples of cinema's objectification of women and the director's progressive attitude toward women's liberation.

Many filmmakers were affected by the changing political currents of the late 1960s, and Godard was no exception. The former *Cahiers du cinéma* editor became involved with the Maoist circles of the Parisian left while making *La Chinoise* (1967). That same year, his opposition to the war in Vietnam led him to become involved in *Loin du Vietnam*, a collaboration with, among others, Agnès Varda and Chris Marker.¹²⁴ While his work of the 1960s had dealt with political issues in varying degrees, Godard's approach to filmmaking changed dramatically in the wake of the May 1968 General strike in France. Together with journalist and literary critic Jean-Pierre Gorin, he founded the Dziga Vertov Group, named after the pioneering Soviet non-fiction filmmaker, in the summer of 1968. In doing so, he rejected his earlier films and commercial filmmaking practices in favour of more politically engaged forms of distribution, exhibition, and, significantly, cinematic language.

Between 1968 and 1970, Godard and Gorin embarked on several tours of US campuses, participating in numerous Q&As and giving many interviews. One series of panels that took place in February 1968 at University of Southern California, attended by, among others, Agnès Varda, were transcribed and published in the *LA Free Press*.¹²⁵ Leacock and Pennebaker turned another, at New York University in April that same year, into *Two American Audiences* (1968).¹²⁶ During this period, Godard attempted to integrate his developing Maoist perspective into his film practice, primarily by disrupting the conventional relationship of sound and image. The resulting works produced under the Dziga Vertov group include *British Sounds* (aka *See You At Mao*, 1970), *Le vent d'est* (1970), *Struggle in Italy* (1971) – all of which were commissioned for television – and *Tout va bien* (1972). He returned to the US in the spring of 1970,

¹²³ Richard Brody, *Everything is Cinema: the Working Life of Jean-Luc Godard* (London: Faber & Faber, 2008), 220-222; 326. Together, Godard, Pennebaker and Leacock made *Two American Audiences* (1968) and *One PM* (1971).

¹²⁴ Colin McCabe, *Godard: A Portrait of the Artist at 70* (London: Bloomsbury, 2003), 191.

¹²⁵ The four panels were held alongside a retrospective on Godard's films as part of Festival of the Arts at USC. Varda attended panel on 27 February. See Gene Youngblood, 'Jean Luc Godard: No Difference between Life and Cinema,' [1968] *Jean-Luc Godard: Interviews*, ed. David Sterritt (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1998), 9-49.

¹²⁶ Brody, 325.

touring with *British Sounds* and *Pravda* (1969), his second Dziga Vertov film, about Czechoslovakia in the wake of its invasion by the Soviets in August 1968 (and featuring an interview with Czech woman director Věra Chytilová).¹²⁷ Moreover, the release of several of his earlier films coincided with the exhibition of his more recent political works.¹²⁸

He published a manifesto, 'What is to be Done?' in the British film journal *Afterimage*, in 1970, (reprinted in *Women & Film* 1, see fig. 12).¹²⁹ The title of this list of 39 statements is taken from Lenin's 1902 pamphlet, subtitled 'Burning Questions of our Movement,' in which he identifies the achievements required to radicalize the proletariat and sets out his plan to form a revolutionary 'vanguard' in order to spread Marxism among the working classes in Russia.¹³⁰ In the first two lines of the text, Godard distinguishes the need to make political films from the need to make films politically. The statements that follow are reflections on this distinction. Godard identifies the need to make political films to challenge the 'idealist and metaphysical conception of the world' whereas making films politically requires a 'Marxist and dialectical conception of the world.'¹³¹ Without the latter, political filmmaking is said to leave intact the modes of production, distribution, exhibition and consumption that, like the cinematic object itself, are shaped by the forces of capitalism.

Godard takes his *British Sounds* as an example of a political film. The 48-minute film is made up of six sections, all of which privilege sound or speech over image. Footage of a car factory assembly line, with the deafening screeches of machinery, is accompanied by a voice reading extracts from speeches by figures such as Harold Wilson and tracts from the history of labour struggles, with lines repeated by a young girl as if receiving dictation or memorizing by rote. The film also showcases Godard's growing awareness of feminism: in another sequence, a naked woman walks between doorways and up and down stairs while a female voice reads from a feminist text; it is in fact British feminist Shelia Rowbotham reading from her own 1969 article 'Women:

¹²⁷ Ibid, 353.

¹²⁸ McCabe, 229; Brody, 356.

¹²⁹ *Afterimage's* editors Simon Field and Peter Sainsbury acquired Godard's manifesto for their first issue thanks to a request made by mutual friend Mo Teitelbaum, who also translated it from the French. See Simon Field (and Peter Sainsbury), 'Présentation,' *Jean Luc-Godard: Documents*, ed. Nicole Brenez and Michael Witt (Paris: Centre Pompidou, 2006), 144.

¹³⁰ V.I. Lenin, 'What is to be Done? Burning Questions of our Movement,' [1902], trans. Joe Fineberg and George Hanna. Marxists Internet Archive, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1901/witbd/> (05.06.2017).

¹³¹ Jean-Luc Godard, 'What is to be Done?' *AfterImage*, no. 1 (April 1970), unpaginated, reprinted in *Women & Film* 1 (1972), 41.

the Struggle for Freedom.’¹³² According to Godard, to carry out his second commandment, to make films politically, ‘is to struggle for the showing of British Sounds on English television.’ *British Sounds* had been commissioned by Kestrel Films as a documentary about Britain but was rejected by London Weekend Television as unsuitable for broadcast. The producers likely objected to, among other things, the shot in which a woman’s naked abdomen is shown in medium close-up for several minutes while a voice reads from Marxist and feminist texts. Throughout the manifesto, Godard distinguishes between making political films and making films politically and expands on the latter. To carry out this task is to ‘take up a proletarian class position’; ‘to understand the laws of the objective world in order to actively transform that world’; in the words of Bertold Brecht, ‘to say how things really are’; ‘to study the contradictions between classes with images and sounds’; and ‘to know that film making is [...] a small screw in the revolution.’¹³³

Despite referring to *British Sounds* (under its US title *See You at Mao*) as Godard’s ‘best political film,’ Beh instead chooses to review one of his earlier films for the magazine. In fact, she suggests that, on the whole, the director’s ‘bourgeois’ films have been ‘more successful as political films’ than those made since 1968.¹³⁴ She identifies *Contempt* (*Le mépris*, 1963) and *Vivre sa Vie* as significant for their exploration of sexism. *British Sounds* is praised for articulating sexism in ‘precise political terms,’ without escaping through conventional narrative devices, but the focus of Beh’s review is *Vivre sa Vie*, and ‘the structure that has rendered [Godard’s] ideas so effectively.’¹³⁵

It is here that Beh finally engages with another woman critic, drawing on Susan Sontag’s article ‘Godard’s *Vivre Sa Vie*,’ originally published in *Moviewgoer* in 1964 and reprinted in her first collection *Against Interpretation and Other Essays* (1966).¹³⁶ Born in 1933, Sontag had risen to fame during the 1960s to become a celebrity intellectual, publishing novels (*The Benefactor*, 1963; *Death Kit*, 1967), political commentary (‘Trip to Hanoi,’ 1968), and cultural criticism (‘Notes on Camp,’ 1964; *Styles of Radical Will*, 1969). While she wrote several articles on films during the 1960s, she was not a full-time film critic like Pauline Kael, nor did she publish in traditional film journals, writing instead for literary and political magazines like *The New York Review of Books* and

¹³² Rowbotham had turned down Godard’s offer to appear in the film herself. Brody, 343. Her article was published in *Black Dwarf* 13, no. 9 (10 January 1969), unpaginated.

¹³³ Godard, 41.

¹³⁴ Beh, ‘*Vivre sa Vie*,’ *Women & Film* 1 (1972), 70.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

¹³⁶ Beh does not provide any bibliographic details other than Sontag’s name.

Partisan Review as well as small periodicals like *Evergreen* and *The Seventh Art*.¹³⁷ Nonetheless, she is considered an influential film critic of the 1960s, credited with bringing European cinema to the attention of American audiences.¹³⁸ She had staked her position as a critical iconoclast, famously arguing 'against interpretation' in favour of an emphasis on the sensuous and formal experience of cinema. She celebrated the formal innovations of European New Wave directors, Godard in particular, but also Ingmar Bergman and Michelangelo Antonioni. At the time of *Women & Film's* first issue, she had also ventured into filmmaking, albeit less successfully, writing and directing *Duet for Cannibals* (1969) and *Brother Carl* (1971). However, Sontag's relationship with feminism was then unclear; she had little involvement in women's liberation of the late 1960s and early 70s and her first writings on feminist issues were yet to appear.¹³⁹ While Sontag and Beh both clearly see themselves and their critical perspectives in opposition to mainstream culture, they nonetheless inhabit very different positions.

Set in Paris, *Vivre sa Vie* tells the story of Nana and her journey from estranged wife and mother, unable to pay her rent, to prostitute and gangster's moll. Naming his central character Nana, Godard echoes the title of Emile Zola's 1880 novel about a Parisian prostitute, which itself has been adapted for the screen several times, including by Dorothy Arzner in 1934. *Vivre sa Vie* unfolds over twelve episodes, each prefaced by a numbered intertitle that describes the upcoming scene in brief, note form. In her review, Beh argues that the film succeeds in addressing the theme of women's oppression by using the 'metaphor' of prostitution effectively, 'for every woman is directly or indirectly a prostitute.'¹⁴⁰ Although she does not expand on this statement, it resonates with the arguments of some feminists from Mary Wollstonecraft onwards. Marriage was equated with prostitution in the suffrage movement as well as by feminists in the 1960s and 70s.

Beh underlines the irony of the film's English title – *My Life to Live* – given Nana's inability to grasp her freedom or to exercise free will for herself. Nana is given

¹³⁷ Jim McLaughlin, 'Putting Her Body on the Line: The Critical Acts of Susan Sontag, Part 2,' *Post Script: Essays in Film and the Humanities* 26, no. 2 (Winter-Spring 2007), 31.

¹³⁸ McLaughlin, 30.

¹³⁹ Sontag, 'The Double Standard of Ageing,' *Saturday Review* (23 September 1972), 29-38; 'Third World of Women,' *Partisan Review* 40, no. 2 (Spring 1973), 180-206. Her best-known reflections on feminism are in her exchange of letters with Adrienne Rich, 'Feminism and Fascism,' in *New York Review of Books* (20 March 1975).

¹⁴⁰ Beh, 'Vivre sa Vie,' 70.

'the illusion of freedom' Beh asserts, while society 'systematically strips her down.'¹⁴¹ After a brief synopsis of the film, Beh enumerates the instances demonstrating that Nana's story relates to women's plight more generally. Narratives of real and fictional women feature within the film, such as Nana's friend Yvette who is abandoned by her husband. Nana is also shown watching Carl Theodor Dreyer's *The Passion of Joan of Arc* (1928), evoking both the tragic story of Jeanne d'Arc and the fate of the actress who played her, Renée Falconetti, whom Beh alleges became a prostitute herself.¹⁴² As Beh sees it, in each case their hardships are the result of male oppression. She reads Godard's inclusion of these shared experiences of exploitation as indicative of a wider system of oppression.

Beh interprets Godard's stylistic approach in episode VIII of the film as transcending the individual's narrative to a more general commentary on the position of women. She observes its 'television documentary style' with its fast cuts and facts about the realities of prostitution in Paris. This 'cinéma-verité style broadens the whole moral issue,' remarks Beh. By exposing the widespread problems of prostitution, the need for a drastic overhaul of the system that would give women 'the political and economical power for self determination,' is highlighted.¹⁴³ Beh then turns to the film's structure, Godard's 'aesthetic considerations' and their effects on the viewer. She identifies the 'fragmented narrative mode' as a Brechtian device that, along with the looped music, 'simultaneously abstracts and involves the spectator in spite of jarring mergers and intermittent plots.'¹⁴⁴ She also points to the sense of immediacy achieved by the use of the present tense (presumably in the title cards that precede each episode).

She echoes Sontag almost word for word when she says '*Vivre sa Vie* tells us what happens but not why something happens.'¹⁴⁵ But where Sontag sees this as exposing the 'inexorability of an event,' for Beh, the absence of cause and effect provokes the spectator to imagine 'the past, present and future' and hinders the film's immediacy. Extending the arguments made in 'Against Interpretation,' Sontag writes that 'all art tends toward the formal, toward a completeness that must be formal rather than substantive – endings that exhibit grace and design, and only secondarily convince

¹⁴¹ There is a resemblance here to Sontag's comment 'In *Vivre sa Vie*, we witness the stripping down of Nana.' Sontag, 'Godard's *Vivre sa Vie*,' *Against Interpretation and Other Essays* (London: Penguin, 2009), 203.

¹⁴² Beh, '*Vivre sa Vie*,' 71.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid. Sontag wrote '*Vivre sa Vie* is an exhibit, a demonstration. It shows that something happened, not why it happened. It exposes the inexorability of an event,' 'Godard's *Vivre Sa Vie*,' 199.

in terms of psychological motives or social forces.¹⁴⁶ For her, Godard's films are 'drastically untopical' and exemplify the 'desire to prove rather than the desire to analyze.'¹⁴⁷ She sees Godard as uninterested in 'the psychology nor the sociology of prostitution'; instead *Vivre sa vie* 'does not explain anything,' it is simply 'an exhibit, a demonstration.'¹⁴⁸

For Beh on the other hand, the film has 'the look, the casualness, and the potential sensuous energy of the cheap thrillers, and the sexual glamour of popular sensation magazine.' This and the motifs of guns, prostitution and murder, she argues, maintain its appeal to a 'popular audience.'¹⁴⁹ But, she asserts, it is 'ultimately about the tragedy of being a woman.' The 'popular audience' is also catered for by the 'allowance for voyeurism.' 'Ordinarily,' she explains, 'private scenes in movies freely admit the audience. But in *Vivre sa Vie*, such scenes are set up in a way as to render the thrill of peeping Toms.' For Beh, this characterizes the dynamic of the opening scene, in which we overhear the conversation between Nana and Paul from behind. As Beh observes, 'their attitude does not admit us but all the same, we hear everything.'¹⁵⁰ This 'allowance' for voyeurism is also present in the scene in which Nana searches for another woman to join her and her client. The camera follows Nana, and is permitted views from both close and long range into various rooms as she opens and closes each door. She moves through a maze-like corridor, frequently revealing women in the process of dressing or undressing for their customers, often naked and seen from behind.

Beh sees Godard's use of both word and action as the film's 'essential ingredient,' resulting in the creation of 'gaps or spaces for the lively participation of the imagination.'¹⁵¹ For Beh, 'this involves alienating elements which at once set up the paradox of distancing and involving simultaneously.' She credits Godard with rupturing the 'conservative and misleading distinction between literary and visual intelligence,' asserting that

Total cinema should invoke as many of our faculties and sensibilities as possible. The fact that cinema can admit language gives it a unique and superior position and freedom compared to other art forms. Realizing the power and susceptibility of the imagination to linear images as well as to audio suggestion besides pictorial visuals, Godard engages participation of the imagination by allowing spaces between word and action, what is heard and what is seen, and

¹⁴⁶ Ibid, 198.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid, 199; 198.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid 203; 199; 199.

¹⁴⁹ Beh, '*Vivre sa vie*,' 71.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Ibid, 71-72.

his use of static as well as arbitrary shots. Godard employs the aesthetic of the incomplete, and the aesthetic of discomfort.¹⁵²

Beh explores the distancing effect of Godard's *mise-en-scène*, returning to the film's opening scenario: Nana is seated at a bar, with her back to the camera. She argues with her estranged husband Paul, who we also only see from behind in a separate shot. The effect is that of eavesdropping on their conversation. According to Beh, 'the opening shot immediately alienates us. [...] But we are given sufficient information to know that two people face an impossible relationship. The sparing conversation keeps us curious, the setting creates enough distance for us to hang on.'¹⁵³

Beh and Sontag's differing outlooks lead them to identify two different scenes as pivotal to the film. For Beh, the relationship between word and action is at its most complex in the final episode, in a scene between Nana and her lover, Luigi. The scene is four and a half minutes long, and the intertitle announces '12 – The young man again – the oval portrait – Raoul sells Nana on,' as we hear the film's musical motif, the sad, repetitive strings scored by Michel Legrand. We see Luigi reading Edgar Allan Poe; the music continues and there appears to be no diegetic sound, an impression confirmed by Nana silently opening a window and the ensuing dialogue appearing as subtitles. As they discuss their plans for the day, we can see Nana's lips moving but Luigi's book obscures his mouth. Nana closes the window and the screen fades to black. The musical theme continues and a male voice is heard – Godard's – describing a painting of a beautiful young woman. The fade-in reveals Luigi reading once again, implying that the voice is in fact reading from Luigi's book, although it is unclear whether this voice is diegetic or non-diegetic, or indeed internal diegetic sound, i.e. what Luigi hears in his mind as he reads silently. When the voice describes 'hurriedly glancing' at the painting, Luigi raises his eyes and lowers the book. This keeps intact the illusion that the voice might be his, since we still never see his lips move; it also aligns his actions with those of Poe's narrator, and by extension, with Godard, although this depends on the audience recognizing the director's voice as it is not revealed elsewhere.

We cut to a shot of Nana, whose profile is silhouetted against a windowpane, making it appear to be 'framed.' As the voice describes the painting viewed by Poe's narrator, the music stops abruptly, and the audience contemplates Nana's portrait from Luigi's perspective, with Nana occasionally returning his gaze (although not that of the camera). In the two shots that follow, Nana is shown in a medium close-up, firstly head on, turning her head slowly from one side to the other, against a blank wall; and

¹⁵² Ibid, 72.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

secondly, in three quarter view with a glamorous, out of focus postcard of Elizabeth Taylor in the background. The voice continues to read the narrator's reflection on the painting's 'life-likeness,' and this contrast between lifeless object and living being is paralleled by the juxtaposition of the flat and blurry photo of Taylor with Nana's moving head. Nana then interrupts with a question, the scene's first instance of synchronized sound, and the voice replies, confirming it as diegetic sound rather than non-diegetic voiceover. We also hear the floorboards creak as Luigi moves across the frame, an action repeated in a strip of mirror just behind Nana's shoulder, in the far right of the screen. The reading voice resumes with 'This is our story: a painter making a portrait of his wife' as Nana turns to apply lipstick in the mirror.

In Poe's story, the painter becomes so engrossed in his painting and rendering it 'life-like,' he does not move or look away from the canvas for weeks. As the voice describes the moment the painter finally looks up from his canvas to discover his wife has died, the scene ends, fading to black. In the following, final scene of this episode, Nana is shot and dies. For Beh, Poe's story evokes the romantic myth of sacrifice for the sake of art in which women play the sacrificial victim for eternity:

While the artist sacrifices his wife for his art, he is also the vampire that sucks her dry. The artist exonerates himself by placing woman on a pedestal frozen by his concept of ideal beauty. But in the final analysis, the man's work of art is for his own glory and fulfillment.¹⁵⁴

In this scene, Nana is visually equated with the fictional model of the story, but the soundtrack adds a third metaphorical layer to this, with Godard's vocal presence drawing a connection between the painter and the director, and the painter's wife and model with the director's actress wife. Godard substitutes his body and actions with those of Nana's lover, Luigi, and his words with those of Poe's narrator, the painter. However, although the voice we hear is Godard's, as Beh points out, it passes for Luigi's since we never actually see his mouth move. Thus for Beh, Godard's voice provides the scene with a 'double strength':

For the audience who has never heard Godard's voice, the continuity and unity is not broken. For those who know of it and of Anna Karina's relationship to Godard, there is added appreciation [...]. The single woman serves a double function equally well.¹⁵⁵

What Sontag sees as a flaw undermining Godard's thesis of the contingent nature of existence, Beh deems a clue that is open to interpretation by the viewer. Through his speech, Godard opens up the existence of Godard the director and Karina the actress as

¹⁵⁴ Ibid, 73,

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

characters in the film. One could also argue that the parallels drawn between Poe's fictional model, the character of Nana and Anna Karina imply an equivalence between muse, prostitute and actress. This is reinforced by the fact that both the muse and Nana die as a result of their objectification by men; their very aliveness is overlooked by artist and pimp and this results in their deaths.

As Beh relates, Sontag found this scene to be the 'one false step' of an otherwise 'perfect film.' 'Godard breaks the unity of his film by referring to it from the outside, as maker,' Sontag observes, commenting further:

Godard is clearly making a reference outside the film, to the fact that the young actress who plays Nana, Anna Karina, is his wife. [...] It amounts to a peculiar failure of nerve, as if Godard did not dare let us have Nana's death – in all its horrifying arbitrariness – but had to provide, at the last moment, a kind of subliminal causality.¹⁵⁶

For Sontag, this surrender to causality undermines what she sees as the film's rejection of social analysis. Conversely, she points to Nana's encounter with the philosopher in episode XI as the film's most significant scene. In this ten minute exchange, prefaced by an intertitle that refers to Nana as an 'unwitting philosopher,' Nana talks to a man reading in a café, played by real-life philosopher Brice Parain, whom Godard has claimed was particularly influential on his thinking at the time.¹⁵⁷ Nana asks a series of questions about the relationship between thought, language and truth, with the philosopher concluding that 'to think, one must speak, there is no other way to think. And to communicate, one must talk. That's life.' Again, later, drawing on Plato: 'I believe we can't distinguish between thought and the words we use to express our thoughts. [...] Words are the only way to grasp thought.'¹⁵⁸ The exchange itself is peppered with failures to communicate; Nana can't think of what to say or cannot find the right words. She is interrupted by the philosopher, who himself later hesitatingly remarks 'I'm not sure I'm explaining myself well.' These ideas resonate with Sontag's mistrust of interpretation, and the critical project of digging "behind" the text, to find a sub-text which is the true one.¹⁵⁹ The philosopher also refers fleetingly to Leibnitz and his idea of contingent and necessary truths in response to Nana's question about love. The reference to the contingent adds weight to Sontag's argument that *Vivre sa vie* 'does not explain anything. It rejects causality.'¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁶ Sontag, 'On Godard's *Vivre sa Vie*,' 206; 207.

¹⁵⁷ Godard, *Jean-Luc Godard par Jean-Luc Godard: tome 2*, ed. Alain Bergala (Paris: Cahiers du cinéma, 1998), 32.

¹⁵⁸ Both are my own translation.

¹⁵⁹ Sontag, 'Against Interpretation,' [1964] *Against Interpretation and Other Essays*,

6.

¹⁶⁰ Sontag, 'On Godard's *Vivre Sa Vie*,' 199.

Beh also takes issue with Sontag's assertion that 'only as a prostitute do we see a Nana who can affirm herself.'¹⁶¹ According to Sontag, Nana is unsure of herself in the first few episodes: she fails in her negotiations with her husband, her landlord and in her attempts to borrow money. But once she accepts her pimp Raoul's proposition she has 'become what she is. She has entered the road that leads to her affirmation and to her death.'¹⁶² Beh argues that Sontag's interpretation is limited: 'she is not respecting the structure which contradicts her statement.'¹⁶³ For Beh, 'Blatant prostitution is the logical conclusion for women who are conditioned to accept themselves as sex objects and to behave accordingly.'¹⁶⁴ Beh points to the allusion to the Nana of Jean Renoir's 1926 adaptation of Zola's novel.¹⁶⁵ Although she makes no reference to the novel, her reading can be linked to this text whose naturalist portrait of a prostitute depicts a woman whose fate is determined by social inequality and oppression. '*Vivre Sa Vie*,' Beh concludes, 'is a brilliant and sympathetic study of woman's eternal dilemma in a world defined by men, money, sex, and violence.'¹⁶⁶

Ultimately, both critics make compelling claims; from Sontag's perspective in 1964, Godard is less concerned with radical politics and social change, and his films from this period reflect this. His interests instead lie with extending the ideas he had first mapped out as a *Cahiers* critic, experimenting with film form and disrupting traditional narrative conventions. His films of this period are in constant dialogue with the cinematic genres and styles of Hollywood cinema. As Richard Roud writes of Godard's films prior to 1970, they 'are a criticism of the cinema, a theory of the cinema.'¹⁶⁷ But by the early 1970s, when Beh is writing, Godard's increased interest in revolutionary Marxism and, to some extent, feminism, makes Beh's interpretation of *Vivre sa Vie* as social commentary with potentially feminist undertones highly convincing. Although it seems likely that Sontag would have objected to Beh's attempts to '[dig] "behind" the text,' it is reasonable that she should reread his 1960s films as earlier iterations of his later, more explicitly political approach to filmmaking.¹⁶⁸ Moreover, as previously mentioned, his earlier films were being viewed simultaneously with his later work in the US, a fact further evidenced by the ad at the back of the issue for a French film festival screening both *Alphaville* (1965) and *Vent d'est* (1970). This

¹⁶¹ Sontag, 'Against Interpretation,' 8.

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Beh, '*Vivre sa vie*,' 73.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Beh, '*Vivre sa vie*,' 71.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid, 73.

¹⁶⁷ Richard Roud, *Jean-Luc Godard* (London: BFI; Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 42.

¹⁶⁸ Sontag, 'Against Interpretation,' 6.

muddling of Godard's filmic chronology is also reflected in the magazine with its inclusion of his 1970 manifesto, 'What is to be Done?,' alongside stills from earlier films (*Les Carabiniers*, 1963; *Une femme mariée*, 1964) and Beh's review of *Vivre sa vie*. Sontag may have mistrusted the doctrines of Freud and Marx as 'aggressive and impious theories of interpretation,' but by 1972, Godard was very much taken with them, as well as Maoism, and as such is of obvious interest to Beh.

What's more, at the time of Beh's writing, prostitution had become a recurrent motif in Godard's films, a device that reflected his belief that 'to live in Parisian society today, one is forced [...] to prostitute oneself.'¹⁶⁹ The fact that Karina had played most of these roles lends further weight to Beh's analysis. While Sontag is writing on the eve of Godard and Karina's divorce at the end of 1964, by 1972 Anna Karina had been replaced by Anne Wiazemsky, whom Godard cast as the lead in *La Chinoise* (1967) and married shortly after the film's completion, when Wiazemsky was nineteen. Anne and Anna's seeming exchangeability as Godard's partner, muse and actor strengthens Beh's reading of the Oval portrait scene in *Vivre sa vie* and the equation of Anna with Nana, actress with prostitute.

Conclusions

Women & Film's debut editorial, co-written by Beh, as well as her individual articles, are testament to early feminism's resourcefulness in using the theories of men – in this case Marx, Mao and Godard – to support the theory of patriarchal oppression and to question, critique and challenge its visual culture. Importantly, these male figures also lay out potentially radical alternatives, be it choreographic as in *Red Detachment* or cinematic, as with Godard, which may open new doors for women filmmakers in the development of a feminist 'people's cinema.' Beh's writing explores film using the tools and militant attitudes of Marxist-Leninism and Third World Marxism first invoked in the debut editorial. As such it provides a tangible link between the radical politics of the late 1960s and the nascent feminist film criticism that the magazine would continue to pioneer in its ensuing issues. In the following chapter, I examine Beh's counterpart, Sandra Salyer's contribution to the magazine's outlook, particularly the influence of radical psychology and radical feminism.

¹⁶⁹ Godard, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 12 October 1966, cited in Brody, 291.

Figure 1, left:
The front cover of
Women & Film 1
(1972)

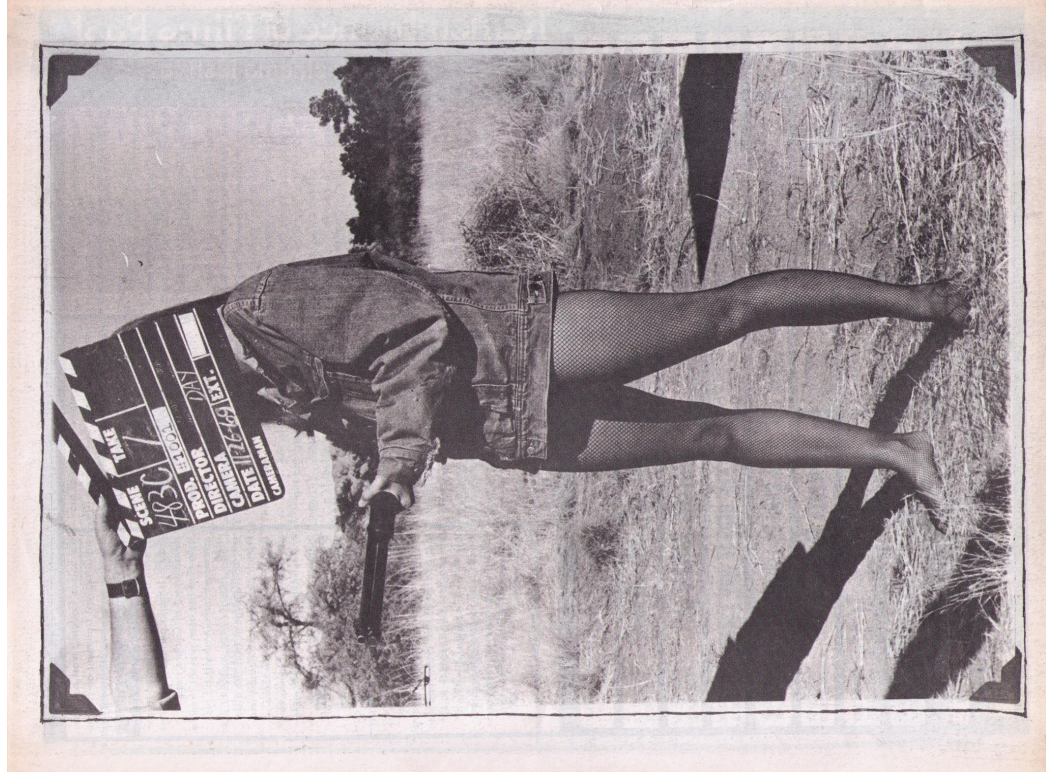


Figure 2, right:
The back cover of
Women & Film 1,
with an image
from unknown
source.





Figure 3: An image from Beh's *The Stripper* (1970).



Figure 4: Siew-Hwa Beh and Sandra Salyer together, date and location unknown, but probably circa 1971-1972.



Figure 5: Siew-Hwa Beh poses in front of her home at 2802 Arizona Avenue, Santa Monica, where *Women & Film* was first published.

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Figure 6: An ad for *Women & Film* from a 1972 issue of *Cineaste*.



Figure 7: Detail of page from the first issue's editorial (page 3), showing the tiny cut-and-pasted torn Cinema magazine covers.



Figure 8: Publicity still from *Une femme mariée* (Jean-Luc Godard, 1964).

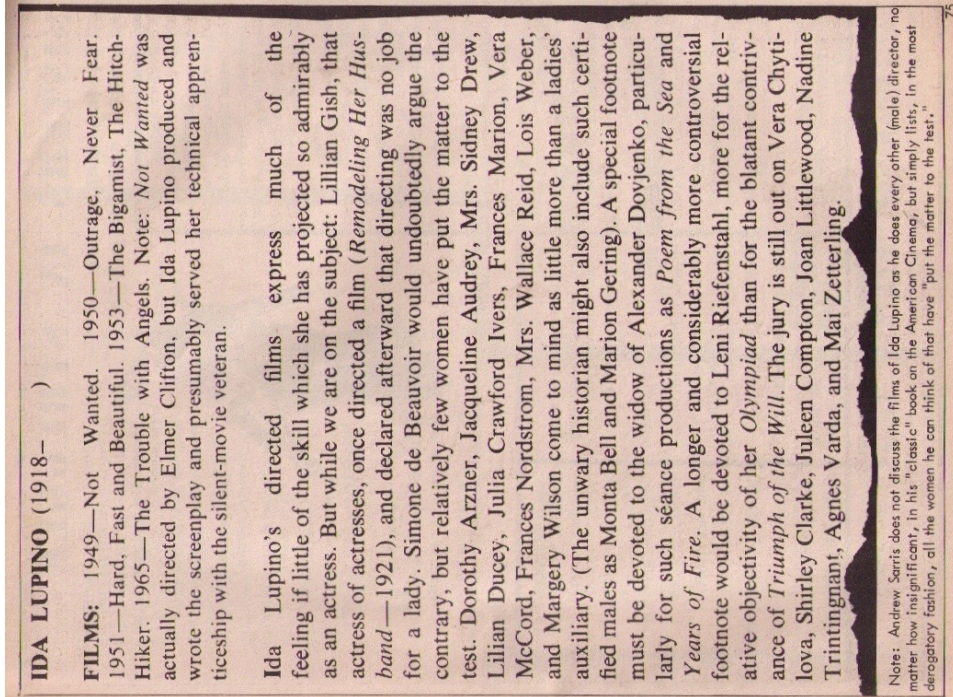
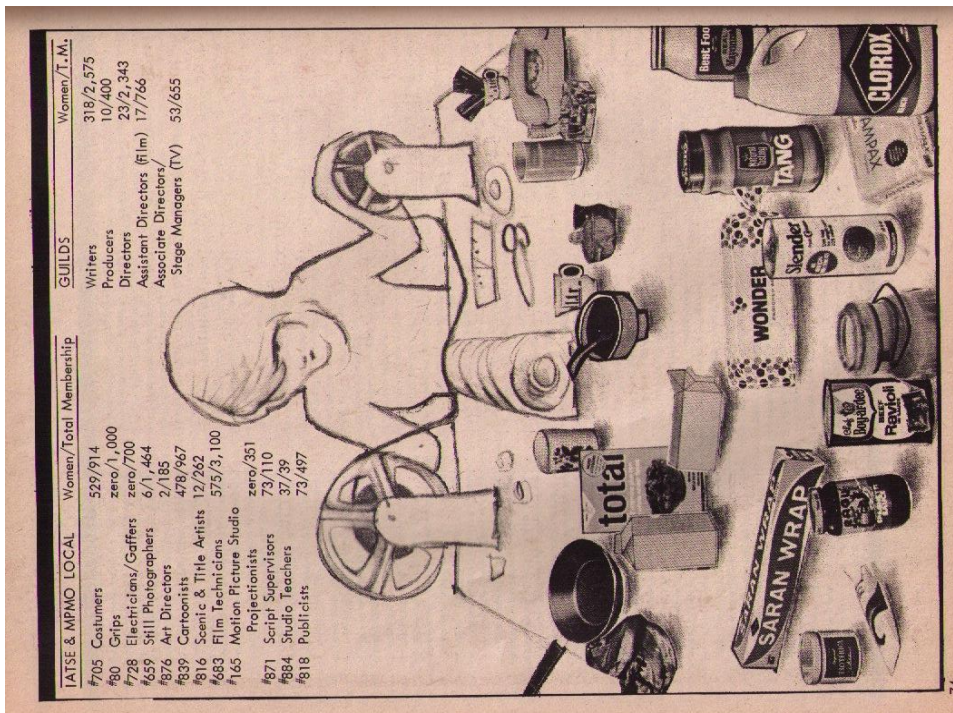


Figure 9, left: Table showing membership figures for film industry unions and illustration with collage and drawing depicting clash between women's creative work and that of traditional domestic duties.

Figure 10, right: Ida Lupino's entry in Andrew Sarris' *The American Cinema* (1968), as reprinted in *Women & Film 1*.



Figure 11, left:
The reprint of
Portrait of
Marilyn Monroe
as Chairman
Mao (1952) by
Salvador Dalí
and Philippe
Halsman in the
magazine.

Figure 12, right:
another reprint,
this time of
Godard's
filmmaking
manifesto, 'What
is to Be Done?,'
originally
published in
Afterimage in
1970.

WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

We must make political films.
 We must make film politically.

1 and 2 are antagonistic to each other and belong to two opposing conceptions of the world
 1 belongs to the idealistic and metaphysical conception of the world.
 2 belongs to the Marxist and dialectical conception of the world.
 Marxism struggles against idealism and the dialectical against the metaphysical.
 This struggle is the struggle between the old and the new, between new ideas and old ones.
 The social existence of men determines their thought.
 The struggle between the old and the new is the struggle of classes.
 To carry out 1 is to remain a bating of the bourgeois class.
 To carry out 2 is to take up a proletarian class position.
 To carry out 1 is to make descriptions of situations.
 To carry out 2 is to make concrete analysis of a concrete situation.
 To carry out 1 is to make BRITISH SOUNDS.
 To carry out 2 is to struggle for the showing of BRITISH SOUNDS on English television.
 To carry out 1 is to understand the laws of the objective world in order to explain that world.
 To carry out 2 is to understand the laws of the objective world in order to actively transform that world.
 To carry out 1 is to describe the wretchedness of the world.
 To carry out 2 is to show the people in struggle.
 To carry out 2 is to destroy 1 with the weapons of criticism and self-criticism.
 To carry out 1 is to give a complete view of events, in the name of truth in itself.
 To carry out 2 is not to fabricate over-complete images of the world in the name of relative truth.
 To carry out 1 is to say how things are real. (Brecht)
 To carry out 2 is to say how things really are. (Brecht)
 To carry out 2 is to edit a film before shooting it, to make it during filming and to make it after the filming. (Dziga Vertov)
 To carry out 1 is to distribute a film before producing it.
 To carry out 2 is to produce a film before distributing it, to learn to produce it following the principle that it is production which commands distribution; it is politics which commands economy.
 To carry out 1 is to film students who write: Unity - Students - Workers.
 To carry out 2 is to know that unity is a struggle of opposites. (Lenin) to know that the two are in one.
 To carry out 2 is to study the contradictions between the classes with images and sound.
 To carry out 2 is to study the contradictions between the relationships of production and the productive forces.
 To carry out 2 is to dare to know where one is, and where one has come from, to know one's place in the process of production in order then to change it.
 To carry out 2 is to know the history of revolutionary struggles and be determined by them.
 To carry out 2 is to produce scientific knowledge of revolutionary struggles and of their history.
 To carry out 2 is to know that film making is a secondary activity, a small screw in the revolution.
 To carry out 2 is to use images and sound as teeth and lips to bite with.
 To carry out 1 is only to open the eyes and the ears.
 To carry out 2 is to read the reports of comrade Kiang Tsing.
 To carry out 2 is to be militant.

JEAN-LUC GODARD January 1970
 Translated by Mo Tefelbaum
 Reprinted from After Image

41

II

Psychedelic Sexual Politics: Sandra Salyer's writing for *Women & Film*

While Siew-Hwa Beh's contributions to *Women & Film* drew on the political and cultural militancy of Mao and Godard, Sandra Salyer's influence on the magazine links it to some of the more esoteric aspects of the counterculture of the 1960s and early 1970s. The inclusion of the Marilyn-Mao photomontage discussed in Chapter I, for example, can easily be linked to Beh's political leanings. However, for the most part, Salyer's cultural and political concerns are less obviously signposted visually. With the exception of the magazine's editorials, Salyer's writing, like her co-founder's, only appears in the magazine's first two issues. This chapter will therefore focus on Salyer's political and critical perspective, steeped in the radical psychology and feminism of the era, and how it shaped her film criticism for this first issue. I look at her review of Moshe Mizrahi's film *Les stances à Sophie* (1970) and her report on the 1971 San Francisco International Film Festival, particularly her consideration of Louis Malle's *The Heart Murmur* (1971) and *WR: Mysteries of the Organism* (Dušan Makavejev, 1972). These discussions are prefaced by a brief overview of Salyer's life and work before her involvement in *Women & Film*, providing some context for her critical perspective and her preoccupation with cinematic and philosophical reimaginings of political power and sexual relationships.

Consciousness-Expansion: Psychedelia, radical therapy and the new psychology of the 1960s

Born in 1946, Sandra 'Saunie' Salyer was deeply involved in the political and cultural movements of the 1960s and 1970s, and, like Beh, self-identified as a 'rebel and iconoclast' from a young age.¹ With her father a colonel in the US army, Salyer's family moved home frequently and she spent much of her early childhood in Germany. As a

¹ Salyer, email to author, 12 June 2012.

high school student in Virginia at the start of the 1960s, she was keenly aware of the civil rights movement arising from the South as well as the political folk music scene in Washington D.C.. She recalls being hugely disappointed when her family relocated to Japan just weeks before Martin Luther King's historic speech at the Great March on Washington on 28 August 1963 as she had been 'determined to go and lend [her] body and voice' to the cause.² As a teenager in Japan, she nonetheless experienced the era's Beatlemania and attended concerts like that of British band The Animals in Tokyo.³ After graduating high school in June 1964, she spent several 'tumultuous' years at a number of universities: University of Kansas (fall 1964); Sophia University in Tokyo, Japan (spring 1965); and the University of Hawaii (fall 1965). At Hawaii, she met Mike Shedlin, who convinced her to come and live with him and his parents in LA. In 1966 she returned to the US mainland and settled at Santa Monica College until 1967.⁴

In Santa Monica, Salyer experienced the eruption of a psychedelic culture: 'Owsley, acid, LSD was *the* revolution, besides the cultural revolution in music,' she remembers.⁵ During the 1960s, the use of hallucinogenic drugs evolved from the rare experimental trials of psychiatric research programs to widespread recreational consumption among young people in the hippie and countercultural movements. In 1966, the state of California criminalized the manufacture and use of LSD (D-Lysergic acid diethylamide), and other states soon followed suit, although this did not halt the drug's consumption. In January of the following year, the Human Be-in, a free cultural event, featuring bands like The Grateful Dead and Jefferson Airplane and figures such as the beat poet Allen Ginsberg, was held in San Francisco's Golden Gate Park. This 'gathering of the tribes' heralded 1967's Summer of Love, during which thousands of young people flocked to the city's Haight-Ashbury neighbourhood and other Californian towns to attend the myriad of hippie happenings celebrating, among other things, the psychedelic experience. Although they had yet to meet, Beh and Salyer were both living in Los Angeles at this point, and Salyer was travelling north to visit San Francisco and Berkeley regularly.⁶

² Ibid.

³ Salyer, interview with author, Montclair, CA. 11 October 2013. The Animals toured Japan in June 1965, Setlist.fm <http://www.setlist.fm/stats/concert-map/the-animals-63d6bedf.html?year=1965> (01.06.2017).

⁴ Salyer, email to author, 12 June 2012; Salyer, email to author, 13 June 2013.

⁵ Salyer, interview, her emphasis. A former chemistry student at UC Berkeley, Owsley Stanley became a prolific manufacturer of LSD in the mid-1960s, and a key countercultural figure as the sound engineer for the Grateful Dead and a friend of Ken Kesey and the Merry Pranksters.

⁶ Salyer, interview. Beh also 'stumbled' across a Golden Gate Park Love-in while a student at Mills College in Oakland, but she had little interest in psychedelic drug culture. Rich, *Chick Flicks*, 385.

Some historians have dismissed the psychedelic aspect of the counterculture, deeming it a purely hedonistic activity with little political significance. However, David Farber has argued that ‘the way some people used some drugs in the [...] era facilitated their purposeful exit from the rules and regulations that made up the culture they inhabit.’⁷ For its advocates, including Salyer, ‘psychedelia and the psychedelic experience expanded [the] examination of the whole culture and cleansed the “doors of perception”, as Aldous Huxley said.’⁸ A key proponent in this history is Dr. Timothy Leary, a former Harvard behavioral scientist whose experiments with LSD led him to promote the drug as a potential tool for personal wellbeing and societal change. Leary believed that LSD ‘allowed individuals to [...] explore the inner workings of their minds [...] [and] challenged people to rethink social norms and life patterns.’⁹ Others, like the West Coast-based writer Ken Kesey, heralded the drug as way to ‘re-negotiate social space’ and alter society through collective hallucinogenic experiences.¹⁰ Moreover, while the drug itself became outlawed in many US states, its associated aesthetic – psychedelia – became increasingly popular, as the visual imagery of the ‘trip’ influenced the design of countercultural magazines and graphic artists as well as musicians and experimental filmmakers. Californian filmmakers Scott Bartlett and Constance Beeson, for example, employ repetition, mirroring, overexposure, distortion and overlaying of images to create the kaleidoscopic and dreamlike effects in their respective films *Off/On* (1967) and *Unfolding* (1969).¹¹

‘Once was enough’ when it came to psychedelics for Salyer, but she did experiment with nitrous oxide and film simultaneously: ‘we would actually imbibe on camera and let the camera run for four, five hours and see what happened.’¹² For her and her film

⁷ David Farber, ‘The Intoxicated State/Illegal Nation,’ *Imagine Nation: The American Counterculture of the 1960s and '70s*, ed. Peter Braunstein and Michael William Doyle (New York: Routledge, 2002), 18.

⁸ Salyer, interview. Huxley (1894-1963) was a British writer best known for his dystopian novel *Brave New World* (1932). An early advocate of the creative potential of the hallucinogenic experience, his book *The Doors of Perception* (1954) detailed his experiences of taking mescaline, a hallucinogen derived from the peyote cactus. Its title is taken from William Blake’s poem *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*: ‘If the doors of perception were cleansed/every thing would appear to man as it is, Infinite./For man has closed himself up,/till he sees all things thro’ narrow chinks of his cavern.’

⁹ Farber, 23.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, 24; 26-27. Kesey had been a test subject for early government studies into LSD. Farber, 21.

¹¹ Both Bartlett and Beeson were members of the Canyon Cinema Co-Op for experimental filmmakers in the San Francisco area. Bartlett was married to Freude Bartlett, who founded Serious Business Co, a distribution company dedicated to experimental and women’s film. Beeson’s films were shown at the First International Festival of Women’s Films in 1972 in New York as well as the Erotic Film Festival reviewed in by Lucille Iverson in *Women & Film* 3-4 (1973).

¹² Salyer, email to author, 12 June 2012; Salyer, interview.

collaborators David Wallechinsky and Mike Shedlin (fig. 13), her boyfriend at the time, these experiences formed part of a long history of experimental drug use by writers and artists including the Romantic poets Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Robert Southey. They eventually chronicled this history in their book *Laughing Gas: Nitrous Oxide* (1973).¹³

Huxley, Leary and Kesey were all visitors to an experimental therapeutic community in Big Sur, California called Esalen. But while its early history is entwined with that of the psychedelic movement, Esalen's influence on the counterculture, and indeed mainstream America culture of the period, lies in its role as the home of then-pioneering methods in psychological therapy, 'New Age' philosophy and the development of Western versions of practices like massage, yoga and meditation. Founded in 1962 by two Stanford graduates, Michael Murphy and Richard Price, Esalen was envisioned as both an 'intellectual ashram' as well as 'a place of healing from the cruelties of Western culture.'¹⁴ Under the banner of the 'Human Potential Movement,' the centre offered seminars and workshops from an eclectic range of disciplines, with many activities emphasizing the body, touch and movement over traditional talking therapies or study of the mind.; 'no approach is too far out to be tried here,' writes Murphy in one 1967 article.¹⁵

Salyer's hosts in LA, Art and Jane Shedlin were both active at Esalen, with Art Shedlin referred to by Murphy as the 'best group leader in captivity.'¹⁶ Encounter group therapy was developed from the sensitivity training or T-groups pioneered by psychologists treating soldiers with post-traumatic stress by the humanist psychologists such as Carl Rogers and Esalen's Will Schutz, both Shedlin's colleagues, and informed by Rogers' person-centered therapy and Abraham Maslow's transpersonal psychotherapy.¹⁷ Encounter groups were usually composed of ten to fifteen people, seated in a circle on the floor for several hours (or sometimes even

¹³ Wallechinsky was the son of Irving Wallace and author of *The People's Almanac* (1975). Salyer's essay 'Nitrous Oxide and the Surreal Condition,' was later reprinted in *High Times* (fall, 1974), which refers to the *Laughing Gas* as an 'underground bestseller.'

¹⁴ Jeffery J. Kripal and Glenn W. Shuck, 'Introduction,' *On the Edge of the Future: Esalen and the Evolution of American Culture* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005), 5; *Ibid.*, 6. Murphy rejected his Episcopalian faith and studies in medicine after becoming interested in Indian religion and philosophy at Stanford during the 1950s in a course by the historian and theorist of Asian religions, Frederic Spielberg (1897-1994). Price had studied psychology at Stanford and was also eventually taught by Spielberg as a graduate student in 1955. He gravitated from his Jewish roots to Zen Buddhism. Murphy and Price met at a residential mediation centre in San Francisco in 1960. Kripal, *Esalen: America and the Religion of No Religion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 47-82.

¹⁵ Michael Murphy, 'Esalen: Where It's At,' *Psychology Today*, December 1967, 39.

¹⁶ Salyer, email to author, 28 July 2017.

¹⁷ Rogers (1902-87) and Maslow (1908-70) were central figures in humanistic psychology, also known as the Human Potential Movement.

several days) and encouraged to interact, to “reach” and perceive each other [...] and experience genuine inner feelings.’¹⁸ These interactions were often physical as well as verbal; in one session described by Murphy’s article, participants lie ‘on the floor, in a circle with their heads together’ and the ultimate aim of the sessions was to ‘amplify feelings and to help turn suspicious, hostile or dull individuals into trusting and aware people capable of more meaningful lives.’¹⁹ According to Salyer, she read Maslow’s *Religions, Values and Peak Experiences* (1964) ‘within months’ of arriving in L.A.

Art and Jane had an extensive library and were continuously pressing books into my hands. Maslow’s book impressed me deeply as did the process of bringing a group of friends together to actively engage with one another, to increase awareness, resolve conflicts and examine our selves in light of our stated values, such as self-actualization.²⁰

‘The Shedlins,’ Salyer continues, ‘were my introduction to humanistic and transpersonal psych [...] and depth psychology.’ In another filmmaking experiment, Salyer and a group of friends filmed an encounter group at the Shedlin’s home in the Pacific Palisades. She credits her exposure to this world, as well as her reading of Ken Kesey’s novel about psychiatric care, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest* (1962), with encouraging a life-long interest in psychology and radical therapy.

Underpinning Esalen’s mission, and the work of many of its practitioners like Schultz and Perls, were the theories and therapeutic methods of the Marxist psychoanalyst Wilhelm Reich (1897-1957). A former disciple of Freud, Reich’s theories were influential in the changing attitudes toward sex in Europe before WWII, and, along with Alfred Kinsey and William Masters and Virginia Johnson, a driving force behind the sexual revolution in North America of the 1960s.²¹ Unlike Freud, Reich was a Marxist and sought to unite his political perspectives with psychoanalysis, a position he developed treating working-class patients in the Vienna free psychoanalytic clinic

¹⁸ Nevill Drury, *Wisdom Seekers: the Rise of the New Spirituality* (Winchester: O-Books, 2011), 88.

¹⁹ Murphy, 39. There are similarities here with feminist consciousness-raising techniques, which for some often oscillated between group therapy session and political strategy meeting.

²⁰ Salyer, email to author, 28 July 2017. Through the Shedlins, she also encountered the works of Carl Jung (1875-1961) and his student Esther Harding (1888-1971); the Indian philosopher Jiddu Krishnamurti (1895-1986); the spiritualist and mystic George Gurdjieff (1866-1949) and his followers P. D. Ouspensky (1879-1947) and J.G. Bennett (1897-1974) as well as Simone de Beauvoir. She later completed a BA in Transpersonal Psychology at San Francisco State in 1979. Salyer, email to author, 13 June 2013.

²¹ Kinsey conducted a groundbreaking study of human sexual experience in the late 1940s, publishing his ‘reports’ *Sexual Behaviour in the Human Male* (1948) and *Sexual Behaviour in the Human Female* (1952). Masters and Johnson carried out extensive research into sexual behaviour throughout the late 1950s and 1960s. Their research culminated in *Human Sexual Response* (1960).

during the 1920s and his own Sex-Pol clinics founded in 1929.²² He deviated significantly from Freud in his assertion that, far from being the glue holding civilized society together, sexual repression was a cornerstone of authoritarian regimes, and argued that sexual freedom was integral to political liberty. Perhaps most controversially, he believed that the sexual freedom of children and teenagers was most affected by repressive society and sexual morality, and significantly impinged on an individual's healthy character formation. The traditional 'patriarchal family', he argued, is 'the first and most important place of reproduction of the social order' and 'creates in children a character structure which makes them amenable to the later influences of an authoritarian order.'²³ He was highly critical of pre-marital abstinence, an early advocate for birth control and of women's rights to safe, legal abortions.

In 1920s Austria, Reich studied psychoanalytic therapeutic techniques in tandem with human sexuality, building on Freud's concept of libido and his incomplete study of masturbation. Reich believed that the sexual repression demanded by patriarchal societies like those in Europe, instilled in infancy and maintained in adulthood, resulted in 'undischarged sexual excitation.'²⁴ From this research he developed his concepts of 'character armour' – physical manifestations of pent-up emotional energy in the body – which he explored in his book *Character Analysis* (1933; publication in English, 1950), and 'orgiastic potency', what he describes as the 'the capacity to surrender to the flow of biological energy, free of any inhibitions; the capacity to discharge completely the damned-up sexual excitation through involuntary, pleasurable convulsions of the body.'²⁵ As his biographer Myron Sharaf summarizes, 'in both contexts, Reich was concerned with the liberation of emotion,' either through character analysis or physical release.²⁶ He expanded these notions in his books *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*

²² Juliet Mitchell, *Psychoanalysis and Feminism: A Radical Reassessment of Freudian Psychoanalysis* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1987), 145. Reich established his own Sex-Pol clinic in 1929 with the aim of educating ordinary working people about sex, sexual health and contraception. See Elizabeth Ann Danto, 'Sex, Class and Social Work: Wilhelm Reich's Free Clinics and the Activist History of Psychoanalysis,' *Psychoanalytic Social Work* 7, no. 1 (2000): 55-72.

²³ Wilhelm Reich, 'Preface to the First Edition,' *Character Analysis*, trans. Theodore Wolfe (London: Vision Press, 1976), xxiii.

²⁴ Reich, *The Function of the Orgasm: Sex-economic Problems of Biological Energy* [1942], trans. Vincent R. Carfagno (London: Souvenir Press, 1999), 134.

²⁵ Reich, *The Function of the Orgasm*, 102. These ideas were first explored in *Die Funktion des Orgasmus* (1927, published in English as *Genitality in the Theory and Therapy of Neurosis*, 1980). Confusingly, *The Function of the Orgasm* (1942), written specifically for an English audience that charted the development of his theories up to 1940, is entirely different from *Die Funktion des Orgasmus*. It is also worth noting that, like Freud, Reich's formulations were based on a heterosexual conception of sexual intercourse.

²⁶ Myron Sharaf, *Fury on Earth: A Biography of Wilhelm Reich*, [1983] (New York: De Capo, 1994), 89.

(1933, 1946) and *The Sexual Revolution: Toward a Self-Governing Character Structure* (1936, 1945).

Significantly, these ideas led him away from the ‘talking therapy’ championed by Freud and his followers to a reconsideration of the body and the belief that the psyche manifested itself physically. In the mid-1930s, he attempted to further link the psychological with the physiological using scientific studies of the human nervous system and bio-electricity in order to investigate how pleasure and anxiety affected electrical activity in the body, particularly the skin.²⁷ During this time, he developed his vegetotherapy, a therapeutic method to tackle the ‘physiological processes of repression,’ which functioned as the physical equivalent of character analysis in psychoanalytic therapy.²⁸ Using deep breathing techniques, the movement of limbs and other parts of the body, and pressure applied by the therapist’s hands, its goal was to restore the individual’s orgasm reflex, and ultimately, regain his or her orgiastic potency.²⁹ As well as breaking the strongly held taboo against touch within psychiatry, his patients were eventually treated in their underwear or sometimes totally nude.³⁰

Following his emigration to the US in 1939, Reich began formulating his theory of orgone energy, what he believed to be a ubiquitous atmospheric energy force, developing on his earlier natural scientific experiments. As Jeffrey Kripal stresses, unlike Freud’s metaphorical concept of the libido, Reich believed orgone energy to be ‘quantifiable.’³¹ This same energy was what circulated thorough the body and facilitated the orgasm reflex, unless it became blocked by muscular armour, which he subsequently conceived of as a series of seven segments or rings.³² “Character-analytic vegetotherapy” eventually became known as “psychiatric orgone therapy” and in the early 1940s, Reich developed a device that he believed attracted orgone energy which he eventually named the orgone energy accumulator.³³ The accumulator became popular with Beat generation writers William Burroughs and Jack Kerouac as well as Norman Mailer, and to some extent has defined Reich’s legacy in popular culture ever since. It was also central in his demise; in April 1957, Reich was sentenced to two years in prison for breaching an injunction against the sale of the devices imposed by the US Food and Drug Administration; many of Reich’s books or other documents were burned by court order. The FDA had banned the accumulator mainly because of the

²⁷ Ibid, 207-211.

²⁸ Reich, *The Function of the Orgasm*, 300; 329.

²⁹ Ibid, 330-334.

³⁰ Sharaf, 235.

³¹ Kripal, *Esalen*, 234.

³² Sharaf, 311-313.

³³ Ibid, 313; 281.

claims being made about its ability to cure diseases like cancer. In November that year, Reich died in his cell of heart failure.

In the late 1960s, however, Reich's writings were rediscovered and adopted by a new generation seeking to challenge the perceived social and cultural conformity of the American way of life. Several of his writings were republished or appeared for the first time in English during the 1970s. His influence was felt in the world of psychology; Schutz's encounter groups can be considered a descendant of Reichian therapy, as can the work of another influential Esalen figure, Fritz Perls. As a former analysand of Reich's, Perls was influenced by 'Reich's idea that the body reflected internal psychological processes.'³⁴ But his political ideas also found new audiences, particularly in the New Left and the Women's Liberation Movement. And, as we shall see, Reich's theories also inform Salyer's discussion of films in her writing for *Women & Film*. By 1972, Salyer had a close friend who was a Berkeley psychology graduate and Reichian therapist; studying together, she remembers 'longing to free ourselves, our bodies, [...] so heavily armoured through generations against feeling the pain of trauma, personal and collective.'³⁵

To understand why Salyer and others turned to Reich, a brief look at the history of psychoanalysis and psychological theory in the United States is needed. Psychoanalytic terms and concepts had entered mainstream discourse in America during the 1920s and 30s, in part due to the high numbers of European practitioners and theorists taking refuge in the country in the wake of fascism.³⁶ Undergoing psychoanalysis became a fashionable activity for many in the middle and upper classes during the post-war era, and by the 1960s, some of its terms had gained currency in North American popular culture. However, in the early 1960s, Freudianism met with widespread criticism from US feminists. For Betty Friedan, the author of *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), the popularization of psychoanalytic ideas during the first half of the 20th century had come at the expense of a proper understanding of Freud's work. Their use in popular journalism, particularly women's magazines, was helping to bolster the 'feminine mystique': 'Over and over,' she said, 'women heard in voices of tradition and of Freudian sophistication that they could desire no greater destiny than to glory in their own femininity.'³⁷ In *The Dialectic of Sex* (1970), Shulamith Firestone argued that psychoanalysis – 'America's Modern Church' – had been reclaimed by Neo-Freudians,

³⁴ Walter Truett Anderson, *The Upstart Spring: Esalen and the American Awakening*, (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1983), 91; Drury, 85.

³⁵ Salyer, email to author, 6 September 2017.

³⁶ Mitchell, 296-7.

³⁷ Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique, The Feminine Mystique* (New York: Laurel, 1983), 15. See her chapters 5 and 6 on Freud, functionalism and the anthropologist Margaret Mead.

such as Erich Fromm and Theodor Reik, and mobilized to 'stem the flow of feminism'.³⁸ 'Freudian theory', she claims,

regroomed for its new function of "social adjustment", was used to wipe up the feminist revolt. Patching up with band-aids the casualties of the aborted feminist revolution, it succeeded in quieting the immense social unrest and role confusion that followed in the wake of the first attack on the rigid patriarchal family.³⁹

For Kate Millett in *Sexual Politics* (1970), modern western culture, in the guise of celebrated authors such as D.H. Lawrence, Henry Miller and Norman Mailer and leading social scientists of the day, similarly appropriated Freud's theories, such as the Oedipus complex and penis envy, in order to reinforce male supremacy.⁴⁰ Millett further argued that this anti-feminism was to some extent inherent in Freud's work, allowing it to be a major contributor to the 'counterrevolution' that followed the achievements of the women's suffrage movement.⁴¹ Beh and Salyer see a similar process at work in mainstream film, complaining of the 'misleading superficial interpretations of Freudian psychology turned out by a dozen hack writers and directors' in their debut editorial.⁴²

While Freud seemed toxic to many feminists in the United States, a number of his followers gained prominence during the 1960s and 1970s, several of whom appeared less inimical to the women's movement, Reich in particular. While Salyer at times cites him directly, his theories are also deployed through the filter of radical feminism, specifically the work of Shulamith Firestone. This shall be discussed more fully following an account of Salyer's political activism and her encounters with the women's liberation movement during the late 1960s.

³⁸ Firestone, *The Dialectic of Sex: The Case for Feminist Revolution* (London: Paladin, 1972), 69.

³⁹ *Ibid*, 71.

⁴⁰ In fact both Miller and Mailer can be linked to the history of Reich's ideas in North America: Miller was a figure in the pre-WWII sexual revolution and made the hot springs at Big Sur – the future site of Esalen – famous as a space for sexual liberation in the 1940s. Christopher Turner, *Adventures in the Orgasmatron: Wilhelm Reich and the Invention of Sex* (London: HarperPress, 2008), 274-276. Mailer was famously an advocate for Reich during the sixties and a frequent user of his own, homemade orgone accumulator. Turner, 429-432.

⁴¹ Kate Millett, *Sexual Politics* (London: Virago, 1977), 178. In 1974, Juliet Mitchell argued that the use of Freudian psychoanalysis to buttress the status quo in the United States (as identified by Friedan et al) contributed to American feminism's deep mistrust of Freud. But for British feminists, a reassessment of Freud's work appeared far less counterintuitive for developing a feminist theory of sexual difference, given that Fascism and Nazism had largely eradicated psychoanalytic study on the continent. She in turn argues that Friedan's and Millett's work is also subject to significant misunderstandings. Mitchell, 297.

⁴² Editors, 'Overview,' *Women & Film* 1 (1972), 4.

Salyer's Political Education and Feminist Radicalization

Salyer's exploration of the ideas and philosophies emerging from the counterculture was simultaneous with her involvement in the era's political movements. She had come of age during civil rights and the Free Speech Movement, and had been a frequent visitor to Berkeley while living in LA. But it was her time at San Francisco State that marked the beginning of her political radicalization, 'the beginning of finding a form in the midst of formless protest and experimentation.'⁴³ Enrolling there to study English literature, drama and psychology at the start of 1968, she moved from Santa Monica to Berkeley. That spring, she took part in a sit-in at the administration building alongside other students campaigning for a black studies department.⁴⁴ On 21 May, police arrested 26 students from the 400-strong sit-in, Salyer among them. She spent her first and only time in jail awake all night in a cell with several women from Students for a Democratic Society (SDS).⁴⁵ 'I listened to their analysis of society, and [it] just blew my mind' she remembers.⁴⁶ This protest was followed by a major strike in November of the same year. For five months, students protested in demonstrations coordinated by the BSU and several other ethnic minority student groups under the banner of the Third World Liberation Front (TWLF). A list of demands submitted by the demonstrators included the admission of every black applicant for the 1969-1970 academic year, and the creation of twenty full-time academic positions for a black studies department.⁴⁷ As well as the battle for the department was the desire to improve African-American students' access to higher education and to make university curricula reflect more fully black and minority citizens' histories and identities. A request was also made by the TWLF for an ethnic studies department to be set up on campus. In March of 1969, a student was badly injured when he attempted to set off a bomb on campus. Two weeks later, the university, the BSU and the TWLF reached an

⁴³ Salyer, interview. She goes on to explain: 'I mean, there was Golden Gate Park love-ins and be-ins, [...] the hippie movement, [...] music, [...] alternative lifestyles. But there wasn't a focus for really looking at the culture and trying to systematically undertake change, on a consciously political level.'

⁴⁴ A hundred or so black students had formed the Black Students Union (BSU) in 1966. Following the suspension of several students for allegedly attacking the white editor of college paper *The Gator*, black and white students held demonstrations and sit-ins throughout 1967. Willie Brown, a BSU member and local state representative, eventually called for the university to set up the country's first-ever black studies department. See Anderson, *The Movement and the Sixties*, (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 294-295.

⁴⁵ Salyer, interview.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ Helene Whitson, 'S.F. State Strike 1968-69 Chronology,' *Foundsf.org*. http://foundsf.org/index.php?title=S.F._STATE_STRIKE_1968-69_CHRONOLOGY (27.02.2014).

agreement, with many of the protesters' demands met, and the strike came to an end on 21 March.⁴⁸

As a Berkeley resident, Salyer took part in many other local political and social campaigns including 'anti-war demonstrations, the attempt to recall California Governor Ronald Reagan, [...] rent-strikes against Berkeley's most oppressive landlords, [...] and] organic food co-ops.'⁴⁹ The assassination of Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy in 1968 'left most of us hopeless and enraged, paralyzed and committed to desperate and sustained action,' she recalls, but 'news of student uprisings in other countries gave us hope.'⁵⁰ She was an active supporter of Eldridge Cleaver's presidential campaign; 'the 1968 presidential election was the first in which I was eligible to vote and I cast my ballot for Cleaver' she recalls.⁵¹ She also witnessed the violence that erupted during the People's Park Protests in May 1969. The dispute centered on a small plot owned by UC Berkeley that had been earmarked for development; locals and students had claimed it as a community park and staged occupations to prevent it from being built on. One such demonstration escalated into violence when Governor Ronald Reagan sent the National Guard to end the protest. Salyer recalls seeing the now iconic scenes of hippies putting flowers in the gun barrels of National Guardsmen and tanks rolling down Telegraph Avenue.⁵²

Salyer reflects that 'there were things going on all over the world. And you felt it. I felt it. We all felt it. [...] There was energy and passion; there were *numbers*.'⁵³ Significantly, she also recalls an

emerging awareness that in this protest movement, in this counterculture [...] (going back to the land, food co-ops, rent strikes) while women were participating side by side, making decisions, and carrying out the necessary actions, when the spotlight came on, when somebody was asked to be interviewed by the press, when someone was asked to represent a group of people, the women were shoved aside.⁵⁴

Women activists, she contends, were expected to 'fetch the coffee, run the mimeograph machine, and spread [their] legs.'⁵⁵ This same impression impelled many women on the left to call out their fellow male activists' discriminatory behavior and sexist attitudes, a move which ultimately ignited the women's liberation movement of the late 1960s. She

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Salyer, email to author, 12 June 2012. An attempt was made to recall Reagan during his first term as governor in the summer of 1968.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Salyer, interview.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

started reading feminist texts such as Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* and began attending consciousness-raising groups in Berkeley, where her experience of encounter group therapy unexpectedly came into play. 'Consciousness-raising was not separated from the activities we were committed to,' Salyer stresses: 'it was a political tool. It was a tool for awareness, making new forms and taking action.'⁵⁶

At the end of her spring semester in 1969 and in the midst of so much political and personal turmoil, Salyer began to see her college education as 'hopelessly irrelevant': 'I wanted to be directly involved,' she recalls, 'to help, and to contribute somehow in these extraordinary times.'⁵⁷ Later that year, she returned to LA and lived in Venice while crewing on various film projects. She eventually became involved in the feminist newspaper *Everywoman*. Founded in 1970, *Everywoman* was an independently produced publication based at the Everywoman Bookstore in Los Angeles (fig. 14).⁵⁸ 'Everyone did everything,' Salyer recalls of the magazine's running, 'there was no hierarchy and [it] was self-published by the collective':

I remember laying-out *Everywoman* in a living room in Santa Monica, a collective project of 3 or 4 women with coffee, snacks, bottles of rubber cement, X-Acto knives, typewriters, Letraset, etc., arranging everything on large sheets of paper which would be taken to a small printer.⁵⁹

One reprinted article by the Iowa City Women's Collective about the group's experiences of living and working communally, including details about their consciousness-raising meetings and their decision to ban all men from the household, claimed that 'women, by forming their own collectives are saying [...], "Fuck men" and "Up with the new revolution".'⁶⁰ This was accompanied by an announcement of *Everywoman's* intent to 'form the first feminist community in Los Angeles' and asked women interested in 'new ways of living and working' to get in touch.⁶¹ Salyer explains that the decision to run *Everywoman* as a collective reflected a

definite desire to reach consensus, to support each other, to stand up for each other, in sisterhood, and not be involved in hierarchical organizations at all. If we were going to provide a critique of capitalism, the class system, racism, and sexism, we were going to do it differently. We weren't going to do it in the same

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Salyer, email to author, 28 July 2017.

⁵⁸ In 1970, the paper was published from a house on 6516 West 83rd Street in Westchester; in June 1971 it moved to the Everywoman Bookstore at 1043B West Washington Boulevard in Venice, and later, 2083 Westwood Blvd in West LA.

⁵⁹ Salyer, email to author, 12 June 2012; email to author, 15 February 2013.

⁶⁰ 'Women's Collective,' reprinted in *Everywoman* I, no. 5, issue 5 (1970), 17. Original article from *Ain't I A Woman?*, a feminist paper from Iowa City.

⁶¹ Editor's note, 'Women's Collective,' 17.

old structures, the same old way. That [hierarchy and separation] was part of the illness.⁶²

The aim of publishing the newspaper, she recalls, was to 'collect information, make it available to everybody so we could be an effective force for change.'⁶³ 'Herstory' by Ann Forfreedom was a regular column about women's history, and the anonymous 'Manglish,' about language and sexism. There were also articles about abortion rights, discrimination in the workplace, childcare and health, as well as poetry, drawings, collages and reports on feminist campaigns, actions and arts events (fig. 15-17). Salyer describes the paper as

locally oriented as a calendar, review of news, events, arts, business and professional contacts and then oriented broadly with features of political, cultural and movement analysis.⁶⁴

She also remembers that 'sometimes we would type up material (literally news as it came in) on the spot and glue it down.'⁶⁵ This included the meeting point for LA women to join the Women's General Strike taking place in August 1970; details about the opening of the Berkeley Women's Clinic, 'the first women's clinic in the country'; the location of the Southern California Regional N.O.W. conference; or information about a 'Women's Liberation School' running at the Women's Centre on Crenshaw Boulevard in the fall of 1971.⁶⁶

Everywoman was an important space for the discussion of an emerging feminist cultural scene. Its calendar section notified readers of lectures, readings, plays, concerts as well as film screenings. One announcement from late 1971 lists screenings of *Women on the March*, *Eva Peron* and *Eleanor Roosevelt* taking place as part of the LA Women's Film Series at the Women's Center.⁶⁷ In another 1971 issue, a monochrome lithograph of a tampon being pulled from a vagina by Judy Chicago entitled *Red Flag* (1971) appeared as an alternative centrefold (fig. 18-19).⁶⁸ As previously mentioned, Chicago was a key figure in the nascent feminist art movement and had established the Feminist Art Program at Fresno State in central California in 1970. This small group of female students explored issues of femininity, sex, rape and the body through a consciousness-raising group, which then informed performance works, sculptures and

⁶² Salyer, interview.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Salyer, email to author, 12 June 2012.

⁶⁵ Salyer, email to author, 15 February 2013.

⁶⁶ *Everywoman* I, no. 5, issue 5 (31 July 1970), 3; vol. II, no. 9, issue 20 (18 June 1971), 2; vol. II, no. 16, issue 27 (12 November 1971), 17; vol. II, issue 23, (20 August 1971), 2.

⁶⁷ 'Calendar,' *Everywoman* II, no. 16, issue 27 (12 November 1971), 17.

⁶⁸ *Everywoman* II, no. 16, issue 27 (12 November 1971). According to Salyer, some subscribers 'decided they weren't interested in the paper after this photo!' Salyer, interview.

installations such as *Womanhouse* (1972), often making use of traditionally feminine crafts such as embroidery. Chicago was a pioneer of 'cunt art' or 'central core imagery,' an attempt to depict what it is was like 'to be organized around a central core, a vagina.'⁶⁹ As its title suggests, the image, with its red, bloody highlights, dramatically breaks the taboo on visually representing menstruation.

The magazine also published a special issue dedicated to women's sexual health. As Salyer recalls, the collective 'was interested in reclaiming "our bodies for ourselves" and we did a clinical feature with photos taken in a living room on the use of the speculum for self-examination.'⁷⁰ This was almost certainly in response to a visit to the Everywoman bookstore in April 1971 by Carol Downer, who would go on to found the Los Angeles Feminist Women's Health Center soon after.⁷¹ In 'Vaginal Politics,' which appeared in August that same year, Peggy Grau explains to readers how to use a speculum and how to recognise signs of infection. It included two photographs by Salyer of a woman using a speculum to open her vagina (fig. 20).⁷² 'It was a dynamic time, Salyer reflects, 'we were all infected with this resurgence of feminism and activism.'⁷³

At *Everywoman*, Salyer explored her interests in surrealism and film as well as feminism. 'I was definitely *the* person at *Everywoman* that was consistently bringing forward films as a tool for cultural transformation, and to encourage women to make their own films.'⁷⁴ Her influence is perhaps evidenced by the *Everywoman* cover featuring an image from Makavejev's *WR: Mysteries of the Organism*, a film Salyer would later write about for *Women & Film* (fig. 21).⁷⁵ It shows a double image of a woman in front of a striped wall; in one she poses holding a picture frame that encases her lower body, framing her midriff, hips and upper thighs in a way that reduces her to anatomy. In the other, the frame surrounds her head but her arm punches through its invisible glass. Together, they represent the possibility of women breaking out of the confines of sexual objectification.

⁶⁹ Judy Chicago, *Through the Flower: My Struggle as a Woman Artist* (New York: Anchor Books, 1977), 55.

⁷⁰ Salyer, email to author, 12 June 2012.

⁷¹ Sandra Morgan, *Into Our Own Hands: The Women's Health Movement in the United States, 1969-1990* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2002), 7-8.

⁷² 'Vaginal Politics,' *Everywoman* II, no. 12, issue 23 (20 Aug 1971), 1.

⁷³ Salyer, email to author, 12 June 2012.

⁷⁴ Salyer, interview.

⁷⁵ *Everywoman* II, no. 16, issue 27 (12 November 1971).

Everywoman on Film: Salyer reviews *Les stances à Sophie*

The review of Moshe Mizrahi's film *Les stances à Sophie* (*Sophie's Ways*, 1970) that appears in issue 1 of *Women & Film* succinctly represents Salyer's transition from the *Everywoman* collective to her collaboration with Beh. Credited to 'Everywoman' in the issue's table of contents, what appears is in fact an edited version of 'The Perils of Celine' published in the August 1971 issue of *Everywoman*. Although the original article is written in the first-person plural and credited to 'Saunie, Gail, Susan and Peggy,' according to Salyer, she wrote it alone.⁷⁶ *Les stances à Sophie* is based on the bestselling 1963 book of the same name by the French feminist novelist Christiane Rochefort (1917-1998). It is frequently mentioned in *Women & Film*'s first few issues, most likely because it was one of the earliest films of the period to depict a woman's encounter with the women's liberation movement and her attempts to transform her life based on feminist ideas. The film is later discussed in depth in the double issue 3-4 (1973), in a nine-page interview with Rochefort featuring photographs and a drawing of the novelist (fig. 22).

In *Les stances à Sophie*, Céline (Bernadette Lafont) goes from being a single woman experimenting with painting, 'universal love' and the drugs and music of the hippie lifestyle, to a disillusioned housewife after marrying Philippe (Michel Duchaussoy), a bourgeois businessman. Set up as polar opposites, their relationship appears doomed, as Salyer points out in regard to this exchange: Céline declares 'I love all men as if they were one.' Phillippe responds: 'I want one woman to symbolize all women.' What Salyer does not mention is what succeeds this scene on screen: the camera pans away from the couple, with Phillippe looming behind a seated Céline as they both look off into the distance, followed by a shot of a series of signs warning of 'Danger' and 'Zone de Confusion' (they are standing under an electrical pylon). The visual pun is unmistakable.

Céline becomes friends with Julia (Bulle Ogier), the wife of her husband's best friend, and learns from her how to exert her power in the domestic sphere: padding household bills, using emotional manipulation and dressing to please. Nonetheless, both remain trapped in this stifling and repressive environment and Céline is still deeply unhappy. As Céline and Julia's friendship deepens, their ongoing discussion of

⁷⁶ 'Review: The Perils of Celine,' *Everywoman* II, no. 12, issue 23 (20 August 1971), 7. The other names are of other *Everywoman* members. Salyer clarifies: 'articles were not collectively written. They might be conceived, discussed and edited collectively but one person typically volunteered or suggested a specific article and took responsibility for writing it,' Salyer, email to author, 29 July 2017.

what it means to be a wife and a woman develops into a critique of marriage, Western romantic ideals and sexual mores. They isolate themselves from their husbands and Céline begins to rebel by neglecting her housewifely duties.

The film's soundtrack is scored by the avant-garde jazz troupe the Art Ensemble of Chicago, and their music often functions as an aural representation of Céline's spirit. Drums and wailing trumpets lend an exotic air to its opening scenes, as we follow Philippe as he navigates the esoteric décor and spaced out inhabitants of Céline's hippie den; this is her world. As they establish themselves as a couple, no music is heard on the soundtrack, but it fades in quietly and somberly in the ensuing scenes during which Philippe exerts his dominance over his wife, dictating her schedule and demanding her devotion as she mopes. Later, it returns with vengeance when she finally seizes power in the domestic sphere, this time accompanied by Fontella Bass's powerful vocals. Throughout the film, the Art Ensemble's music underlines those moments when Céline tastes autonomy, freedom and joy as she gradually challenges her husband.

Céline and Julia begin writing a treatise, *The Sexual Mores of the Natives of Western Europe*, in part as a response to the superficial embrace of free love espoused by some in their bourgeois circle, most vocally Julia's husband Jean-Pierre (Serge Marquand). Céline returns to painting, as well as other hobbies like tapestry and self-defense. However, Julia is killed when her husband crashes his new sports car during a race with Philippe to the coast. Céline is devastated and seeks solace in a new friendship with Philippe's young sister, Stephanie. In the final act of the film, Philippe explodes with rage at his wife after his growing suspicion of her activities and relationship with Stephanie leads him to discover the manuscript of the treatise on sexuality. Their confrontation escalates to violence and ends with him attempting to rape her. She fights him off and he breaks down. In a final act of humility, Céline comforts him and they make love, finally, it seems, as equals: each is shown laying their head on the other's naked breast, images which indicate a kind of reciprocal tenderness. The film ends with Céline's departure from the marriage and Philippe's acceptance of his need to change and his acknowledgement that he had 'loved her the wrong way.'

Salyer's review begins with a quotation from the opening paragraph of Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino's 'Toward a Third Cinema', reprinted from *Cineaste*:

In an alienated world, culture – obviously – is a deformed and deforming product. To overcome this it is necessary to have a culture of and for the revolution, a subversive culture capable of contributing to the downfall of a capitalist (sexist) society. In the specific case of the cinema – art of the masses

par excellence – its transformation from mere entertainment into active means of dealienation [sic] becomes imperative.⁷⁷

The aim of bringing down sexist society by ‘subversive culture’ is Salyer’s own addition to Solanas and Getino’s original text. How does *Les Stances a Sophie* contribute to this downfall? Does it perform ‘an active means of dealienation’ instead of being ‘mere entertainment’? The term is a reversal of alienation, Marx’s concept whereby an individual becomes dehumanized by the exploitative nature of existence within capitalist society. Salyer’s argument is that it does by specifically ‘analy[zing] the process of dealienation of one woman, and to a lesser degree, her husband, her friend and a child.’ ‘To the extent that the woman’s awareness of her oppression is an awareness of male-structured and dominated society,’ Salyer argues, *Les stances à Sophie* ‘is a “feminist film”.’⁷⁸

This is in spite of it also being a ‘commercial’ film as opposed to a ‘revolutionary’ one. By commercial, Salyer means a film with ‘conventional, dramatic form in the interests of mass distribution,’ i.e. following the model of classical Hollywood filmmaking and circulated via the traditional channels for film exhibition: cinemas and festivals as opposed to classrooms or discussion groups.⁷⁹ Her model for a revolutionary film is Solanas and Getino’s *The Hour of the Furnaces*, a 208 minute-long essay film about Latin America’s colonial history which combines archive footage and stills with traditional music, archive audio extracts and a didactic voice-over reading from Jean-Paul Sartre and Franz Fanon, Che Guevara and Fidel Castro. Salyer’s point is that while *Les stances à Sophie* may not look like a politically revolutionary film, its ‘content is radical’ and although it at times demonstrates a lack of understanding of feminist ideology, ‘its analysis is sound.’⁸⁰ She also points to Solanas and Getino’s manifesto as a good ‘starting point’ for a ‘manifesto of feminist cinema,’ directing readers to the winter issue of *Cineaste* in which it appeared. She stipulates that such a cinema would ‘initially mean films made collectively by women and all female crews.’⁸¹ Once again however, this term is deployed with little indication of how such systems would be implemented.

Salyer lights on Céline and Julia’s relationship as the catalyst that brings about change for Céline. But it is not just sisterhood but rather sex that makes their pairing politically fertile, although this transition from a platonic to a sexual relationship is not

⁷⁷ Solanas and Getino ‘Toward a Third Cinema,’ *Cineaste* IV, no. 3 (1970-71) in Salyer, ‘Stances a Sophie,’ *Women & Film* 1 (1972), 69.

⁷⁸ Salyer, ‘Stances a Sophie,’ 69.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid; Ibid, 70.

⁸¹ Ibid, 69.

made explicit in either the novel or the film. In the novel, Céline and Julia's sexual encounters are deliberately left out by Rochefort to preclude a 'voyeuristic response' from readers.⁸² In the film, this encounter is represented by one long shot: the camera pans around Julia's empty bedroom; it reverses out, and the door slowly closes after it. Prior to this is an exchange between the two women as they lie on the bed opposite one another eating strawberries. Céline talks about kissing and prompts Julia to recall an experience with an old boyfriend. This memory cracks what has, up to this point, been a seemingly unbreakable veneer in Julia's cheerful stoicism. A wistful flute and double bass tune plays briefly before Julia admits 'If I think about this, I'll have desires and it will hurt.' The music picks up again as Julia remarks that she wants to take a shower and that her maid has gone out, and continues over the shots of the empty bedroom. As we glimpse the en-suite bathroom through a half-open door, the implication is that the two women are in the shower together.

By turning to each other for pleasure, Céline and Julia perform a rejection of patriarchy as enacted in the romantic ideal of heterosexual coupling. Following this, Céline's activities become distinctly rebellious; after the bedroom scene, the camera cuts to her admiring herself in a new pair of trousers in front of the mirror and accompanied by a upbeat tune dominated by trumpet. But despite their sexual relationship and their isolation from their husbands, Céline and Julia do not embrace any kind of lesbian identity. Instead, their coupling works to disrupt patriarchal oppression in order that an individual woman can be liberated from it. As Salyer describes

The women grow together. Their equality of relationship, intellectually, emotionally and sexually, destroys the need they have for authority, and the bastion of authority, male society. After the physical consummation of Julia and Céline's love, *Céline is transformed*.⁸³

Here the women's relationship becomes a transformative and liberating process, an outcome that conforms to the Reichian understanding of sexual repression and political impotency. This seeming disavowal of lesbian identity concurs with Rochefort's own attitude toward sexual identities at the time. As the author has acknowledged, *Les stances à Sophie* is her most autobiographical novel and the women's relationship reflected her own experiences during the breakdown of her marriage.⁸⁴ 'All my life,' Rochefort has claimed, 'I've been considered a lesbian. I've

⁸² Margaret-Anne Hutton, *Countering the Culture: The Novels of Christiane Rochefort* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1998), 73.

⁸³ Salyer, 'Stances a Sophie,' 70. My emphasis.

⁸⁴ Hutton, 76.

always been what they now call bisexual,' another 'label' she has rejected.⁸⁵

Salyer ends her short review with the complaint that the film 'suffers at times from a limited knowledge of current feminist ideology' – unsurprising given that it was written well before the women's movement had developed in France or the US – and that it 'lacks solutions [...] other than individual liberation.'⁸⁶ Although the film centers on Céline, I would argue however that her emancipation requires her to reach out to others, Julia, Stéphanie and even Phillipe eventually, in order for change to truly occur.

Dora Kaplan Reports: Salyer on the San Francisco International Film

Festival

According to Salyer, the San Francisco International Film Festival, which she began attending in the late 1960s, was 'instrumental' to her appreciation of film.

My film aesthetic and preferences were entirely fueled and determined by three or four years of "apprenticeship" in international cinema at the SFIFF under Albert Johnson's brilliant leadership. The international cinema, mainly European, was pretty much my initiation into the world of film, and into the passionate belief that cinema could change the world.⁸⁷

First held in 1957, it was one of the earliest international film festivals in the United States. Albert Johnson, its director from 1965-72, 'searched the world for films' recalls Salyer, and generously catered to the growing American enthusiasm for foreign movies, bringing filmmakers like Jean-Luc Godard, Lina Wertmüller and Bernardo Bertolucci to the West coast.⁸⁸ Salyer points out that while some Hollywood directors like Howard Hawks had 'some appreciation of women as real people in film, apart from being sexual objects,' the cinematic styles of directors like Ingmar Bergman, Satyajit Ray and Godard were of far greater political and cultural interest. Like Beh, Salyer is hugely influenced by Godard, commenting that his 'documentary stance [...] cleared the indoctrinations, the cultural lens that could so easily be used as propaganda.' Overall,

⁸⁵ Rochefort in Cécile Arsène, 'The Privilege of Consciousness: An Interview,' trans. Marilyn Schuster, *Homosexualities and French Literature: Cultural Contexts/Critical Texts*, ed. George Stambolian and Elaine Marks (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1979), 105.

⁸⁶ Salyer, 'Stances a Sophie,' 70.

⁸⁷ Salyer, email to author, 13 June 2013.

⁸⁸ Salyer, email to author, 12 June 2012. Johnson (1925-1998) started out writing for *Sight and Sound* in the UK and later lectured on film within the African American studies department at University California Berkeley. See 'Albert Johnson, 73, San Francisco Film Festival Program Director,' *New York Times*, 23 October 1998, <http://www.nytimes.com/1998/10/23/arts/albert-johnson-73-san-francisco-film-festival-program-director.html> (14.03.2017).

the films of the European new wave are 'deep penetrating, soulful, symbolic, mythic, metaphoric explorations of deep psyche and relationships' and highly relevant to the themes of love, intimacy and relationships that Salyer feels were at stake in the women's movement.⁸⁹ Her report provides the opportunity for her to explore her interest in the revolutionary feminist potential – politically and psychologically – of avant-garde cinema of Europe, particularly its representations of alternative sexual and familial relationships. She discusses eleven films in detail, but of special interest are her reflections on *The Heart Murmur* (Louis Malle, 1971) and *WR: Mysteries of the Organism* (Dušan Makavejev, 1971). It is these films that draw forth her engagement with radical feminist, Marxist, and psychoanalytic theory, particularly the work of Shulamith Firestone and Wilhelm Reich.

Salyer writes her report under the pseudonym Dora Kaplan, chosen in homage to one of the then few French woman directors, Nelly Kaplan. The 15th San Francisco International Film Festival featured very few films by women but despite being 'a (male) cultural event of the greatest magnitude', Salyer explains, it nonetheless showcased several films significant for feminism.⁹⁰ Before considering the festival and its films, she lays out her critical framework for the discussion of art and the artist in the context of feminist political change. Salyer begins with an extended quotation of Maxim Gorky's famous account of seeing the Lumière Brothers' films in his hometown of Nizhny-Novgorod in 1896.⁹¹ Gorky describes the contradictions of this new technology, one which 'affirms once again the energy and the curiosity of the human mind' and yet is enjoyed by the unsophisticated crowds at Aumont's bar.⁹² Of interest here is Gorky's conclusion that

these pictures will soon be replaced by others of a genre more suited to the general tone of the "Concert Parisien." For example, they will show a picture titled: "As She Undresses," or "Madame at Her bath," or "A Woman in Stockings."⁹³

Gorky's statement is prescient, Salyer believes, since it identifies the cinematograph's future role in the 'representation of woman as sexual object.'⁹⁴ Given that 'culture itself is male', it comes as no surprise that 'the invention of cinema, the art form with the

⁸⁹ Salyer, interview.

⁹⁰ Salyer, 'A Woman Looks at the S.F.I.F.F,' *Women & Film* 1 (1972), 48.

⁹¹ She does not provide a reference for this, but a possible source is Terry Ramsaye's *A Million and One Nights: A history of the motion picture* (1926, reprint 1964).

⁹² Salyer, 'A Woman Looks,' 47.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

greatest potential for revealing man to himself has also the greatest potential for revealing woman to herself as seen through the eyes of men.’⁹⁵

This notion of art as a reflection of reality, something already touched on in the editorial, is also present in the image that accompanies her article (fig. 23). A still from *Adrift* (Jan Kadar and Elmar Klos, 1971), it depicts a woman holding up a mirror to another, reclining woman; while the positioning of her head obscures the first woman’s face, the mirror reflects the second’s at an obtuse angle. There is something sisterly about the way one is holding up the mirror to the other, an image that perhaps resonates with notions of feminist sisterhood. Combined with the article’s title, ‘A Woman Looks at the S.F.I.F.F.’, it evokes the idea of women investigating their image and their representation for themselves.

Salyer grapples with a fundamental question in philosophy, and one that feminist film critics of the era return to repeatedly: the complex relationship between authorship and gender, specifically in relation to the representation of women in literature and film. She turns to Shulamith Firestone and her assertion that ‘not only do most artists not overcome, they are not even *aware* of the existence of a cultural limitation based on sex.’⁹⁶ She quotes Firestone again, who argues that most art

fails to achieve a comprehensive world view because it does not recognize that male reality is not REALITY, but only one half of reality. Thus its portrayal of the opposite sex and its behavior (half of humanity) is false: The artist himself does not understand female motives.⁹⁷

Salyer allows for the existence of an androgynous authorial position and her invocation of Joyce, Proust and Tolstoy points to her likely indebtedness to Virginia Woolf’s writing on the subject in *A Room of One’s Own* (1929).⁹⁸ But, she counters, the ‘female reality’ they depict remains constrained by the artists’ specific cultural context: ‘they were unable to grasp female aspirations to power, self-definition and creative achievement.’⁹⁹ While it would seem that ‘the solution to the false portrayal of woman’s reality in art is, clearly, more art by women,’ Salyer speculates that this will never happen as long as women continue to be oppressed by patriarchal society, relegated to the limited role of ‘emotional supporter and inspirer.’¹⁰⁰ This chicken-and-egg style

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Firestone, *The Dialectic of Sex*, 156 (cited without page numbers) in Salyer, ‘A Woman Looks,’ 47. Salyer’s emphasis.

⁹⁷ Firestone, 158 in Salyer, ‘A Woman Looks,’ 47. Salyer’s emphasis.

⁹⁸ Woolf cites the latter two in *A Room of One’s Own* (London: Hogarth Press, 1929), 156.

⁹⁹ Salyer, ‘A Woman Looks,’ 47.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

conundrum leads to the need to interrogate authorship entirely: 'The nature of the artist's work', she concludes 'must be examined'.¹⁰¹

Salyer is particularly interested in art forms that could actively contribute to social change, work with 'revolutionary commitment.'¹⁰² She calls on artists to go beyond simple realism and instead 'to imagine reality as it might be, i.e. without sexual, racial and senescent [age-related] chauvinism.'¹⁰³ This task, she suggests, is the special role of the artist.¹⁰⁴ She draws here on 20th century anarchist philosophy, such as Russian literary critic Mikhail Bakunin and the British cultural critic and social philosopher, Herbert Read.¹⁰⁵ Quoting Read, Salyer writes that "Ideals provide a utopian consciousness which may enable men to transcend the barriers of their existing social reality and promote historical change".¹⁰⁶ There is a continuation here of some of the ideas discussed in the debut editorial, namely Herbert Marcuse's emphasis on the importance of an oppositional culture that transcends the status quo. As discussed in chapter I, Marcuse argues in *One-Dimensional Man* (1964) that this culture is jeopardized by the process of repressive desublimation characteristic of liberal advanced industrial societies.¹⁰⁷

This opening section marks a key distinction between Salyer and Beh's critical positions. Although they share a grounding in New Left and feminist political writing, and are both clearly deeply interested in Godard, Solanas and Getino, as a student of literature Salyer's perspective is framed by her understanding of 19th and 20th century philosophy and literature. Salyer had studied literature and languages throughout her college career and expanded her reading outside of university when she became interested in psychedelia and depth psychology. She praises documentary as a politically significant form, singling out the work of Frederick Wiseman, Santiago Alvarez and Fernando Solanas and examining Marcel Ophüls' four-hour epic *The*

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid, 48.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Read (1893-1968) was an art critic and poet, active during between the 1930s and 1950s, an advocate for pacifism, and eventually, a member of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (founded in the UK in 1957) in the 1960s. Read died in 1968. See George Woodcock, *Anarchism and Anarchists* (Kingston, Ontario: Quarry Press, 1992), 200-251.

¹⁰⁶ Cited only as '(Sir Herbert Read),' but in fact from April Carter, *The Political Theory of Anarchism*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1971), 92. Salyer's main source here appears to be Carter. Her previous statement about the artist's role in the expression of ideals is also a quotation from her. She also evokes Mikhail Bakunin's adage that 'the passion for destruction is a creative passion,' but only in passing.

¹⁰⁷ See Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2002), 59-86.

Sorrow and The Pity (1969).¹⁰⁸ But only Malle's *The Heart Murmur* and Makavejev's *WR: Mysteries of the Organism* conform to her earlier formulations for a revolutionary art by attempting to 'imagine reality as it might be'. *WR*, she says, 'advoca[tes] the end to sexual repression, [...] the liberation of women and the demise of fascism and authoritarianism'; and *The Heart Murmur* explores 'the breakdown of the patriarchal nuclear family and the liberation of children.'¹⁰⁹

The Heart Murmur and the feminist critique of sex and family

Louis Malle's *The Heart Murmur* (aka *Le souffle au coeur*) tells the story of fifteen-year old Laurent (Benoît Ferreux), his entry into adulthood and French bourgeois society's contradictory attitudes to sex. He finds himself torn between the safety of childhood, his nurturing relationship with his mother (Lea Massari), and the exciting but cruel world inhabited by his older brothers and father. His early sexual experiments are thwarted, either by his sibling tormentors, or the reluctance of his female peers to lose their 'virtue.' He is finally initiated by his mother, while tending to her after a night of drinking and dancing together, and both awake the next morning shame-free. He immediately beds a female friend, having now lost his self-consciousness, and successfully takes possession of his adult sexuality. According to Malle, the story was inspired by his own experiences as an early teenager, although he points out that the sexual encounter between mother and son was based not on his own life but on George Bataille's novel *Ma mère* (1935).¹¹⁰

It is hard to imagine how such a film would be made, or indeed received, today, in a climate extremely sensitive to the sexual exploitation of children. Perhaps surprisingly, most mainstream critics at the time responded positively. One *Life* reviewer calls it 'a film of taste, charm, and the most winning sentiment.'¹¹¹ Judith Crist describes Malle as treating the 'oedipal relationship between mother and son [...] with a tenderness and compassion and understanding that is overwhelming,' going on to comment: 'Malle is not concerned with the sensational nor even with the sensuous; he is concerned with the total expression of caring between human beings.'¹¹² Less impressed is Molly Haskell, who believes the film only 'pretends to satirise the frivolity

¹⁰⁸ She praises Ophüls' use of interviews and personal accounts of conflict, a technique that highlights the absence of 'the people's point of view' in other historical narratives. Salyer, 'A Woman Looks,' 52.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, 50; Ibid, 50.

¹¹⁰ *Malle on Malle*, ed. Philip French (London: Faber and Faber, 1993), 82-83.

¹¹¹ Richard Schicken, 'Deft handling of an old taboo,' *Life*, 12 November 1971, 16.

¹¹² Judith Crist, 'A Boy' Best Friend,' *New York*, 18 October 1971, 78.

and hypocrisy of the upper class while luxuriating in its charms.¹¹³ Pauline Kael was a Malle fan and thought the film to be 'exhilarating.'¹¹⁴ Salyer similarly remarks that 'the incestuous act is a positive, natural, health-giving one and it's principals [sic] are better off because of it.'¹¹⁵

The film's presentation of incest, and its critical reception - particularly Salyer's interpretation - must be understood within the context of the critique of traditional family structures and sexual repression taking place in the wake of the sexual revolution of the 1960s. This critique was present in Reich's theories of sexual repression, neurosis and political oppression, and it was also central to feminists such as Shulamith Firestone. Building on Friedrich Engels' study of the function of the family unit within the capitalist class system, in *The Dialectic of Sex* Firestone argues that 'the elimination of the sexual classes requires the revolt of the underclass (women) and the seizure of control of reproduction' in order to break the 'tyranny of the biological family.'¹¹⁶ But she also calls for a drastic change in attitudes toward child sexuality. In her section on revolutionary demands, she comments that previously,

Child sexuality had to be repressed by means of the incest taboo because it was a threat to the precarious internal balance of the family. [...] But in our new society, humanity could finally revert to its natural polymorphous sexuality - all forms of sexuality would be allowed and indulged.¹¹⁷

Elsewhere, she also imagines a future in which monogamous, married heterosexual couples are possibly replaced by 'trans-sexual group marriages, which also [involve] older children.'¹¹⁸ Firestone argues that childbirth be replaced by artificial reproductive methods, in order to free women from the 'barbarity' of pregnancy, but also to destroy the repressive and possessive relationship between mother and child. If this were successfully carried out, she suggests:

It is unlikely [the child] would chose her as his first love object [...]. But [...] if he should choose to relate sexually to adults, even if he should happen to pick his own genetic mother, there would be no *a priori* reasons for her to reject his sexual advances, because the incest taboo would have lost its function.¹¹⁹

This, Firestone hopes, will lead to men and women returning to their natural polymorphous sexuality - and away from a genitally orientated couple formation - within a few generations.

¹¹³ Molly Haskell, 'The fair sex, M or F?', *Village Voice*, 28 October 1971, 79.

¹¹⁴ Pauline Kael, 'Le souffle au coeur,' *New Yorker*, 23 October 1971, reprinted in Kael, *Deeper Into Movies* (Boston: Little, Brown & Co, 1973), 305.

¹¹⁵ Salyer, 'A Woman Looks,' 54.

¹¹⁶ Firestone, *The Dialectic of Sex*, 19.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid*, 195.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid*, 213.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid*, 223.

Firestone not only draws on Engels' critique of the family but also Reich's work on the family and childhood sexual repression. In *The Sexual Revolution*, Reich writes that 'the foremost breeding place of the ideological atmosphere of conservatism is the compulsive family', its primary function being the perpetuation of sexual repression from childhood to adulthood.¹²⁰ Secondly, it results in the creation of 'the individual who is forever afraid of life and of authority' and the possibility that 'masses of people can be governed by a handful of powerful individuals.'¹²¹ For Salyer, *The Heart Murmur's* depiction of sex between a mother and her fifteen year-old son 'goes right to the heart of social inequity' by dealing with its strictest taboo.¹²² According to Salyer, the film's taboo-violation is not just ideological but is physically experienced by the spectator as 'a heart palpitation of such magnitude that his/her psychic emotional structure is irredeemably altered.'¹²³ For the viewer, she suggests, 'the immediate, unavoidable gut response is that traditional family relationships will never be the same.'¹²⁴

Salyer points out, however, that the film's 'demystification of the incest taboo' only functions within the realm of the bourgeois middle-classes. She quotes Malle's claim at a press conference that the bourgeois comedy is 'the quickest, most incisive way of totally demystifying a certain education, a certain milieu.'¹²⁵

This thing about the Oedipus complex is very much based on the incredible sex repression that was on the adolescent [sic], at least in European society – I won't say anything about American society – at least the last two centuries in this bourgeois world we're coming out of. There was strong repression, so that when you get to the age of 14 or 15, (or 6!) you want to express yourself sexually – it's physiological, it's normal. And it's repressed, incredibly repressed in those families. You sort of had to turn to whatever you had in front of you, to your mother, your sister. So I'm sure that a good part of this build-up of the Oedipus complex came from that sexual repression, and I hope it's going to fade out quick.¹²⁶

Salyer concludes that, by dealing with the incest taboo in a film while retaining conventional cinematic forms, such as linear narrative, characters and emotional identification, Malle has pioneered a 'new form of film militancy' to cater to a mass audience.¹²⁷ Salyer posits *The Heart Murmur* as a challenge to the notion of cinema as 'a

¹²⁰ Wilhelm Reich, *The Sexual Revolution: Toward a Self-Governing Character Structure*, [1945] trans. Theodore P. Wolfe (London: Vision Press, 1969), 71; 79.

¹²¹ Reich, *Sexual Revolution*, 79.

¹²² Salyer, 'A Woman Looks,' 54.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Ibid, 55.

¹²⁶ Louis Malle, originally quoted from a press conference held by the director (date and location not supplied), Salyer, 'A Woman Looks,' 55

¹²⁷ Ibid.

substitute for reform or [...] a political safety valve by restoring the justice and balance lacking in society.’¹²⁸

It may seem strange that Salyer does not spend more time discussing the few films by women showcased by the festival: Annie Tresgot’s *The Passengers*; Yolande Dulart’s *Angela: Portrait of a Revolutionary* and *Brother Carl* by Susan Sontag. Although she does briefly mention Tresgot’s film, for her, these did not have the appeal of the politically subversive *The Heart Murmur* or the explicit discussion of women’s liberation found in *Les stances à Sophie*. And as Salyer notes, she could not see all the films at the festival, nor could she write about them all.

WR: Sex, Women and Revolution

The final four pages of Salyer’s article are devoted to Makavejev’s *WR: Mysteries of the Organism*. A film explicitly concerned with Reichian theory, *WR* combines newsreel and documentary footage of the life and therapeutic methods of Reich with a fictional narrative set in communist Yugoslavia about a woman (Milena Dravić) who seduces a champion ice skater (Ivica Vidović). The result is a cinematic collage that explores the relationship between sexual and political revolution and the correlation between sexual repression and violence. Makavejev employs a kind of Eisensteinian montage technique that intricately weaves these various elements together. In one sequence for instance, Reich’s persecution by the US authorities is evoked in a number of contrasting ways. An interview with Reich’s daughter Eva Reich Moise, shows her walking around a barn while she recounts his ‘judicial murder;’ this is followed by a still of Reich, the camera slowly zooming into his handcuffed wrists. Eva Reich’s voice continues over this shot, but it is quickly replaced by a female narrator who reports that Reich died ‘a free man to the end, in the federal penitentiary in Louisberg, Pennsylvania.’ The ensuing footage shows the outside of the penitentiary in which he was held until his death in 1957, jarringly accompanied by a cheerful folk tune featuring an accordion and mandolin. The film also features several short interviews with figures from the period, including the artist Betty Dodson, who discusses her erotic drawings and her advocacy of masturbation.¹²⁹ Salyer describes *WR* as ‘the only film [...at the festival] to deal with sexual politics and anti-authoritarian, radical-feminist revolution,’ with

¹²⁸ Ibid, 54.

¹²⁹ Ibid, 62.

Dodson's statements one of the key ways the film goes beyond a simple consideration of sexual repression and 'free love' from a male perspective.¹³⁰

Salyer's writing on the film includes several descriptions of the film's montage sequences and sketches of its plot alongside accounts from the director's press conference (which presumably took place at the festival). Makavejev's statements highlight the film's attempt to critique the Soviet communism of the period for abandoning sexual liberation. Salyer links these arguments back to Reich, quoting at length from *The Mass Psychology of Fascism* (1946). However, she argues, the film fails to grasp the complexities of Reich's theories on the family as articulated in his later *The Sexual Revolution*, and from which she quotes with some alterations:

As the economic basis (of the family) became less significant (to the extent to which the woman was included in the productive process), it's [sic] place was taken by the political function which the family now began to assume. It's [sic] cardinal function, that for which it is mostly supported and defended by conservative science and law, is that of serving as a factory for authoritarian ideologies and conservative structures. It forms the educational apparatus through which practically every individual of our society, from the moment of drawing his first breath, has to pass... it is the conveyor belt between economic structure of conservative society and its ideological superstructure.¹³¹

As previously discussed, Reich's ideas were significant for Firestone and other feminists since a disruption of the patriarchal family offered women freedom from child-rearing, domestic servitude and sexual slavery. Almost paraphrasing Reich, Salyer remarks that the sexual oppression of women and children, as presented in *WR*, 'anchors submission to authority and the fear of freedom into people's "character armour," resulting in the reproduction, generation after generation, of the basic conditions essential to the manipulation and enslavement of the masses.'¹³² Salyer concludes that the film 'offered solutions to the problem of organized, violent, destructive and oppressive social order, rather than to simply reflect it; for this reason and others, *WR* is a film classic.'¹³³

Conclusions

Salyer's writing for *Women & Film* shows her frame of reference for the politics of art making and cinema. Although a Marxist like Beh, she is more explicitly influenced by

¹³⁰ Ibid, 61.

¹³¹ Ibid, 64. No references are provided, only the author is attributed but it is from *Sexual Revolution*, 72. Her ellipsis excludes the following from Reich: It influences the child in the sense of reactionary ideology not only as an authoritarian institution, but also on the strength of its own of structure.' Reich, *Sexual Revolution*, 72.

¹³² Salyer, 'A Woman Looks,' 61.

¹³³ Ibid, 64.

radical feminists like Firestone and also possesses a distinctive interest in psychology, particularly in Reich. As such she is drawn to films like *Les stances à Sophie* and *The Heart Murmur* that depict traditional bourgeois institutions – marriage and parent-child relationships – challenged by the breakdown of sexual mores and the liberation of individual women.

Through their respective interests and experiences, Siew-Hwa Beh and Sandra Salyer embody two distinct strands that characterize the women's movement of the 1970s: a desire for structural political change and the quest for individual, personal, inner change, both with the aim of building a radically more equal society. Salyer reflects

I've come to understand how different we were from each other then, though not in what was important. She had grown up in Malaysia not the U.S.A., in a small town where everyone knew everyone, attending a Catholic girl's school, while I was preparing to march in Washington D.C. with Martin Luther King. [...] Siew-Hwa did not live within the belly of the cultural transformations in consciousness and values that were exploding around us [...] – the music and psychedelia ('mind expanding' substances), the Love-Ins and Be-Ins, civil rights and anti-war protests, the explosion in the arts, the "back to the land" and ecology movements, collective living experiments, etc.¹³⁴

'What was amazing,' Salyer concludes, 'is that Siew-Hwa and I immediately [...] knew that we were going to create this magazine together.'

As with Beh, the idea of feminist film is still in flux in Salyer's writing; its aesthetic strategies are yet to be decided although collective production methods, though only vaguely formulated, are considered crucial. Like Beh, she regards work by men, theoretical and artistic, relevant to the development of a feminist conception of political filmmaking. But despite the increasing number of independent films being made by women – documentaries, experimental, feminist, even some feature films – they had little awareness of this work due to the absence of any distribution network or spaces for exhibition. But this was about to change. Following the publication of *Women & Film's* first issue, Salyer travelled across the country to attend the first major women's film festival in New York. The First International Festival and the ensuing explosion of feminist and women's film festivals in the US, Canada and Europe marked a sea change in the trajectory of feminist film criticism as a canon of women's film began to emerge and a women's film movement began to take shape.

¹³⁴ Salyer, email to author, 13 June 2013.

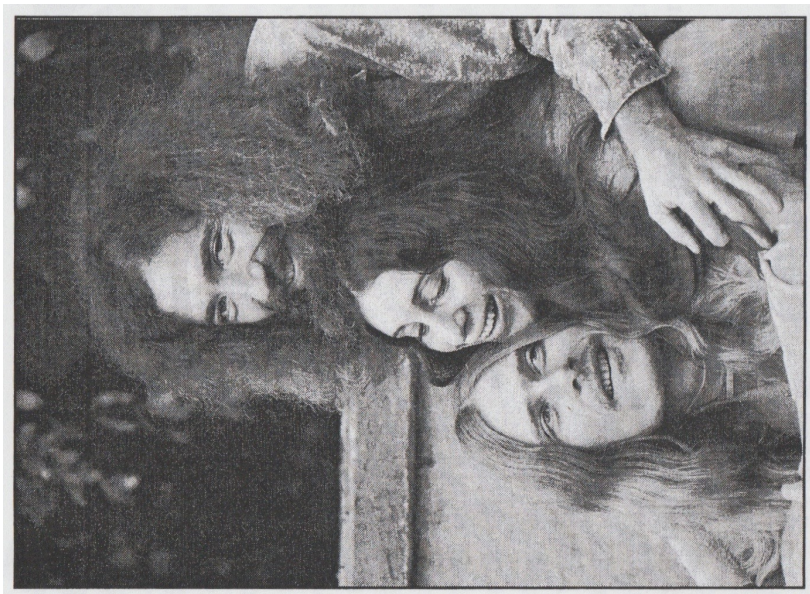


Figure 13:
Laughing Gas
 collaborators
 David
 Wallechinsky,
 Sandra
 Salyer and
 Mike Shedlin,
 circa 1973
 (*Laughing
 Gas*,
 Berkeley:
 Ronin, 1973).



Figure 14:
 The
 Everywoman
 Bookstore on
 West
 Washington
 Boulevard,
 Venice, home
 of the feminist
 newspaper
 Everywoman.



Figures 15-17: Everywoman cover from 30th July 1971; III, no. 1, issue 29 (February 1972); II, no. 17, issue 26 (17 December 1971).



Figure 18: Salyer proudly displays the Judy Chicago centerfold in *Everywoman II*, no. 16, issue 27 (12 November 1971) in our interview, Montclair, CA, 11 October 2013.



Figure 19: Judy Chicago, *Red Flag*, 1971, photo-lithograph.

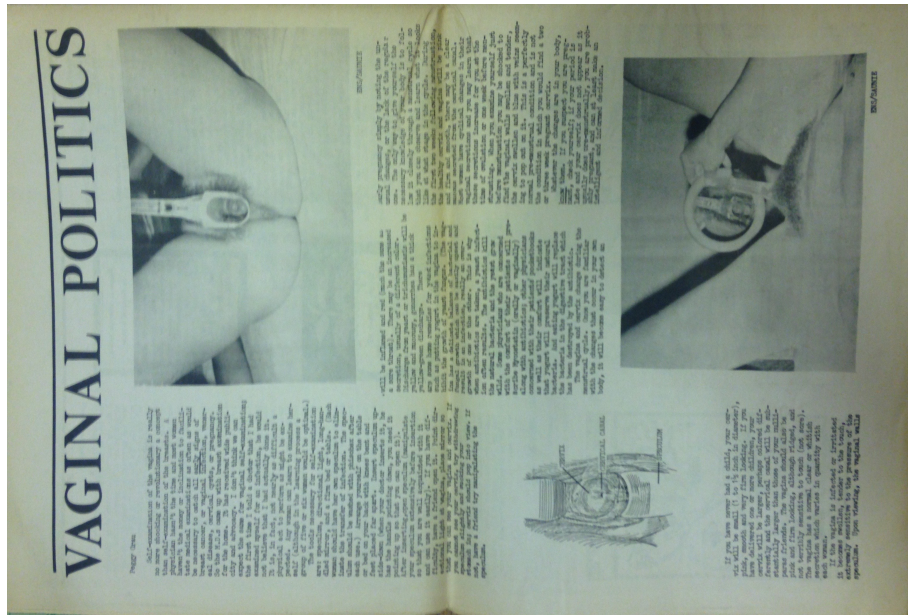


Figure 20: Women's health feature on how to use a speculum in Everywoman II, no. 12, issue 23 (20 Aug 1971), 1.



Figure 21: Everywoman II, no. 16, issue 27 (12 November 1971).

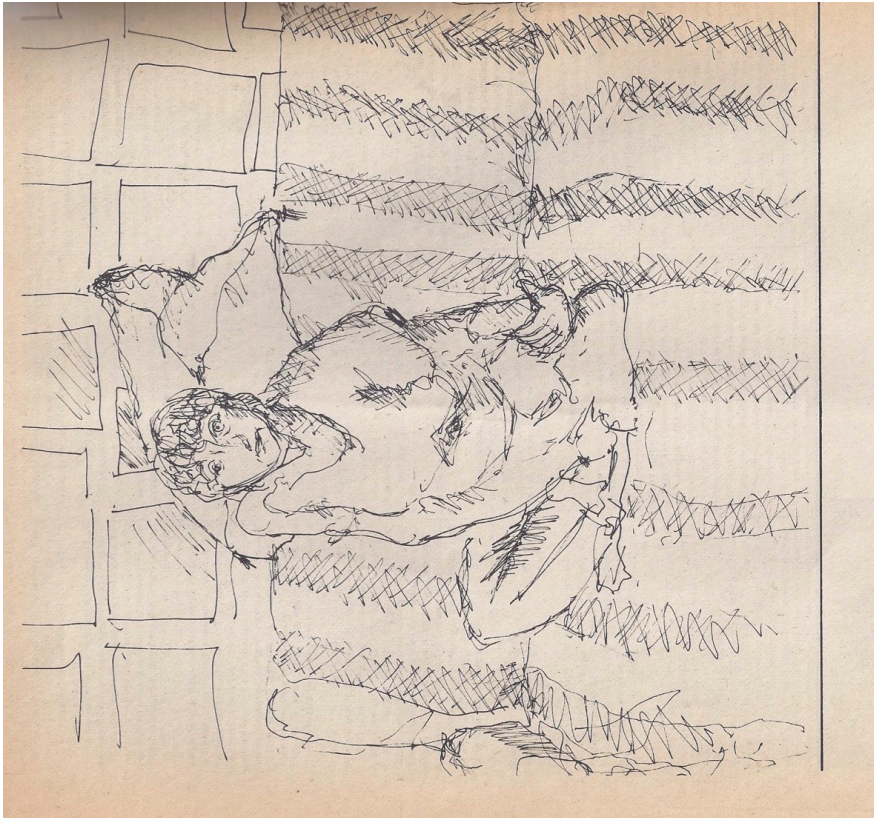


Figure 22: Unknown artist, sketch of Christiane Rochefort, from the interview in *Women & Film 3-4* (1973).



Figure 23: Still from *Adrift* (Jan Kadar and Elmar Klos, 1971) included in Salyer's 'A Woman Looks at the S.F.I.F.F.,' *Women & Film 2* (1972).

III

Early Women's Film Festivals in *Women & Film*

'We need to find the old films and the new ones and rescue them and show them and talk about them and show them again and make new films.'

Barbara Martineau¹

As the previous chapters make clear, most of the films Siew-Hwa Beh and Sandra Salyer consider in *Women & Film* are by men, with work by women seemingly absent from their discussions. The magazine's first issue readily acknowledges that women had historically been denied access to careers in filmmaking and the contributions of the few who had succeeded had often been ignored. What feminists discovered in this period is that women filmmakers had worked throughout the history of film, in and outside Hollywood, and, while some films had been lost, many had survived. The scale of contemporary women's filmmaking was also revealed, although many women pointed to the difficulties they faced in getting their films distributed and shown in traditional exhibition networks.

In response, women across the US and Western Europe began to organise film festivals that showcased this newly recovered as well as recent work. During the first half of the 1970s, the number of women's film festivals rose dramatically; they ranged from tiny events in arthouse cinemas or student film clubs with small, local audiences, to multi-venue, international affairs, attended by hundreds of women (and often men). Undoubtedly, these festivals were crucial for the legitimization of women's film work and the wider women's film movement. As one festivalgoer remembers, 'You would go to these places and see women's films and the earliest women's video [...] and you would see things that you would never see again.'² They offered a unique opportunity to see films by women – work that had been forgotten or lost or was simply not in circulation – as well as new work from emerging women filmmakers. Apart from local

¹ Barbara Martineau, 'Women's Film Daily,' *Women & Film* 5-6 (1974), 44.

² Julia Lesage, Chuck Kleinhans and Julia Lesage, interview with author, Eugene, OR, 19 October 2013.

and campus newspapers, very few mainstream film publications, newspapers or mass circulation magazines covered these events.³ But they were written about extensively in *Women & Film* and these articles depict the pioneering spaces that introduced many now canonical films to an emerging community of feminist activists, filmmakers and scholars. This coverage offered a vital way of extending the legitimizing force of film festivals as well as preserving the history of these somewhat ephemeral events. Without it, our sense of a women's film movement would be less complete, and as my research testifies, our knowledge of these events would be reliant on increasingly precarious living memories and personal archives.

With the academic study of film festivals in its nascent phase, the individual and collective histories of women's film festivals are still to be written. Attempting a historical account of all the events mentioned in *Women & Film* is unfortunately too epic a task for this chapter (although they are listed in Timeline 2 in Appendix C). Instead, I will focus on *Women & Film's* coverage of the first major event, the First International Festival of Women's Films, held in New York City (13-21 June 1972). Although preceded by several smaller events, this was the first major international festival to take place and therefore looms large in accounts of this early period of feminist film history. Its inception coincides with that of *Women & Film*, and it is the most written about event in the magazine's pages. *Women & Film's* first issue contains a half-page ad for the event calling for films to be submitted before a deadline of 18 January (fig. 24).⁴ The publication of its second issue was delayed so that coverage of the festival could be included.⁵ This took the form of a 20-page section, made up of three separate articles: 'To Be Our Own Muse: The Dialectics of a Culture Heroine' by Naome Gilbert (discussed in the following chapter); 'Interview with Nelly Kaplan' by Kay Harris (chapter VII); and 'Selected Short Subjects' by Salyer, again writing under the pseudonym Dora Kaplan. The first and last of these three also feature sections of the festival programme, cut and pasted onto the page, a kind of informative-cum-decorative marginalia.

While this chapter will look at a number of writings on the festival, I want to pay particular attention to Barbara Martineau's lengthy, multi-event report 'Women's Film Daily' from *Women & Film* 5-6 (1974). At the time that she was writing for the magazine, Martineau (née Barbara Joan Sakofsky) was a North American professor

³ Writing in the occasional 'Women in Film' column in *Take One* in 1973, Kay Armatage, who organised the Women and Film Festival in Toronto in 1973, notes that these events went unnoticed, 'except by the women's magazines and in the "family section" sections of newspapers,' *Take One* 3, no. 11 (1973), 45. My research confirms this.

⁴ The festival is advertised as taking place in April 1972 but was pushed back to June.

⁵ Editors, 'Editorial,' *Women & Film* 2 (1972), 1.

teaching film and literature in the English department of Scarborough College at University of Toronto, Canada. She had joined the faculty, where her drama professor husband also taught, in 1967, gaining her PhD in comparative literature from Columbia University in 1970. As much of her writing makes clear, she strongly identified as a Canadian and was particularly interested in the development of Canadian feminist film culture. After reading Kate Millett's *Sexual Politics* (1970), Martineau later writes, she 'realized that [...] all the authors whose books I'd been reading and all the "auteurs" whose films I'd been watching had been... not women.'⁶ Between 1971 and 1972, she helped found the University's first Women's Studies programme with a group that included Kay Armatage, who would go on to co-organise the 1973 Toronto Women's Film Festival. Martineau contributed her 'Thoughts on the Objectification of Women' to the Canadian journal *Take One's* special edition on women and film published in 1972. Toward the end of that same year, she travelled to Europe thanks to funding from the Canada Council for the Arts, attending women's film festivals in the UK and France (fig. 25). She published her writing on these events, and on feminism and film, throughout the 1970s, in *Take One* but also *Cinema Canada, Women & Film*, and later *Jump Cut* (see bibliography). During this time she also compiled a book of interviews with women writers and filmmakers such as Alice Munro, Anaïs Nin and Agnès Varda, titled *Women Imagine Women*, which was never published.⁷ Two of her articles – one an interview with Nelly Kaplan – were included in *Notes on Women's Cinema*, the early collection of feminist film criticism edited by Claire Johnston and produced to accompany the 1973 Women's Cinema festival in London.⁸ Martineau later wrote under the surname Halpern Martineau, the former her maternal grandmother's name, a move she says was inspired by the 'Womanifesto' devised at the 1975 New York Conference of Feminists in the Media that encouraged women to 'question [...] how language itself can be oppressive.'⁹ *Jump Cut* co-founder and *Women & Film* contributor Chuck Kleinhans recalled her as 'wonderfully manic and smart' and 'very committed to feminism as a

⁶ Martineau, 'The Films of Marta Meszaros or, The Importance of Being Banal,' *Film Quarterly* 34, no. 1 (Autumn 1980), 21.

⁷ *Feminists Who Changed America*, ed. Barbara J. Love (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006), 196.

⁸ 'Nelly Kaplan' (14-23) and 'Subjecting Her Objectification or Communism Is Not Enough' (32-40), *Notes on Women's Cinema*, ed. Claire Johnston (London: Society for Education in Film and Television; British Film Institute, 1973).

⁹ 'An Ongoing Womanifesto', reprinted in Martineau, 'Paris/Chicago: Women's Film Festivals 1974,' *Women & Film* 7 (1975), 11. Martineau began publishing her work as Halpern Martineau from 1973. I refer to simply Martineau throughout this thesis for the sake of clarity.

practical political movement;’ as a critic she had ‘a fresh take on everything [...] trained in literary studies, but always open to new things.’¹⁰

Martineau’s first, eight-page article for *Women & Film* includes coverage of three other women’s film festivals that took place between 1972 and 1973: the Women’s Event, part of the 26th Edinburgh International Festival (21-26 August, 1972); Women’s Cinema at the National Film Theatre in London (1 April-2 June 1973); and Women and Film 1896-1973, held in Toronto, Canada (8-17 June 1973). In the following issue of *Women & Film* (7, 1975), she published a further, 18-page article about the Musidora festival in Paris (3-11 April 1974) and Films by Women/Chicago (3-17 September 1974). Except for Harris and Salyer’s contributions in *Women & Film* 2, and an additional article on the Musidora festival by Connie Greenbaum in issue 7, Martineau’s are the only articles to report on these events in detail.¹¹

What’s more, Martineau’s articles feature large sections of extra material, including excerpts from festival programmes, film notes and coverage by other journalists and critics (fig. 26). Her earliest pieces similarly contain extensive quotations, ranging from comments overheard at screenings and statements made by filmmakers, to citations from Sergei Eisenstein, R.D. Laing, Bertolt Brecht and Charlotte Brontë, to which her writing frequently responds. In her *Women & Film* article, ‘Women’s Film Daily,’ such material accounts for around half the total content of her texts. Encountering these ‘highly subjective collage[s] of facts[,] impressions and thoughts’ is almost overwhelming for the reader, as she is bombarded with texts written by different authors, from different sources; the result is a multi-faceted intertextual document that struggles to be contained by the page.¹² Having attended so many of these early women’s film festivals, Martineau is able to compare and contrast their aims, organisational structures and atmospheres, while considering their relevance to feminist political goals and working methods. As she writes in *Women & Film*’s last issue, ‘with each successive festival I attended the actual structure of the event, its internal and external politics and problems and possibilities, seemed to be more accessible to me.’¹³ Martineau therefore offers a uniquely rich contribution to the writing on these events and presents the reader with far more than a straightforward festival film roundup.

¹⁰ Chuck Kleinhans, email to author, 12 July 2016.

¹¹ See Timeline 2 in Appendix C for other women’s film and video festivals and events and the tables of contents in Appendix A for regular festivals covered in the magazine.

¹² Martineau, ‘Women’s Film Daily,’ 36.

¹³ Martineau, ‘Paris/Chicago,’ 10.

Pioneering the Women's Film Festival

Radical Festivals

While festivals have long been reviewed and reported on by film critics and arts journalists, the scholarly study of film festivals only began to coalesce in the early 2000s.¹⁴ In her 2007 book, Marjike de Valck sketches out three phases in the evolution of the film festival, beginning with the founding of the first regularly repeating event in Venice: 1932 to c. 1968; the 1970s to mid-1980s; 1980s to the present. Established in 1932 as part of the Venice Biennale, the Venice Film Festival was intended as a glamorous event catering to an elite audience of film aesthetes and responded to the crisis brought about by sound technology in European cinema by celebrating national *and* international film.¹⁵ De Valck cites the importance of specialist film publications, such as *Close-up* (UK, 1927-33), in fostering the intellectual discourse and networks that helped give rise to this first phase.¹⁶ The Hollywood film industry was both 'embraced' and 'subtly opposed' she recounts: '[early film festivals] cooperated with Hollywood's commercial film system, while simultaneously refocusing its merits on the more ideologically-colored goal of cultural enlightenment.'¹⁷ The films shown were not simply 'mass-produced commodities, but [...] national accomplishments; [...] conveyors of cultural identity; [...] unique artistic creations.'¹⁸ Embedded in this history therefore is a tension between film as art vs. film as commodity, and the role of festivals as both sites of commercial exchange as well as sanctuaries for alternative culture that are nonetheless always in dialogue with the status quo.

It is during the second phase that women's film festivals first emerged, and the impact of the radical politics of the late 1960s on European and North American festivals in this period provides an important context within which to consider the feminist appropriation of the film festival. The political and cultural upheavals of the 1960s brought about changes to festival formats and programmes, most notably the move away from festivals as showcases for national cinemas.¹⁹ Founded in 1963 and

¹⁴ This work has been spearheaded by scholars such as Marjike de Valck, Dina Iordanova, and Skadi Loist, through the Film Festival Research website and *Film Festival Yearbook* series. The website was founded in 2008 by de Valck and Loist; the *Film Festival Yearbook* series is edited by Iordanova. See also Bill Nichols' 'Global Image Consumption in the Age of Late Capitalism,' *East-West Film Journal* 8, no. 1 (1994): 68-85.

¹⁵ De Valck, *Film Festivals: From European Geopolitics to Global Cinephilia* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2007) 23; 24.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, 26.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, 24.

¹⁸ *Ibid*.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, 19.

located in the then recently built mecca for New York high culture, the Lincoln Center, the New York Film Festival was established by two stalwarts of art cinema – Richard Roud and Amos Vogel – to give European cinema a home in the US that would match the prestige and glitz of Cannes and Venice.²⁰ It screened contemporary films from mostly foreign avant-garde and experimental directors, catering to the city's population of leftist, educated cinephiles.²¹ New formats were also pioneered by events such as the Pesaro Film Festival, founded in 1965, which showcased experimental and political films as alternatives to the 'First-world' cinema of Hollywood and Western Europe.²² As de Valck asserts, 'Pesaro led the way toward a new type of programming: festival directors and programmers began selecting films on a thematic instead of national basis beginning in the late 1960s onwards.'²³ Pesaro also abandoned a prize jury in favour of panels and talks, encouraging a 'productive combination of cinephile, political-activist and academic input.'²⁴ In 1968, Jean Luc Godard and other artists and filmmakers famously staged a protest during the Cannes Film Festival that criticized it for pandering to the commercial film industry and called on its participants to halt the festival in solidarity with striking workers and students in France.²⁵ These shifts point to the continuing currency of the idea of the festival as a culturally radical space with the potential to include political agendas and represent marginalized art forms. This is crucial to understanding why the film festival was adopted by so many feminist film activists and scholars during the early 1970s. But as we shall see, festivals nonetheless presented their organizers with challenges when it came to programming films by women and catering to audiences in ways that conformed with the feminist politics of the era.

The First International Festival of Women's Films

²⁰ Rahul Hamid, 'From Urban Bohemia to Euro Glamour: The Establishment and Early Years of the New York Film Festival,' *Film Festival Yearbook 1: The Festival Circuit*, ed. Dina Iordanova with Ragan Rhyne (St Andrews: St Andrews Film Studies, 2009), 68.

²¹ Roud had formerly been director of the London Film Festival, whereas Vogel had founded Cinema 16, an organization dedicated to screening experimental and avant-garde film, based in New York. See Hamid, 67-81.

²² Julianne Burton, 'The old and the new: Latin American cinema at the (last?) Pesaro Festival,' *Jump Cut*, no. 9 (1975), 33, cited in de Valck, *Film Festivals*, 28.

²³ De Valck, *Film Festivals*, 28.

²⁴ *Ibid*; *Ibid*, 167. Pesaro also played an important role in disseminating semiotic film theory, with papers by Roland Barthes Umberto Eco, Christian Metz, and Pier Paolo Pasolini presented at the festival in the later 1960s respectively. Don Ranvaud, 'Pesaro Revisited,' *Framework*, no. 18 (1982), 34.

²⁵ De Valck, *Film Festivals*, 28.

The First International Festival of Women's Films, organised by Kristina Nordstrom and held in New York in June 1972, was preceded – and inspired – by a small fundraising event held by the New York Radical Feminists (NYRF) in 1971 that billed itself as a 'Film Festival' (fig. 27).²⁶ An unspecified Mae West film is billed as the feature, alongside shorts by Amalie Rothschild and Claudia Weill. Nordstrom, who was a member of a NYRF consciousness-raising group, recalled that

The leader of the group said that they wanted to do a Mae West film festival [...] That made me think, 'Oh a women's film festival, we should have a women's film festival that shows films directed by women.' And that's how I got the big idea.²⁷

Nordstrom was tired of 'just talking,' and had prior experience of organizing a festival, having previously worked as secretary to The New York Film Festival's co-director, Richard Roud, in 1968.²⁸ The New York festival would prove to be a significant influence on Nordstrom's event, particularly when it came to its programming.

In the spring of 1971, Nordstrom circulated a flyer soliciting films for an event that would take place that November.²⁹ She proposed several aims for the festival, namely to 'get [women's] films in front of an audience,' and to 'call attention to the fact that women were making films.'³⁰ In the ad placed in the first issue of *Women & Film* in 1972 (fig. 24), the festival's stated goals are:

- To discover and exhibit the work of new filmmakers.
- To permit a general audience to see films made by women that have not received wide distribution.
- To make the public aware of the great number of highly creative women working in film.
- To see the images that women are creating for themselves.
- To present a comprehensive exhibition of films made by women in order to investigate the existence of a particularly female film sensibility.
- To provide a forum for discussion among women filmmakers.

²⁶ Nordstrom, interview with author, Los Angeles, CA, 31 April 2011. Not to be confused with the New York Radical Women, The New York Radical Feminists were founded by Shulamith Firestone after she left the Redstockings in 1969, with Anne Koedt, previously a member of The Feminists. For a detailed history of the group and its formation, see Echols, *Daring to Be Bad: Radical Feminism in America 1967-1975* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), 186-197.

²⁷ Nordstrom, interview. NYRF festival ad from *Majority Report* 1, no. 6 (November 1971). *Majority Report* 1971-1979 was a New York-based bi-weekly feminist newsletter founded by members of the Women's Strike Coalition. See 'Majority Report,' *Women's Periodicals in the United States: Social and Political issues*, ed. Kathleen L. Endres and Therese L. Lueck, (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1996): 195-197. I have yet to find further information or coverage of this event. A film festival is mentioned as one of several cultural events organized by the NYRF but no specific details are given in the report of activities published in the New York Radical Feminists' *Newsletter* (March 1975), 2.

²⁸ Nordstrom, interview.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*

To encourage women of all ages to enter the film profession and pursue their ambitions in this field.

Nordstrom later emphasized that while several previous events had focused on 'women's image' in film, her interests lay in showcasing women as 'creators.'³¹ As these aims demonstrate, Nordstrom's stated agenda is a modest one compared to, for example, the ambition to 'tear down the old vicious structures' of oppression stated by Beh and Salyer in issue one of *Women & Film*.³² Instead of an all-out critique of mainstream filmmaking or of film festival culture, it is geared toward addressing inequality in and exclusion from the film industry.

The festival took place at Manhattan's Fifth Avenue Cinema, located between 12th and 13th Street, which had recently been turned into a two-screen venue, allowing for simultaneous showings.³³ A total of thirteen feature films were screened, along with four feature-length documentaries (fig. 28). The majority of the features shown at the festival were by directors from Europe, with only two by Americans: *Wanda* (1970) by Barbara Loden and *Passages from Finnegans Wake* (1967) by Mary Ellen Bute.³⁴ According to the financial report, the most highly attended film was the opening feature, Mai Zetterling's *The Girls* (1968), the former Swedish actress's fourth directorial outing, and, according to some, her first 'overtly feminist' film.³⁵ Most of the festival screenings, however, were programmes of short films. In total, 96 shorts were shown, 82 of which were organized into themed programmes containing four to seven

³¹ Jonas Mekas, 'Movie Journal,' *Village Voice*, 1 June 1972, 61. An influential figure in the avant-garde film scene in New York, Mekas wrote for *The Village Voice* from 1958 but eventually moved into filmmaking during the sixties, founding the Film-Maker's Cooperative (FMC) in 1962. The FMC supported women filmmakers such as Maya Deren, Clarke and Marie Menken. He refers to the festival as a 'major event on the New York film scene.' Mekas, 'Movie Journal,' 61. His support was extremely important in legitimizing it and its films.

³² Editors, 'Overview,' *Women & Film* 1 (1972), 5.

³³ Amalie R. Rothschild, interview with author, New York City, NY, 14 March 2011. The festival ran from 6-21 June; during this time, there were eighty-two screenings. Shows were split into afternoon and evening performances; the features were screened a total of three times, once at noon and then twice on another day (at 6pm and 10pm).

³⁴ Written, directed by and starring Loden, *Wanda* follows a day in the life of a working-class woman as she passively drifts from divorce from her husband to casual encounters with male strangers, eventually becoming an accomplice to an unsuccessful thief. Mary Ellen Bute, an experimental filmmaker who had been working in film throughout the thirties and forties, had headed her own production company, Expanding Cinema, in New York. Made between 1965 and 1967, *Passages from Finnegans Wake* was her last completed film and attempts to combine her experiments in sound and animation with an adaptation of James Joyce's modernist novel.

³⁵ *The Girls* screened four times, selling 657 tickets in total. Nelly Kaplan's *A Very Curious Girl* sold 455, Kate Millett's *Three Lives*, 365 and *Wanda*, 297. The theatre's capacity was 254. The records only show tickets sold and did not include the complimentary press tickets, estimated at 640 (figures from '2nd Int'l Festival of Women's Films, Section I M.4' Nordstrom personal archive); Richard Henshaw, 'A Festival of One's Own: Review of Women Directors,' *Velvet Light Trap*, no. 6 (1972), 41.

individual works, while the rest preceded the feature films.³⁶ An accompanying series of conference events were also held (fig. 29), with topics ranging from the image of women in film (panelists included Molly Haskell and Gloria Steinem), the image of men (Judith Crist, Frank Perry, Andrew Sarris), and the question of female film aesthetics (Nordstrom, Annette Michelson) to editing (Dede Allen), acting (Viva) and directing (Nelly Kaplan, Barbara Loden).

Barbara Martineau was one of the many women who attended the First International Festival of Women's Films in New York in 1972. While her report on the event for *Women & Film* did not appear until 1974, she did publish an earlier article in *Cinema Canada* at the end of 1972. She opens it by remarking that she had 'often wondered why festival reviewers spend so much time and space recounting their adventures [...], their sense of atmosphere, trips [...], glimpses of famous people [...] but now [...] I know.'³⁷ Unlike at a cinema, she continues, at a festival 'there is a sense of context, and the overwhelming process whereby quantity becomes quality.'³⁸ For Martineau, this context is a feminist one, and her experience of the screenings is shaped and enhanced by her experiences as a woman, particularly as a mother. She writes of packing 'many diapers', kissing her husband, and picking up her son Noah before setting off from Vancouver to attend the festival, and of 'rushing home' to feed him, still 'bopping to the jazz of the subway,' after seeing Agnès Varda's *Cleo from 5 to 7* (1969).³⁹ For Martineau, this context has a significant impact on the films themselves; she writes, for instance, of how 'rising at 6 with my little boy gave a new quality' to *The Lizards* by Lina Wertmuller (1963), 'that slow, softly black and white poem of a Sicilian village, with its singsong voices and vegetating men and desperate women.'⁴⁰ She describes experiencing a 'triple high' during Gunvor Nelson's short film *Kirsa Nicholina* (1969) from her enjoyment of not just the visual and aural qualities of a film that shows a baby being born, but also from 'sharing the mother's joy at watching her child emerge.'⁴¹ After asking rhetorically if these details are irrelevant to her account, she replies: 'No, because I'm watching a program called Maternal Images and wondering how Noah is faring with that unknown baby-sitter and wishing there were daycare at the festival.'⁴² Her chief concern in this and her later article for *Women & Film*: what is

³⁶ '2nd Int'l Festival of Women's Films, Section I M.4.'

³⁷ Martineau, 'The New York Women's Film Festival: A Contextual Fragmentation,' *Cinema Canada* no. 5 (December 1972/January 1973), 34.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 35.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 34.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Ibid.*

the point of a women's film festival? For Martineau, it is, in part, this sense of connection – the 'triple high' – but also 'to see how creative women see their world.'⁴³ What's more, Martineau 'can't help hoping a change will be wrought in women's attitudes right there in the theatre' and, she urges, 'we must help each other learn how to see what we've been trained until now to ignore.'⁴⁴

Finding and Choosing Women's Films

The Screening Committee

As Martineau observes, 'in 1972 when women started searching actively for our heritage in films, an impressive number of hitherto neglected films by women were discovered gathering dust in archives and on distributors' back shelves.'⁴⁵ As will be discussed further on in this thesis, activists and scholars were, at first glance, faced with an almost total absence of women directors from film histories like Andrew Sarris' *The American Cinema* (1969). But these early women's film festivals, Martineau attests, were full of 'gemlike' discoveries.⁴⁶

Nordstrom's Spring 1971 press release had appeared in the New York-based feminist newsletter *Majority Report*, seeking 'films made by women on all subjects' including 'features, documentaries, industrials, animated and experimental works,' as well as 'films made in collaboration with men.'⁴⁷ 'I sent out word to all the filmmakers that I met,' remembers Nordstrom, 'I contacted all the film distribution companies, [and] said: "Please, I want all the films made by women", so they sent them to me.'⁴⁸ Also fundamental to the search for films for Nordstrom was the 1971 Flaherty Film Seminar, a yearly event dedicated to documentary film attended by an assortment of documentary enthusiasts, from filmmakers, festival programmers and film historians to teachers and librarians.⁴⁹ Nordstrom recalls: 'I drew up a proposal, I started calling

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Martineau, 'The Films of Marta Meszaros,' 21.

⁴⁶ Ibid, 22.

⁴⁷ 'Feb. Women's Film Festival,' *Majority Report* 1, no. 6, (November 1971).

⁴⁸ Nordstrom, interview.

⁴⁹ Rothschild, interview. Founded in 1955 by Robert J. Flaherty, a pioneer of documentary film, the seminar originated as a gathering on the Flaherty Farm in Vermont, eventually developing into a forum for the screening and discussion of documentary film over a week-long period, during which participants also share meals in order to create an intimate community that differs from festivals or scholarly conferences, 'Flaherty Seminar: History of the Seminar,' The Flaherty/International Film Seminars Inc. 2008, <http://www.flahertyseminar.org/?sb=2&mb=4&yr=0> (11.05.2011).

up people to ask them to be sponsors, and then I went to Flaherty.⁵⁰ There, she met filmmakers Amalie R. Rothschild (*Woo Who May Wilson*, 1969 and *It Happens to Us*, 1971), Liane Brandon (*Anything You Want to Be*, 1971), and Julia Reichert and Jim Klein (*Growing Up Female* 1971), who all screened films at the festival.⁵¹ Rothschild, who eventually joined the festival's screening committee, recalls:

At that time in history there were only, I mean less than a handful of women feature filmmakers who were known to us [...] Agnès Varda, Shirley Clarke, [...] Maya Deren, Marie Menken [...] There were a number of women doing avant-garde experimental film in the United States, but for full-length, dramatic feature films there were very, very few. And it was hard to find them.⁵²

As Rothschild further points out, 'there was no internet, no Twitter, no Facebook; there weren't fax machines. So things were done by snail mail, and word of mouth and putting announcements in the relevant film journals [...].'⁵³ Flyers were sent out inviting women to submit films, specifying that they would be chosen based on 'artistic merit by a committee of women actively involved with the cinema.'⁵⁴ Nordstrom also contacted future *Women & Film* contributor Sharon Smith, who was compiling information about women filmmakers for her book, *Women Who Make Movies*, which she would excerpt in the magazine and eventually publish in 1975.⁵⁵

Despite women's seeming absence from film history, and some critics' initial skepticism that enough films would be found for a festival devoted to women directors, Nordstrom and her selection committee, which included Rothschild, photographer Kay Harris, art critic Regina Cornwell, and playwright Janet Sternburg, were faced with the task of selecting films from the hundreds they had unearthed. Once a week, they gathered in a loft above the famous music venue the Fillmore East, where Rothschild

⁵⁰ Nordstrom, Jan Rosenberg, *Women's Reflections: The Feminist Film Movement* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1983), 97; Nordstrom, interview.

⁵¹ Rothschild recounts: '[Nordstrom] had mentioned that she was trying to put together a women's film festival, we decided to have a breakfast meeting [...]. That's where we all volunteered [...] to serve on the screening committee and to help her organize it,' Rothschild, interview. This meeting between Rothschild, Brandon, Reichert and Klein led to the founding of New Day, a co-operative dedicated to the distribution of independent educational and social issue films.

⁵² Rothschild, interview.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ The flyer cites June 1972 as the date for the event and sets the 18 March as the deadline for submission. According to an official entry form the final date of June was set by the end of spring 1972. By April 1972, *Variety* claimed the event would take place in at the end of May. By this point the 5th Avenue Cinema had been chosen as the venue, as had a certain number of films, although the report states that only thirty features will be shown, 'Festival in N.Y. to Celebrate Women as Makers of Films, All Kinds,' *Variety*, 5 April, 1972. The flyer also announced topics for panel discussion, filmmaker talks and a conference on the image of women in film and film aesthetics.

⁵⁵ Nordstrom, interview. Smith also acted as a moderator on a panel titled 'Is there a Female Film Aesthetic?' that took place 20 June 1972. Her work is discussed more fully in Chapter VI.

housed her production facilities.⁵⁶ At times, there were too many films to watch in one sitting, so they were carried over until the following session. In total, they viewed over 500 films; 200 of these were directly submitted to the committee; the rest were sought out from distributors.⁵⁷ As Rothschild observes, 'everything was 16mm in those days, so you didn't just pop a DVD or VHS cassette into your TV. It was a big deal; you had to have projection facilities.'⁵⁸ It was an equally big deal for the filmmakers themselves, who were often lending their only print of their films.⁵⁹ As Nordstrom's scope widened and more and more films presented themselves for screening, the festival's dates were pushed into the following year.

A Feminist Festival?

The selection process proved highly contentious for the women involved. Two distinct issues arose: firstly, what were the criteria for selection? Should the films be feminist films, and if so, what distinguished a feminist film from a non-feminist one? Or should they simply be films made by women? As Martineau would later write in her reflection on the festivals she attended between 1972-1973, 'I think some deeply unresolved issues about the relationships between art and politics within feminism need to be thought through and worked through more carefully.'⁶⁰ Secondly, how could the selection process and festival itself reflect feminism's desire for equality, accessibility and radical political change? These issues echo those experienced by those involved in *Women & Film*, both in regard to questions of feminism and authorship as well as implementing feminist principles into the magazine's organising structure and decision-making processes.

Nordstrom had adopted the selection procedure she had seen at the New York Film Festival. Roud, and to a lesser extent Vogel, had initially been responsible for choosing the films, but after its programme was criticized for being both too idiosyncratic and dominated by the same European directors, a selection committee

⁵⁶ Nordstrom, interview; Rothschild, interview.

⁵⁷ Nordstrom estimated it at 525, interview; Mekas, 61. Selection was in some cases affected by issues of availability: for example, Esther Shub's *The Fall of the Romanoff Dynasty* was owned by MOMA and could not be used for public screenings. Nordstrom also mentioned two films that she did not include: 'I rejected Chantal Akerman's first film for my first festival because it was so boring. [...] I also made a mistake rejecting Gillian Armstrong's experimental film [probably *The Roof Needs Mowing*, 1971], that I should have shown.' Nordstrom, interview.

⁵⁸ Rothschild, interview.

⁵⁹ As evidenced by a letter from Canadian filmmaker Patricia Gruben to Nordstrom, asking for her film back so that she can use it for a job interview. Letter, 15 July 1972, Nordstrom personal archive.

⁶⁰ Martineau, 'Paris/Chicago,' 10.

was formed in 1966 that included Andrew Sarris, Arthur Knight, and in 1967, Susan Sontag.⁶¹ The result was ‘marathon sessions of watching and debating,’ where ‘each member’s vote received equal weight.’ According to Sarris, ‘they fought it out and each member was allowed to pick one film that was immune from the vetoes of other members.’⁶² Rothschild recalls that in the women’s festival ‘there were certainly people representing different points of view on the committee and who were pushing for the things that they thought should be part of the festival.’⁶³ However, the New York Film Festival selection differed in one key way: their selection committee members would suggest films they had seen at other festivals for fellow members to consider.⁶⁴ There was therefore a pre-selection process at work that was absent from Nordstrom’s festival.

Unlike Roud and company, whose selections acted to refine an already respected and influential cinematic avant-garde, the selection committee of the First Festival of Women’s Films were attempting to simultaneously reinstate a parallel history of women’s filmmaking, as well as identify and define a cinematic counterpart to the women’s liberation movement. These competing aims proved difficult to accommodate. In October 1971, *Variety* reported a change from the event’s title of the Feminist Film Festival to the Women’s Film Festival, with a claim that since ‘all kinds of films by women will be showcased, the [original] title was considered misleading.’⁶⁵ In a later interview, Nordstrom commented:

‘I didn’t want to put on a totally feminist film festival because it would turn people off [... I wanted] rather, a varied program of creative ideas, and to make it less angry and concentrate on more productive women [...]. I think I succeeded in getting more people to come [...]. I wasn’t interested in reaching only the women’s movement, but many people [...] the choices [of films] were made on aesthetic values.’⁶⁶

Despite her involvement with the New York Radical Feminists, she was wary of the associations that the label of ‘feminist’ would invite, particularly, it seems, the perennial stereotype of ‘angry feminists.’

⁶¹ This criticism originated mainly from Stanley Kauffmann of *The New Republic* and John Simon of *New York* magazine. Sontag joined in 1967 to help put together the 1968 festival, on which Nordstrom also worked. Hamid, 77-78.

⁶² *Ibid*, 78.

⁶³ Rothschild, interview.

⁶⁴ Hamid, 77.

⁶⁵ ‘Women’s Film Fest is Seeking Seed Coin,’ *Variety*, 6 October 1971.

⁶⁶ Rachel Rolon de Clet, ‘Film Festival: How-why-and-who-dunit,’ *Majority Report* 1, no. 13 (July 1972), 11. Some advertisers were apparently resistant to promoting the event because of its association with women’s liberation. Nonetheless, the festival clearly retained its traditional commercial function: Nordstrom succeeded in securing distribution for some of the festival’s films, including Mai Zetterling’s *The Girls* which was taken on by Bob Shay of New Line Cinema alongside a selection of films for general distribution. Nordstrom, interview.

However, the festival's ambivalent relationship to the feminist movement proved a deal-breaker for some of the women involved. In February 1972, most of Nordstrom's screening committee resigned. In a letter to Jonas Mekas at *The Village Voice*, they complain that despite 'having repeatedly tried to work out differences of policy with the Festival's Director' over five months, they were unable to 'function in a way creditable to ourselves, to film, and to the women's community.'⁶⁷ These differences of policy are listed as the lack of 'a clear concept of the motivations, goals, and related managerial policy of the Festival' and a failure for this to be translated into 'a working structure.' They go on to say that

Realizing the Festival's cultural importance to women, we felt we could not simply continue looking at films while these matters were left undetermined. Consequently we attempted among ourselves to form and define a philosophy and practical direction for the Festival and for the committee, but again we found the Director unable to effect a situation in which our committee could work with her on the broader issues of policy and structure. It was our opinion that, without the committee's increased involvement, the idea of the Festival could not be adequately served in the absence of stated policy and administrative expertise.⁶⁸

They close the letter by expressing the hope that 'in the future, projects of this sort will be undertaken in the spirit of collective decision-making that is one of the working principles of the women's movement.'⁶⁹ Others were critical of the festival's organizational structure in their reviews of the event, such as art critic Joan Braderman, who bemoans the festival for not having been 'conducted according to what we've learned about male structures.'⁷⁰

Given the festival's New York Radical Feminist roots, it is unsurprising that many of those involved were keen to retain the 'nuclear, leaderless structureless groups' and 'flexible non-dogmatic approach to problem solving and decision-making' expressly favoured by the group structure.⁷¹ But Nordstrom's model for the event, Roud and Vogel's New York festival, did not make use of such methods and she clearly wanted to recreate some part of the glamour and excitement generated by the New York festival.

⁶⁷ Mekas, 61. Letter dated 25 February 1972, signed by Susan Clark, Kit Clarke, Regina Cornwell, Nadine Covert, Mary Felbauer, Kay Harris, Linda Patton, Amalie R. Rothschild, Elaine Sperber, Janet Sternburg and Melinda Ward. Mekas postponed publishing the letter, later reasoning that he 'prefer[ed] things done, even if imperfectly, to things not done at all because of too zealous notions of perfection.' He did eventually print it 'as a historical footnote to the First Women's Films Festival [sic]' a few days before it took place, alongside his interview with Nordstrom.

⁶⁸ Mekas, 61.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ Joan Braderman, 'Report: The First Festival of Women's Films,' *Artforum* 11, no. 1 (December, 1972), 87.

⁷¹ New York Radical Feminists, *Newsletter* (March 1975), 4. Not all feminist groups were structureless, with national organizations such as N.O.W. using elected positions.

According to a later interview, Nordstrom asserts that the 'dissident members had been unwilling to do much of the humdrum routine work connected with organising the festival but they were equally unwilling to accept the restrictions which this imposed on their authority.'⁷² While Nordstrom had sought a committee to help select the films, she had nonetheless named herself Festival Director from the outset, and, it seems, she was keen to retain this position and control over the ultimate vision for a festival.

It is also unsurprising that implementing these models posed considerable problems. As the feminist activist and writer Jo Freeman points out in her essay 'The Tyranny of Structurelessness,' 'unstructured groups may be very effective at getting women to talk about their lives; they aren't very good for getting things done.'⁷³ Drawing from her own experiences of women's movement activism, Freeman argues that no group can be truly structureless, only formally or informally structured, since human groups inevitably form social hierarchies of some kind. While feminists' desire to reject such systems was 'a natural reaction' to patriarchal oppression, and had become an 'unquestioned part of women's liberation ideology,' the idea of 'structureless' or leaderless groups 'is as little examined as the term is much used.' Collective organizing was a feminist ideal but there were certainly very few guidelines on how to implement these ideals. As we shall see further on in this thesis, these issues were also highly relevant to *Women & Film*.

Following the resignation of much of the first screening committee, Nordstrom recruited several new members: TV producer Marty Bowles and graphic designer Rachel Rolon de Clet (both fellow members of the New York Radical Feminists); publicist Carol Kahn; filmmaker Jane Anders; Polly Elliot and Mary Jo Sorce, who both worked in public relations; editor Fred Von Berenwitz; and filmmaker Leah Laiman (who would go on to co-direct the 1976 festival with Nordstrom). The screenings then moved to the Film Forum, a newly established cinema founded in 1970 by Peter Feinstein and Sandy Miller, dedicated to showing independent and avant-garde film.⁷⁴

⁷² Rosenberg, *Women's Reflections*, 98. Rosenberg also notes that similar objections were not raised during the ensuing festival organized by Nordstrom that took place in 1976, most likely because 'the fervor which once surrounded issues of decentralization had dissipated.'

⁷³ Jo Freeman, 'The Tyranny of Structurelessness,' 1971, jofreeman.com, <http://www.jofreeman.com/joreen/tyranny.htm> (09.10 2017).

⁷⁴ Rolon de Clet, 'Film Festival,' 11.

Women's Film Daily: Barbara Martineau's writing for *Women & Film*

How and Why Study Women's Films?

While some of the issues raised by the resignation of the screening committee are considered by Martineau in her first article on the festival for *Cinema Canada*, her later multi-festival report for *Women & Film*, 'Women's Film Daily', integrates her accounts of four major women's film festivals with an overarching assessment of the value of such events for women in film. She opens with the declaration: 'This is the year of Women and Film! Major Women's Film Festivals in four countries!' This is followed by a series of questions and statements that ask how to evaluate women's films and women's film festivals (and also raise the question of Canadian cultural identity):

Women Make Good in Films
Can Canadian women make good Canadian films[?]
Some women make good films
Do good women make films well?
What good are women's films?
Take in a good woman's film today!
What are Canadian women's films?
Are films good for Canadian women?

'Women's Film Daily' is Martineau's attempt to recount the 'mind-changing, life-changing experience' of visiting the first four major women's film festivals that took place in New York, Edinburgh, London and Toronto in the 1970s.⁷⁵ 'After filling notebooks with facts and assumptions and false beginnings and middles and endings,' she explains, 'I began to construct the highly subjective collage of facts impressions and thoughts which I have called Women's Film Daily. It is subjectivity in pursuit of greater objectivity.'⁷⁶

Martineau's article is composed of various other texts relating to the festivals. In her section on the New York festival, she includes a reprint of *New York Times* critic George Gent's description of the festival, which itself features a long quotation from a festival press release, claiming that the

festival was organized to encourage women film makers, who are said to suffer from notorious discrimination in the field. It is also designed to provide an outlet for selected works, and to serve as a forum for the [...] dissemination of the woman's point of view.⁷⁷

⁷⁵ Martineau, 'Women's Film Daily,' 36.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Festival press release, 11 June 1972, quoted by George Gent, 'Women Filmmakers: Door Opening,' *New York Times*, 15 June 1972, in Martineau, 'Women's Film Daily,' 36.

Martineau also reprints a description of the festival from Sandra Salyer's earlier *Women & Film* article from issue 2 (1972) that highlights some of the criticisms it faced, namely the lack of childcare provision; the expense of screenings (tickets were \$2 for matinees, \$2.50 for evening showings, and \$25 for the opening night film, *The Girls*); and the failure to address 'non-white minorities.'⁷⁸ Martineau herself says very little about the festival until the end of her article, where she summarises her impressions of the four she attended. She describes New York as 'pioneer[ing...] haughty, exclusive, fantastically exciting and democratic in the individualistic American way. Little money, lots of films, conventional aesthetic approach.'⁷⁹

Her discussion of the other three festivals sheds light on her preferences in terms of organisational approach; Edinburgh (organised by Claire Johnston, Linda Myles and Laura Mulvey, 1972) is deemed to have showcased an 'intelligent choice of films' but was 'practically exclusive,' open to all only in theory.⁸⁰ Her choice of words here takes on a pun-like quality when repeated in her evaluation of the London event (Claire Johnston, 1973), which she refers to as possessing 'a certain exclusivity of insistence on either semiology as a basis for theoretical discussion in the seminars, or, as very few women had the needed the background for that, only the most diffuse discussion of likes and dislikes.'⁸¹ The exclusivity that Martineau picks up on at these British festivals may well reflect her position as a foreigner but also the influence of the small network of women theorists organizing them. As for Toronto, she praises the collectives and committees behind the event, commenting 'I don't count political struggles and difficulties of interpersonal relations as disadvantages – they're inherent to the development of collective work.'⁸² She does however concede that this process may have led to inefficient spending and organising at times. She also stresses the potential uses of auteurism 'if modified by women' and therefore laments the absence of any director retrospectives.⁸³

In a sidebar entitled 'Why Study Women's Films?', Martineau grapples with some of the issues that had confronted the New York festival's screening committee, such as the issues of labelling work by women as 'women's film.' She starts by establishing that 'films made by women have been neglected on a large scale [...] because made by women [sic].'⁸⁴ She queries the existence of a female aesthetic, but points to the

⁷⁸ Salyer, 'Selected Short Subjects,' 36.

⁷⁹ Martineau, 'Women's Film Daily,' 43.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 37, her emphasis.

differences in women's experiences as generating new images: 'women have been treated differently, conditioned differently for so long, that when they set about working with images of the world it is likely to be a different world with different images [...] than those of men.'⁸⁵ She repeatedly draws a parallel between the subordination of women to men and that of Canadian film culture to North American, specifically Hollywood. 'We look at women's films,' she concludes,

To find cultural roots – to find images of women and their world(s) made by women. Doing this strengthens our sense of being subjects regarding a world where we have creative roles, rather than objects existing only *to be looked at* [...].⁸⁶

This distinction between the active, looking subject and the passive object that is looked at is of course deeply reminiscent of that made by Laura Mulvey in 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema.' Given that she had met Mulvey at Edinburgh in 1972, it is quite likely she had at some point been exposed to these arguments in the run-up to their publication in *Screen* in 1975.⁸⁷ Again, she returns to the difficulty of evaluation: 'what about women,' she asks, 'who demand that their films be judged in comparison with films by men[?]' [...] Do we want to be integrated into a rotting system?' Her hope, she explains, is that 'one can attack the male-based position some women take without attacking the women, and at the same time recognize what value there is in their work.'⁸⁸

In a further sidebar, 'How Study Women's Films?', Martineau remarks on the necessity 'of studying women's films on their own terms.'⁸⁹ Despite her apparent dislike of the theoretical bent of the British festivals, she reflects on the 'the great promise of semiology', the 'possibility of "reading" different art forms on their own terms, asking *how* a film means.'⁹⁰ But she also brings to life the intellectual efforts required for mastering these theories, writing that, after attending the London festival in 1973, she 'was faced with the necessity of coming to terms with semiology, which meant reading the most unreadable texts imaginable.' Such an acknowledgment is refreshing in a debate that often sometimes descends into accusations of elitism or unsophistication. Despite its difficulty, she acknowledges that semiology is 'exciting in

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid, my emphasis.

⁸⁷ Martineau writes of meeting Mulvey, Myles and Johnston in her letter to Kay Armatage, published in *Take One's* Women in Film column. Martineau and Armatage, 'Women in Film,' *Take One* 3, no. 8 (1973): 35-38. Mulvey briefly previews her argument in the introduction to the Scottish festival, also reprinted in part by Martineau in 'Women's Film Daily,' 37.

⁸⁸ Martineau, 'Women's Film Daily,' 37.

⁸⁹ Ibid, 39.

⁹⁰ Ibid, her emphasis.

its implications.⁹¹ She also has more to say on the utility of ‘auteur analysis.’⁹² It allows the critic to ‘see how patterns other than narrative and plot develop (one director may concentrate on using certain kinds of music, or editing techniques [...]).’⁹³ But, she asserts, the aim of such an approach is not to reveal the personality of the director; instead we learn ‘how plot and narrative can be subverted or dominated by other structures and how three individual plots may add up to a new way of seeing [...] the way women live.’⁹⁴ This section ends with a diagram entitled ‘The Argument: Why and How Study Women’s Film’ that summarises the arguments made in the sidebars (fig. 30).

Martineau finds the basic premise of women’s film festivals – the exhibition of woman-made films – as ultimately useful, politically and creatively. She concludes her article with a section called ‘What I have learned in a year of women’s festival going.’ She makes three main observations: firstly, that ‘seeing films by women is shattering and transforming when you’re a woman brought up on films by men’; secondly, ‘a large number of well-made and generally interesting films made by women, made from the beginnings of film making until now, have been neglected, lost, destroyed, not shown, ignored by critics or panned.’⁹⁵ Finally, she asserts, ‘we need to find the old films and the new ones and rescue them and show them and talk about them and show them again and make new films.’⁹⁶ She is keen to stress the material and institutional measures that will facilitate this, venturing

We need a women’s film centre, run by women, with an archive, a film theatre with regular showings of retrospectives and new work, a library, resources for making films and learning to make them, and resources for generating publications. Wouldn’t Canada be a good place for this?⁹⁷

Building a network, building a movement

The First International Festival of Women’s Films may have left questions about what defines a women’s cinema or the existence of a female film aesthetic unresolved. But in her second report for *Women & Film* (on the Paris and Chicago festivals), Martineau stresses ‘that the most useful function women’s film festivals can now perform is to

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid, 40.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid, 44.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

bring together local women with an awareness of their own resources and potential.⁹⁸ While these events are deemed important for the exhibition of films by women, they were also crucial as sites for the exchange of knowledge, contacts and expertise between women filmmakers and critics, and ultimately helped build a sense that a potential network of women was making films around the globe (see the collage of photographs in fig. 31-32).⁹⁹ Writing in 1972, Saundra Salyer refers to the First International Festival of Women's Films as 'one the largest gatherings of radical women in the U.S. in recent years,' and notes that 'the forced intimacy of the small 300-seat theatre made for a more intense atmosphere of common purpose and inspiration.'¹⁰⁰ On the festival's significance to women's filmmaking, she writes:

The vital exchange of information, jobs and ideas transformed the festival into a workshop. Almost daily someone came in looking for a cinematographer or editor for a feature to begin production the next day or week; suddenly women wanted to work with all female crews. The Festival became an employment office. Often several women would discover they'd been trying to realize the same project and would form a working collective on the spot. Five different books treating some aspect of women in film are being written. Contacts were made, new friendships formed, in an atmosphere of struggle and solidarity.¹⁰¹

Not only did women exchange knowledge and contacts, but in many ways the festival functioned as a kind of mass consciousness-raising: Salyer describes the panel discussions organised to coincide with the screenings as 'lively personal testimonies of women struggling with their image on screen, behind and in front of the camera and in "real life."¹⁰² This is echoed by Rachel Rolon de Clet's article on the festival, which claims that 'for the majority, it was consciousness-raising.'¹⁰³ She also recounts that women found crews to work on their films: 'after a number of requests [...] we put up a sign, and by the end of the two weeks it was filled with names.'¹⁰⁴ As future *Women & Film* contributor Julia Lesage recalls on her own festival-going experiences, there was 'a lot of socializing, and a lot of discussion [...]. A lot of people met at women's film

⁹⁸ Martineau, 'Paris/Chicago,' 10.

⁹⁹ The majority of films screened at these festivals were from the US, UK, Canada and France, although over time, more and more women from South America, Africa and Asia were uncovered.

¹⁰⁰ Salyer, 'Selected Short Subjects,' 37.

¹⁰¹ Ibid. Of the five books mentioned, these may well have included: *From Reverence to Rape* by Molly Haskell, who attended the festival and sat on the panel 'Women's Image in Film'. Marjorie Rosen's *Popcorn Venus* (1973): she was New York-based and may have attended; Joan Mellen's *Women and their Sexuality in the New Film* (1974); and Sharon Smith's *Women Who Make Movies* (1975). Martineau was reportedly working on a book about women in film but her manuscript was never published.

¹⁰² Salyer, 'Selected Short Subjects,' 37.

¹⁰³ Rolon de Clet, 'Film Festival,' 11.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

festivals and kept that [...] political contact for a lifetime.’¹⁰⁵ Amalie Rothschild similarly emphasizes ‘the important functions of festival social events: the formation of professional liaisons and canonicity. People often chat about movies at parties, but when the guests are scholars, critics, and festival programmers [...] the stakes are high.’¹⁰⁶

Conclusions

The women’s film festivals of the early 1970s illuminated the forgotten histories of women’s filmmaking and elevated the profile of many working women directors of the period. In an interview with Jonas Mekas on the eve of the First International Festival of Women’s Films, Nordstrom recounts the lengthy research process that put her in touch with ‘thousands of women working in cinema,’ and refers to a box file she has put together that contains the details of 700 women directors that she has collected in the run-up to the festival, a figure that leaves Mekas, in his words, ‘dumbfounded.’¹⁰⁷ These festivals were also crucial as spaces in which women could come together to celebrate, learn, and converse and where a movement could take shape. By reporting on these events, *Women & Film* allowed those who were not physically present to feel a part of them and share in the knowledge disseminated there. Sandy Flitterman-Lewis recalls that despite its eclectic programming, during her time in Berkeley no women’s film festivals were held at the Pacific Film Archive (or indeed the Telegraph Theatre that predated it), and films by women were rarely screened. But she was able to read about those festivals that took place in New York and elsewhere, reports that were important for her research.¹⁰⁸

Martineau later writes she ‘was hopeful that the women’s film festivals [...] would lead to more permanent changes in our cultural condition, altered consciousness about the role of women in filmmaking, perhaps an archive of women’s films.’¹⁰⁹ While these outcomes may have failed to fully materialize, articles such as Martineau’s act as a record of these early women’s film festivals; they are of historical relevance to us now, but for those who organized and attended them at the time, they also function as a legitimizing recognition of that effort and energy. One could perhaps even point to a

¹⁰⁵ Lesage, interview.

¹⁰⁶ Kay Armatage, ‘Material Affects: Fashions in Feminist Programming,’ *There She Goes: Feminist Film and Beyond*, ed. Corinn Columpar and Sophie Mayer (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2009), 90–104.

¹⁰⁷ Mekas, 61.

¹⁰⁸ Sandy Flitterman-Lewis, interview with author, Hoboken, NJ, 3 November 2013.

¹⁰⁹ Martineau, ‘Paris/Chicago,’ 10.

correlation between the successful historicization of these events and their coverage in the magazine; allusions to those early festivals that predate the First International Festival of Women's Films can be found in other movement publications, but their histories are currently inaccessible. Articles like Martineau's 'Women's Film Daily' and others published in *Women & Film* however, leave a significant record of this festival's legacy.

Women & Film allowed women a forum in which to reflect on and debate the value of these events and to evaluate the tactics and strategies used to make them happen. As such, this coverage can be seen to bridge temporal and discursive gaps between these festivals. They preserved the momentum, allowing the energy, effort and sense of discovery these events embodied to be transmitted into future time and space, passed to feminists in other parts of the world also hoping to write (and screen) women into film history.

FESTIVAL OF WOMEN'S FILMS

THIS TWO WEEK EVENT WILL FEATURE SCREENINGS OF FILMS MADE OR DIRECTED BY WOMEN, AS WELL AS A SYMPOSIUM TO DISCUSS TOPICS OF PROFESSIONAL INTEREST AND TO EXPLORE THE IMAGE OF WOMEN IN FILM.

PURPOSES:

- To discover and exhibit the work of new filmmakers.
- To permit a general audience to see films made by women that have not received wide distribution.
- To make the public aware of the great number of highly creative women working in the film profession.
- To see the images that women are creating for themselves.
- To present a comprehensive exhibition of films made by women in order to investigate the possible existence of a particularly female film sensibility.
- To provide a forum for discussions among women filmmakers.
- To encourage women of all ages to enter the film profession and pursue their ambitions in this field.

DATE: The target date for the Festival of Women's Films is April 1972.
DEADLINE: Films received after Jan. 18 will not be considered eligible.

For more info: Festival of Women's Films, 1582 York Avenue, New York, N.Y., 10028 (212) 628-5652

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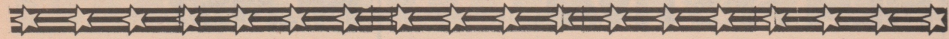
Figure 24: Ad for the First International Festival of Women's Film from *Women & Film 1* (1972).



Figure 25: Barbara Martineau at the Musidora festival, Paris 1974. Image from Connie Greenbaum's 'Musidora: The Organization of the First Women's Film Festival in Paris.' *Women & Film 7* (1975), 9. Photo by Dana Sardet.

"El Topo" might be described as an hallucinogenic Western out of Fellini and Bunuel. Its hero stalks, kills and rapes his way across a desert filled with prophets, freaks and madmen.

WOMEN'S CINEMA



"Red Psalm"—Miklos Jancso

First and last reactions to the film must centre on the camera movement, which provides the structure of the film and the key to its analysis. But surely inbetween there is room to ask about the use of naked women on precisely the same level as horses: i.e., something to do with the natural roots of the people, the willingness of the women to fight with the only weapons they are presumed to have . . . Throughout the film assorted peasant maidens wander through the crowd in simple shifts of virginal white. In the final sequence one maiden wears a simple shift of blood red as, gun in hand, she stalks the oppressors of her people. After the revolution, if still alive, she will no doubt resume her virginal white.

"The Fruit of Paradise"—Vera Chytilova

Chytilova's Eve, who wears a white flower, is married to a very dull man, and attracted to a fascinating stranger, who turns out to be an assassin. He kills blonde women and stamps the red number 6 on their bodies. A bureaucratic assassin. After a sequence where the stranger binds Eve to a tree with serpentine gestures, magically changing her white dress to red, Eve kills him and finds Pravda, truth, a blood-red flower of violence—she offers this to her husband and he refuses in horror. The color symbolism is intricately extended here as it is in "Red Psalm." But here the woman defines her colors—in Jancso's film she is defined by them. Here she is protagonist—there merely symbol.

—BHM, from my Edinburgh diary

The National Film Theatre—London

April 1 - June 2, 1973

36 short films 33 features 2 feature-length documentaries

1 open screening of women's films series of women's seminars (after considerable, distortive press dismay, a final seminar was opened to men)

tickets approximately 40p (\$1.00)

John Player lecture by Nelly Kaplan

THE NATIONAL FILM THEATRE—LONDON

"The conventional view about women working in Hollywood . . . is that they had little opportunity for real expression within the dominant sexist ideology; they were token women and little more. In fact, because iconography offers in some ways a greater resistance to the realist characterisations, the mythic qualities of certain stereotypes become far more easily detachable and can be used as a shorthand for referring to an ideological tradition in order to provide a critique of it . . . Dorothy Arzner certainly made use of such techniques and the work of Nelly Kaplan is particularly important in this respect. As a European director she understands the dangers of myth invading the sign in the art film, and deliberately makes use of Hollywood iconography to counteract this." —Claire Johnston, organizer of the London women's cinema season, in "Women's Cinema as Counter-Cinema," from *Notes on Women's Cinema*, edited by Claire Johnston and discussed in seminars during the season.

Q: What about the feedback to you? Have you learned anything from what critics have said?

NK: Not yet. I hope, someday, maybe . . .

—from an interview with Nelly Kaplan by BHM, same pamphlet as above

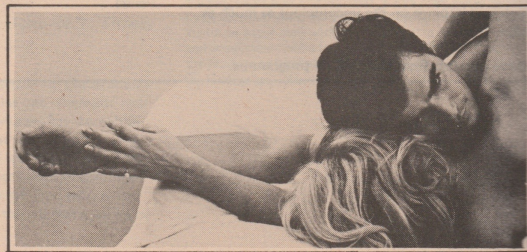


Figure 26, left: A page from Martineau's 'Women's Film Daily,' *Women & Film* 5-6 (1974), featuring extracts from *Notes on Women's Cinema* ed. Johnston and Martineau's 'Edinburgh diary.'

NYRF present,
FUNDRAISING
FILM FESTIVAL

feature: MAE WEST MOVIE

SHORTS:
 FILM BY CONTEMPORARY WOMEN FILMMAKERS
 AMALIE ROTHCHILD: "WOO WHO MAY WILSON"
 ANN LEWIS: "ADOLESCENCE COMING BACK"
 CLAUDHA WELLS

SHOWTIME-- 11:30 AM
NOVEMBER 7th - SUNDAY
ELGIN THEATER - 8th Ave. @ 19th St.

MEN INVITED. SELL THEM TICKETS. \$3.00
GET THE TICKETS FROM MINDA BI KMAN AT
924-7264.

Figure 27: An ad for a New York Radical Feminist film festival from Majority Report 1, no. 6 (November 1971).

FESTIVAL OF WOMEN'S FILMS
LAST 6 DAYS!!

The First International Festival of Films Made by Women
 Complete Details Available at Theatre

TODAY Noon THE GIRL by Marica Meszaros
 6:45 THE GIRL by Marica Meszaros
 8:00 CLEO FROM 5 TO 7 by Agnes Varda
 10:00 CLEO FROM 5 TO 7 by Agnes Varda
 *Midnight OUT FROM UNDER: New documentary on Women's Liberation struggle filmed in Europe by Marion de Vries

SAURDAY * Noon ANIMALS & ANIMATION Short films especially chosen for children. Children's admission only \$1.00
 2:45 Short Films on WOMEN: MYTH & REALITY
 6:00 A VERY CURIOUS STORY by Nelly Kaplan
 8:00 A VERY CURIOUS STORY by Nelly Kaplan
 10:00 A VERY CURIOUS GIRL by Nelly Kaplan
 *Midnight PAPA, LES PETITS BATEAUX, new feature by Nelly Kaplan

SUNDAY Noon THE LIZARDS by Lina Wertmuller
 2:45 Short Films on VISUAL ANTHROPOLOGY
 10:00 THE GIRL by Marica Meszaros
 8:00 Short Films on FAMILIES
 6:00 THE GIRL by Marica Meszaros

MONDAY Noon WANDA by Barbara Loden
 2:45 Short Films on PATHS OF LONELINESS
 * 6:00 PAPA, LES PETITS BATEAUX by Nelly Kaplan
 8:00 PAPA, LES PETITS BATEAUX by Nelly Kaplan
 *10:00 OUT FROM UNDER: New documentary on Women's Liberation struggle filmed in Europe by Marion de Vries

TUESDAY Noon THE GIRLS by Mai Zetterling,
 with Bibi Andersson
 2:45 Short Films on THE FEMINE MYSTIQUE
 6:00 THE LIZARDS by Lina Wertmuller
 8:00 Short Films on VISUAL ANTHROPOLOGY
 10:00 THE LIZARDS by Lina Wertmuller

WEDNESDAY Noon THREE LIVES documentary
 by Käte Millet
 2:45 WANDA by Barbara Loden
 6:00 WANDA by Barbara Loden
 8:00 Short Films on PATHS OF LONELINESS
 *10:00 THE GIRLS by Mai Zetterling, repeated by request

* Starred programs are ADDITIONS to previously announced schedule.

Film-makers are usually present at afternoon screenings for discussions with the audience.

All tickets are good for only one program. Tickets at box office at showtime or in advance at any time.

5th AVENUE CINEMA at 12th Street
 WA 4-8339

Figure 28: An ad from the New York Times 16 June 1972, showing the last six days of the programme.

CONFERENCE ON WOMEN IN FILM

Forum Discussions on these topics will be held at: P.S. 41,
116 West 11 Street, New York, N.Y. from 5:30 to 7 P.M.

<p>Tuesday, June 6</p> <p><u>The Image of Women in Film</u></p> <p>Jeanine Basinger Molly Haskell * Phyllis Chesler Trish Reilly Jean Faust Alex Steadman-Stern Gloria Steinem</p>	<p>Wednesday, June 14</p> <p><u>Acting</u></p> <p>Barbara Harris * Leah Laiman Estelle Parsons Viva Cicely Tyson</p>
<p>Wednesday, June 7</p> <p><u>Scriptwriting</u></p> <p>Helen Deutsch Renee Taylor * Marianna Norris Manya Starr</p>	<p>Thursday, June 15</p> <p><u>Directing & Producing</u></p> <p>Tamara Asseyev Barbara Loden Nelly Kaplan Karen Sperling * Louva Irvine Sylvia Spring Mary Ellen Bute Joan Silver</p>
<p>Thursday, June 8</p> <p><u>Women in Television</u></p> <p>Perry Miller Adato Joan Konner Barbara Gordon Eleanor Riger Pamela Illiot Marlene Sanders * Carole Kahn</p>	<p>Monday, June 19</p> <p><u>Making Documentaries</u></p> <p>Madeline Anderson Pat Jaffee * Patricia Barry Amalie Rothschild Nell Cox Judy Smith Gloria Callaci Charlotte Zwerin Julia Reichert Hope Ryden</p>
<p>Monday, June 12</p> <p><u>Programming & Distribution</u></p> <p>Joan Clark Judith Kass Emma Cohn Peggy Kenis * Madelein Friedlander Joanne D'Antonio</p>	<p>Tuesday, June 20</p> <p><u>Is There a Female Film Aesthetic?</u></p> <p>Richard Henshaw Rosalind Schneider Annette Michelson Sharon Smith * Kristina Nordstrom</p>
<p>Tuesday, June 13</p> <p><u>Editing</u></p> <p>Dede Allen Mirra Bank Mimi Arsham * Mavis Lenauer Smull Ellen Giffard Zina Voynow</p>	<p>Wednesday, June 21</p> <p><u>The Image of Men in Film</u></p> <p>* Judith Crist Marshall Efron Frank Perry Andrew Sarris Lucille Iverson</p>

* indicates moderator

Figure 29: Programme of panel events accompanying the First International Festival of Women's Films, 1972.

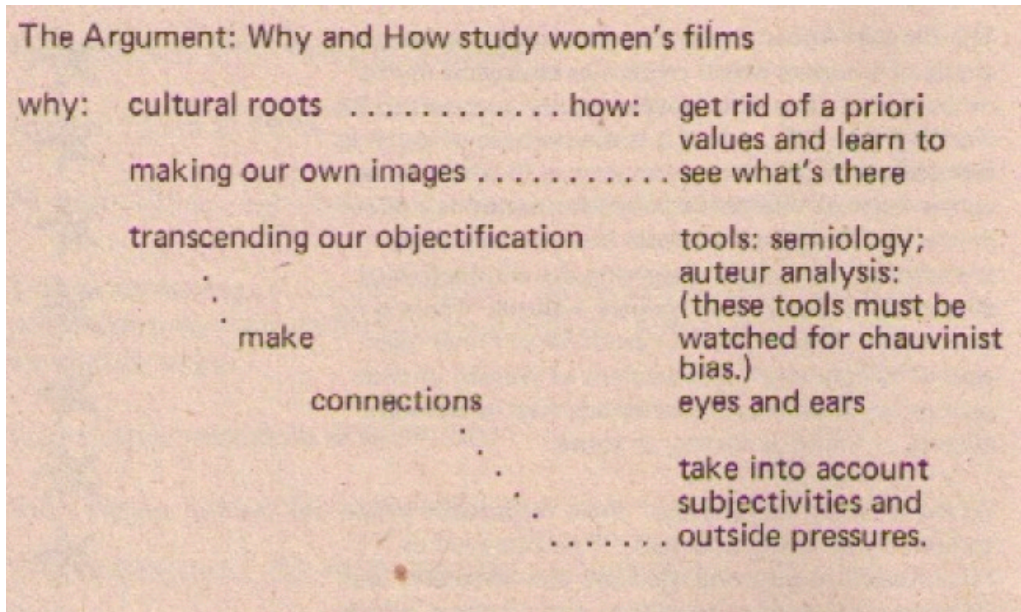


Figure 30: Diagram from Martineau's 'Women's Film Daily.'

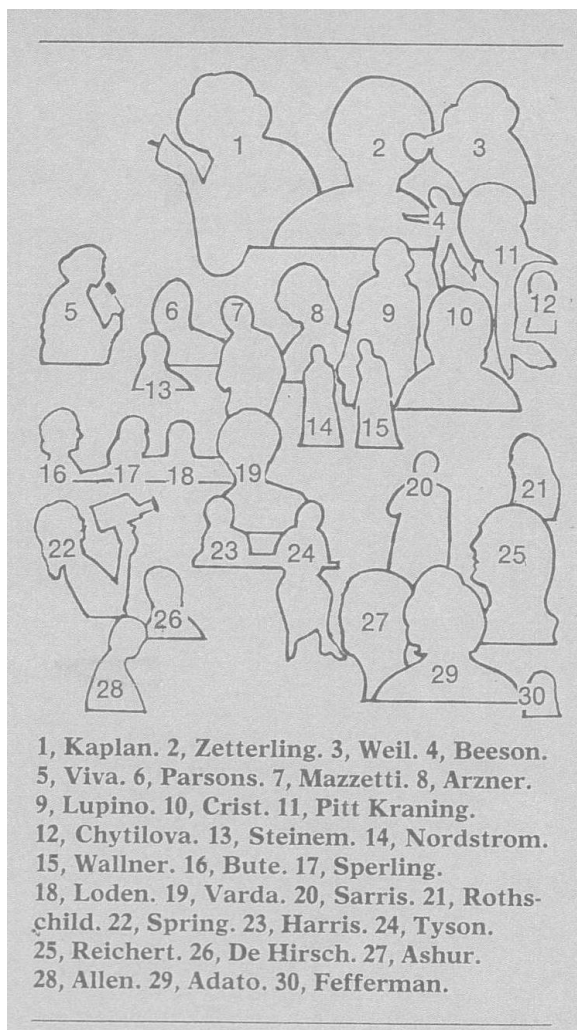


Figure 31: Who's Who for Saturday Review collage, 1972, see next page.



Figure 32: The First International Festival of Women's Films, photographic collage for Saturday Review, 12 August 1972, by Kay Harris, 1972.

IV

Feminist Film Criticism before Film 'Theory': 'images of women' and the auteur theory in *Women & Film*

In the writing of *Women & Film* editors Siew-Hwa Beh and Saundra Salyer, the question of how women are represented on screen is a central one. Their debut editorial emphasizes 'the struggle with women's image in film' and the need for women to 'take charge of [their] mind, bodies and image.'¹ Kristina Nordstrom meanwhile cites the desire to show 'the images that women are creating for themselves' as one of several aims for setting up the First International Festival of Women's Films. 'The Image of Women in Film' was the title of both an article by Sharon Smith in the first issue of the magazine and a discussion panel at Nordstrom's festival. The study of 'images of women,' often referred to as 'sociological criticism,' has since become the form of feminist film criticism with which *Women & Film* is most frequently associated. In this chapter, I examine some examples of this kind of criticism as it appears in the magazine and investigate the theoretical frameworks that inform them: their literary and sociological influences, and the ways in which these methodologies are refracted through the lens of 1970s feminism.

The emphasis at the first women's film festivals on showing films directed *by* women is also testament to the view that such images were created by the director, and implicitly positing the director as the primary author of a film. The relationship between early feminist film criticism and the auteur theory – the study of film directors' styles and motifs that dominated film studies prior to the semiotic and psychoanalytic film theories of the 1970s – is relatively unexplored. I therefore also use this chapter to consider how the auteur theory has been deployed by some *Women & Film* contributors to produce a feminist critique of film. Combined, these investigations reveal the landscape of film studies in the US during the first half of the 1970s, before the transformations brought about by structuralism, semiotics and psychoanalysis.

¹ Editors, 'Overview,' *Women & Film* 1 (1972), 5.

Defining sociological or 'images of women' criticism

The first critic to label the work of *Women & Film's* contributors as 'sociological' was British feminist critic Claire Johnston, co-organizer of the Women's Event at the 1972 Edinburgh Film Festival. As previously discussed, her pamphlet *Notes on Women's Cinema*, published in 1973 for the women's film festival at London's National Film Theatre, which she also organized, included writing by Barbara Martineau as well as another *Women & Film* contributor Naome Gilbert.² In her 'Women's Cinema as Counter-cinema,' Johnston describes the 'sociological perspective' of the magazine, exemplified by Gilbert and Martineau's work, as 'based on the empirical study of recurring roles and motifs.'³ Believing that film criticism should ultimately be used to change the way films are made and inform a women's 'counter-cinema,' Johnston argues that such work 'should not only concern itself with substituting positive female protagonists [...]. It requires a revolutionary strategy which can only be based on an analysis of how film operates as a medium within a specific cultural system.'⁴ Five years later, the film critic B. Ruby Rich identified sociological criticism as one of 'two voices' in feminist film criticism of the early 1970s.⁵ She characterizes this approach – 'exemplified by early *Women & Film* articles and much of the catalogue writing from festivals of that same period' – as an American, 'subjective' perspective, 'often a speaking out in one's own voice.' The 'other' she describes as 'British, seen as methodological or more objective' and informed by 'some of the most advanced tools of critical analysis, like semiology and psychoanalysis.'⁶

Later accounts of the development of feminist film criticism counterpose 'sociological' criticism with one informed by 'theory.' Within these, *Women & Film* is usually placed in the former category, along with three books published soon after: *Popcorn Venus* (1973) by Marjorie Rosen; *From Reverence to Rape* (1974) by Molly Haskell; and *Women and their Sexuality in the New Film* (1974) by Joan Mellen. By 1982, the feminist film historian Annette Kuhn refers to the writing in *Women & Film* as 'descriptive or journalistic, and [...] sociological or quasi-sociological.' She explains that in such approaches,

² Naome Gilbert's 'To Be Our Own Muse: The Dialectics of a Culture Heroine,' *Women & Film* 2 (1972): 25-32 reprinted in *Notes on Women's Cinema* ed. Claire Johnston (London: SEFT; BFI, 1973): 5-13.

³ Johnston, 'Women's Cinema as counter-cinema,' *Notes on Women's Cinema*, 26.

⁴ Johnston, 'Introduction,' *Notes on Women's Cinema*, 4.

⁵ Rich, 'The Crisis of Naming in Feminist Film Criticism,' *Jump Cut* no. 19 (December 1978), in Rich, *Chick Flicks: Theories and Memories of the Feminist Film Movement* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1998), 71.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 72.

Female characters in films might be considered in terms of roles and stereotypes, for example, and stereotyped women's roles [...] assessed according to their degree of 'truthfulness,' the extent to which they either reflected or constituted a smoothing over of, contradictions and conflicts in the 'real' lives of women. Or changes over time in the ways in which women have been portrayed in films might be viewed as in one way reflective of changes in the wider society.⁷

The critic E. Ann Kaplan similarly describes the sociological approach as concerned with the 'sex roles women occupied in various imaginative works, from high art to mass entertainment. [Critics] assessed roles as "positive" or "negative" according to some externally constructed criteria.'⁸ Based on these descriptions, feminist sociological film criticism can be understood to include:

- A focus on representations of women and female characters,
- The discussion of these representations in regard to dramatic 'roles' and repeated 'stereotypes,'
- An avowedly subjective viewpoint,
- Comparisons between these representations and 'real' women, and consequently, a consideration of the relationship between film and reality.

Women & Film did indeed feature many articles that can be described as 'images of women' criticism. Yet what these narratives elide is the fact that *Women & Film* employed both approaches to film criticism, publishing in its later issues several articles that engage with new theory, as the next chapter will explore. Also worth reconsidering is the interchangeability of the labels 'sociological' and 'images of women.' A sociological interpretation of cinema that takes into account narrative and character representation as well as specifically cinematic elements like framing, lighting or mise en scene, is of course possible.⁹ Such an approach is somewhat evident in Chuck Kleinhans and Julia Lesage's criticism, discussed in the ensuing chapter. The equation of the sociological perspective with a subjective viewpoint is also problematic, as the two seem to imply opposing approaches. For feminists however, these positions converge given that 'the personal is political.'

In addition to the implicit value judgments sometimes made about *Women & Film* and sociological criticism more generally, there is an assumption that by being

⁷ Kuhn, *Women's Pictures: Feminism and the Cinema* (London, Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982), 75.

⁸ Kaplan, *Women & Film: Both Sides of the Camera* (New York; London: Routledge, 1988), 23. Kaplan in fact erroneously describes *Women & Film* as later becoming *Camera Obscura*, 3.

⁹ I'm thinking here of Douglas Kellner's writing for example, such as in *Camera Politica: the Politics and Ideology of Contemporary Hollywood*, with Michael Ryan (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988).

'subjective,' 'descriptive,' or 'journalistic,' 'images of women' criticism lacks any kind of theoretical basis. But as Kuhn points out, the criticism associated with *Women & Film* was also based 'on a set of theoretical and methodological assumptions: it is simply that these theoretical groundings were not made explicit in the work itself.'¹⁰ As another historian of criticism has pointed out,

No interpretation, and no way of reading a text can avoid implicit theory. When we fall back on familiar and apparently unproblematic terms such as 'realism,' 'life,' 'naturalness,' 'imagination,' 'emotion,' 'organic,' 'unity,' 'style,' 'moral vision,' 'myth,' and 'tradition,' we are drawing upon concepts which were once problematic and unfamiliar. We are, in effect, using old theories.'¹¹

So what then are the implicit, 'old theories' that inform the approaches taken by those writing for *Women & Film*?

It is important to remember that the works of semiotic theorists, such as Christian Metz, were only just becoming available to American readers at the start of the 1970s and film studies courses – as opposed to filmmaking ones – were largely nonexistent.¹² In the expanding field of popular and academic film writing published in film journals and magazines, auteur theory was the dominant perspective. The contributors to *Women & Film* came from a variety of educational backgrounds and fields of expertise. As such, they possessed an eclectic range of ideas about film as well as gender, culture and society. For those writing from an academic setting, the still relatively new field of film studies had its roots in both the humanities and the social sciences. Many interdisciplinary contributors therefore did not possess the specialist vocabulary specific to film as a medium. Often, discussions of cinema were informed by traditional literary critical approaches, with the paradigms and assumptions of then current aesthetics. Literary scholars who turned their attention to film brought with them much of the analytical toolbox of literary criticism. This included the close reading and textual analysis of New Criticism, a set of practices developed during the 1940s and 50s from the formalist writings of English literature scholars such as I. A. Richards and T.S. Eliot. The lexicon of theatre studies was also crucial, with the discussion of films

¹⁰ Kuhn, *Women's Pictures*, 76.

¹¹ Raman Selden, 'Introduction,' *The Theory of Criticism: from Plato to the Present* (London; New York: Longman, 1988), 3.

¹² For example, in a paper presented at a 1972 student film study conference (discussed in the ensuing chapter), Doug Shryock's discussion of Metz uses a then forthcoming translation of *Signification in the Cinema* (Michael Taylor, Praeger, 1972). Others use unpublished translations of Metz's articles. See Shryock, 'Connotation and Denotation in the Semiology of the Cinema' 276-279 and Jim Linton, 'Increasing Depth of Field and Sharpening Focus in Film Study: Issues of Definition, Theory, and Practice, and Critical Awareness,' 127-147 in *1972 Oberlin Film Conference Selected Essays and Discussion Transcriptions, Vol. II.*, ed. Christian Koch and John Powers (Ohio; Oberlin College, 1973).

typically focusing on characters and roles, plots and narratives. Other key influences on *Women & Film's* contributors are the cultural critiques of feminists like Betty Friedan and Kate Millett, the most significant models for the contributors to these first three issues.

But even the close textual analysis of New Criticism was difficult to apply to the study of film compared to a novel or play, given its particular viewing conditions. Prior to the home video revolution of the late 1970s, the only technologies for repeated film viewing and sustained attention to single shots or scenes were 16 mm projection or an editor's Steenbeck. Most of the films discussed in *Women & Film* would have been viewed in cinemas or at festivals, perhaps not more than once or twice. However Hollywood studio films from the 1930s to 50s were screened frequently on American television, enabling a comparative familiarity with 'classical' cinema.

Film and Reality: reflection and mimesis

Two concepts are key to understanding much of the writing in *Women & Film*, particularly its early issues: first, the idea that films reflect an external reality, or that 'art imitates life,' and that what is on the screen corresponds to the society within which it was created; second, that 'life imitates art'; that these reflections can in turn affect the viewer and shape wider society. This is made clear by Annette Kuhn, who writes that the 'frame of reference' for the work in *Women & Film*, and similar work of the period, is

A shared and usually implicit assumption concerning the relationship between cinematic representation and the "real world": that a film, in recording or reflecting the world in a direct or mediated fashion, is in some sense a vehicle for transmitting meanings which originate outside of itself – within the intentions of the film makers, perhaps, or within social structures.¹³

The use of the word 'reflect' is significant since *Women & Film* contributors repeatedly use the ancient analogy of the mirror. The earliest discussions of this notion of art reflecting reality take place in the writings of Plato (c.428-348 BC) and Aristotle (384-322 BC), and center on the process of imitation, or mimesis. While Plato criticized the work of artists and poets as deceptive approximations of transcendental reality, Aristotle argued that the mimetic impulse was a distinctly human trait. His treatise on the arts, *Poetics* (c. 335 BC), explores how the process applied to a variety of art forms, remarking that imitation 'comes naturally to human beings from childhood [...]: man

¹³ Kuhn, *Women's Pictures*, 75.

[...] learns his earliest lessons through representation.’¹⁴ Reflection theory, or reflectionism, thus refers to the discussion of art’s ability – and duty – to reflect the real. This idea was central to western realist art and literature of the 19th century, when artists such as Gustave Courbet, and writers Honoré de Balzac, Gustave Flaubert and Émile Zola, strove to depict nature and society as accurately as possible.

The converse question of life imitating art, and the degree to which certain media could influence individuals and societies, rose to particular prominence during the late 19th century with the growth of urban populations that followed the industrial revolution. As Lee Grieveson writes, these demographic shifts led to an increased interest in the study of crowds and ‘mass publics’ in the social sciences.¹⁵ In the 1880s and 1890s, psychologists studying ‘collective psychology’ such as Gustave LeBon and Gabriel Tarde posited the self as malleable, shaped by suggestion and imitation.¹⁶ Tarde, considering the French Revolution, describes ‘the mutual contagion of sentiments’ among individuals in a crowd as key in shaping its behavior, and argues that ‘beliefs become heightened through mutual contact.’¹⁷ Grieveson argues that this ‘mimetic paradigm,’ ultimately a reversal of Aristotelian mimesis, proved ‘a key structuring principle for the explosion of theories of subjectivity and social order in the disciplines of psychology, sociology, and psychoanalysis in the late nineteenth century.’¹⁸ The notion that spectators’ behaviour or attitudes could be altered by film was the initial focus of much early writing on the cinema during the first two decades of the 20th century.¹⁹ The German psychologist Hugo Münsterberg for example, wrote of cinema’s ‘penetrating influence’ on its spectators in his ‘The Photoplay: A Psychological Study’ (1916), a work that drew on the ideas developed in psychology – particularly relating to hypnosis –and posited the human psyche as open to suggestion from outside forces.²⁰

The mimetic potential of cinema became an increasing concern for governments seeking to understand and manage mass society, fueling the widespread study of the medium’s influence on different social groups, particularly those thought to be most

¹⁴ Aristotle, *Poetics*, trans. Anthony Kenny (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 20. Plato discussed his views on art and mimesis in chapter 10 of the *Republic* (380 BC).

¹⁵ Grieveson, ‘Cinema Studies and the Conduct of Conduct,’ *Inventing Film Studies*, ed. Lee Grieveson and Haidee Wasson (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008), 5-7.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, 7.

¹⁷ Gabriel Tarde, ‘The Public and the Crowd,’ *On Communication and Social Influence*, ed. Terry N. Clark (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), 291; 289.

¹⁸ Grieveson, ‘Cinema Studies and the Conduct of Conduct,’ 7.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, 5.

²⁰ Hugo Münsterberg, ‘The Photoplay: A Psychological Study,’ 1916, in *Hugo Münsterberg on Film: “The Photoplay: A Psychological Study” and Other Writings*, ed. Allan Langdale (New York: Routledge, 2002), 154; Grieveson, ‘Cinema Studies and the Conduct of Conduct,’ 4.

'vulnerable' to its effects: children, delinquents, women and ethnic minorities.²¹ Works studying these effects, with the hope of reforming cinema for the good of its viewers and wider society, proliferated during the first half of the 20th century.²² These anxieties were addressed from a more radical perspective in the consideration of mass culture by the Frankfurt school of Critical Theory, who combined the findings of the earlier social psychologists with those of Marx and Freud. As my previous discussions of Marcuse in Chapter I argue, the Frankfurt School perspective emphasized the significance of the mass media's role in shaping subjectivity and in turn, maintaining the stability of advanced industrial societies.

All these ideas influenced early film theorists. The American film historian Lewis Jacobs' *The Rise of the American Film: A Critical History* (1939), describes the 'uncritical movie-goer' as deeply impressed by the movie image, and the motion picture as 'powerful and persuasive.'²³ He also notes that 'as many reformers and agitators for censorship, the imagery of the movie was significantly impressive to the populace,' 'children and the uneducated' in particular.²⁴ For the German film theorist Siegfried Kracauer, mimesis is the medium's *raison d'être*; being 'uniquely equipped to record and reveal reality,' film 'gravitates' toward this task.²⁵ In *From Caligari to Hitler* (1947), Kracauer synthesizes the reflectionist view of cinema with the idea of film as a shaping force on society. His study of the production history and narrative structure of *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (Robert Wiene, 1921, Germany) argues that the final film corresponded to a shift in attitudes in German society of the Weimar period (1919-1933). Kracauer places particular significance on the narrative framing of the film adopted by Wiene, which he claims transformed the original script's anti-authoritarian allegory into a work of proto-Nazi conformism. The director's decision, argues Kracauer, was based on his 'instinctive submission to the necessities of the screen' and the need for commercial film to 'answer mass desires.'²⁶ Kracauer is considered the defining proponent of sociological film criticism, and according to historian Dudley Andrew, work such as his uses the mirroring metaphor in two ways: first, by gauging the frequency that certain items or images appear in forms of media. Secondly, these

²¹ Grieveson, 'Cinema Studies and the Conduct of Conduct,' 10-11; 12.

²² For example: Jane Addams' *The Spirit of Youth and the City Streets* (1909); John Collier's 'The Problem of Motion Pictures' (1910); 'The Social Influence of the Moving Picture' by Rev. H. A. Jump (1911); Joseph Roy Geiger's 'The Effects of the Motion Picture on the Mind and Morals of the Young' (1923); *Movies, Delinquency and Crime* by Herbert Blumer and Philip Hauser (1933).

²³ Lewis Jacobs, *The Rise of the American Film: A Critical History* [1939] (New York: Teachers College Press, 1968), 12.

²⁴ *Ibid*, 77.

²⁵ Siegfried Kracauer (1889-1968), 'Theory of Film,' [1960] *Film Theory and Criticism*, ed. Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 172.

²⁶ *Ibid*, 187.

depictions are then interpreted in order to establish their correspondence to the society portrayed. Additionally, writes Andrew, 'the very effect of interpretation makes cinema a mirror in a second sense, for it displays the face not just of those whom the movies are about but of those who make and watch the movies.'²⁷ Kracauer's discussion of *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* was a canonical film studies text in the 1960s, but the criticism in *Women & Film* was even more influenced by feminist writings concerned with culture's mediation of reality, and its shaping of society.

Feminist Cultural Critiques

Feminist critics of the 1970s were particularly interested in how cultural representations might perpetuate patriarchal ideology. The language of reflection theory can also be found in the writings of Betty Friedan, whose study of women's changing social position in 20th century, *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) at times maps shifting representations of women in the mass media. One chapter examines the rise and decline of the New Woman – the educated and comparatively independent class of women who emerged in the wake of women's suffrage – in the short fiction stories published in popular women's magazines. The stories published in the 1930s and early 1940s 'mirrored the yearning for identity and sense of possibility that existed for women then.'²⁸ However, in the aftermath of World War II, 'the image of American women seems to have suffered a schizophrenic split,' and by the mid-fifties, this 'new image of American woman, "Occupation: housewife," had hardened into a mystique.'²⁹ Kate Millett's *Sexual Politics* (1970) draws a connection between how women are treated in the canonical texts of English literature and their position in a patriarchal society. A large part of her study analyses the work of 'those who helped to build these structures – writers, who, after the usual manner of cultural agents, both reflected and actually shaped attitudes.'³⁰

The methodologies and lexicons of sociology, psychology and social psychology were widely employed by these feminist writers, and they frequently use terms like 'sex roles,' 'conditioning,' and 'reinforcement.' As theorized by social psychologist G.H. Mead, 'Roles' or 'social roles' are commonly defined as 'predictable pattern[s] of individual behaviour adapted to the social expectations associated with a particular

²⁷ Dudley Andrew, 'Film and History,' *Film Studies: Critical Approaches*, ed. John Hill and Pamela Church Gibson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 180.

²⁸ Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* [1963] (New York: Laurel, 1983), 40.

²⁹ *Ibid*, 46; 50.

³⁰ Millett, *Sexual Politics* [1970] (London: Virago, 1977), 233.

social position, status, situation or relationship.³¹ 'Sex roles' similarly relate to the social expectations associated with being male or female, considered to be 'learned through socialization, including the mass media.'³² This approach was widely adopted in journalism, and as a writer for women's magazines, Friedan was undoubtedly familiar with this terminology. In *Sexual Politics*, Kate Millett defines the 'sex role' as an 'elaborate code of conduct, gesture and attitude for each sex [...that] assigns domestic service and attendance upon infants to the female, the rest of human achievement, interest and ambition to the male.'³³

The lexicon of conditioning and reinforcement is derived from behaviourist psychology dating back to the Russian physiologist Ivan Pavlov (1839-1936), and popularized in the postwar US via the work of B.F. Skinner (1904-1990). Pavlov established the idea of a 'conditioned reflex' in experiments using dogs.³⁴ The dogs were presented with food at the same time as another stimulus, usually the sound of a bell or buzzer; eventually, the stimulus became associated with the food, leading the dog to salivate on hearing it. These ideas informed the pervasive understanding of conditioning in human behaviour. B.F. Skinner developed Pavlov's theories to include operant or instrumental conditioning, in which reinforcement (i.e. rewards) and punishment were used to 'condition' behaviour.³⁵ In Millett's view, patriarchal ideology is upheld through conditioning, that is to say by 'the "socialization" of both sexes to basic patriarchal politics with regard to temperament, role, and status' which tend to be based on 'stereotyped lines of sex category.'³⁶

'Stereotype' is one of the most extensively employed terms in feminist criticism of this period. In its original sense, it refers to a metal plate used in printing, cast using a mould of an original plate of typed text. As developed in sociology, it describes the repeated representation of groups or individuals based on inaccurate or exaggerated ideas about their behaviour, beliefs or other characteristics.³⁷ Writing about the term's usage, media theorist Alan McKee comments that the word 'stereotype' 'implies a

³¹ *A Dictionary of Media and Communication*, ed. Daniel Chandler and Rod Munday (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 371.

³² *Ibid*, 172.

³³ Millett, *Sexual Politics*, 26.

³⁴ Pavlov described his findings in his second lecture in *Conditioned Reflexes: An Investigation of the Physiological Activity of the Cerebral Cortex* [1927] trans. G.V. Anrep (New York: Dover, 1960). Some translations use 'conditional reflex,' arguing it is closer to the original Russian. See Daniel P. Todes, *Pavlov's Physiology Factory: Experiment, Interpretation, Laboratory Enterprise* (Baltimore; London: John Hopkins University Press, 2002), 244.

³⁵ See B. F. Skinner, *The Behavior of Organisms: An Experimental Analysis* (New York: Appleton-Century Crofts, 1938).

³⁶ Millett, *Sexual Politics*, 26.

³⁷ *Dictionary of Media and Communication*, 407

tradition of representation' that is inherently negative.³⁸ When used in the discussion of media texts, stereotypes are associated with superficial portrayals of characters, as opposed to a psychologically 'rounded' or 'three-dimensional character.'³⁹ In feminist analyses, the term is deployed to refer to narrow range of representations of men and women associated with social expectations relating to gender.

Friedan's work on women's magazines makes use of content analysis, a quantitative research method, based on the assumption of a 'relationship between the frequency with which a certain item [...] appears in a media text [...] and the impact it has on society more generally, through its audience.'⁴⁰ In her analysis of feminist texts employing this approach, Sue Thornham observes that these studies' claim that the 'media [...] firstly *reflect* in the form of images or representations, society's dominant values. Hence content analysis reveals a predominance of traditional and stereotypical images across all media forms. Secondly, they act as agents of *socialization*, transmitting stereotyped images of sex-roles, particularly to young people.'⁴¹

Considerations of reflectionism and mimesis

In the opening feature articles of *Women & Film's* first issue, Christine Mohanna and Sharon Smith offer a historical overview of how representations of women have changed throughout cinema's development, and make connections with changing social attitudes toward women. As their frequent use of reflectionist metaphors indicate, these articles are written from a sociological perspective. Mohanna explains in 'A One-sided Story: Women in the Movies,' 'we think of the evolution of film as a kind of mirror which reflects a changing society,' and while she admits that a film 'can never be, nor is it intended to be, an accurate reflection of our lives and our roles,' she argues that 'the mirror has always been limited in its reflection, and possibly distorted' because of men's dominance of the industry.⁴² Sharon Smith also begins 'The Image of Women in Film: Some Suggestions for Future Research' by articulating a sociological

³⁸ Alan McKee, 'Stereotype' in *Critical Dictionary of Film and Television Theory*, ed. Roberta E. Pearson and Philip Simpson (London: Routledge, 2001), 424-425.

³⁹ *Ibid*, 425.

⁴⁰ Pamela Abbott, Melissa Tyler and Claire Wallace, *An Introduction to Sociology: Feminist Perspectives* (Oxon: Routledge, 2005), 327.

⁴¹ Sue Thornham, 'Feminist Media and Film Theory,' in *Contemporary Feminist Theory*, ed. Stevi Jackson and Jackie Jones (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998), 214.

⁴² Mohanna, 'A One-sided Story: Women in the Movies,' *Women & Film* 1 (1972), 7.

understanding of film and its relationship to off-screen reality.⁴³ Although she does not explicitly use the mirror metaphor as Mohanna does, it frequently appears in the writing of her sources. Lewis Jacobs, for instance, frequently refers to cinema's ability to 'reflect' and shape society in his *The Rise of The American Film*, writing that 'reflecting current states of mind,' the motion picture can reveal 'the changing values, standards, and points of view of twentieth-century America in flux.'⁴⁴ Jacobs provides Smith with a framework for her historical survey of film as well as source material for the discussion of female characters and their evolution. He repeatedly notes how changing social mores led to changes in the way women were portrayed on screen: 'The pre-war generation had its vamp, Theda Bara; the post-war jazz period had its women of the world, Gloria Swanson, and its flaming youth, Clara Bow; and the depression gave birth to Mae West.'⁴⁵ Smith too notes the importance of Bow and West in the evolving image of women on screen.

A comparable understanding of film is also found in Beth Sullivan's contribution to the first issue. Her article compares how two early silent films have dealt with 'the position and treatment of women' and 'the question of woman's role in society': *Master of the House* (Carl Theodor Dreyer, 1925) and *Bed and Sofa* (Abram Room, 1926).⁴⁶ Sullivan argues that

Because of their common structure, disparities cannot be blamed on [...] the quality of the individual filmmaker, since both have been recognized as equally innovative in relation to the societies they represent. Rather, we shall see that it is those very societies which can be viewed as responsible for the attitudes and ideas expressed in the films.⁴⁷

Jacoba Atlas makes a similar assertion in the magazine's third issue, commenting that 'if we accept that a society is sexist by nature [...] then it would follow that all products produced by that society would be intensically [sic] sexist.'⁴⁸

But perhaps more significant for these authors is life's tendency to imitate film. Atlas points out that 'film unlike any other artform, shapes and emphasizes our own hopes, dreams and aspirations.'⁴⁹ Smith likewise suggests a reciprocal interaction between reality and screen when she considers the 'very large possibility that media

⁴³ Smith, from Santa Monica, was at the time a Master's student at the University of Southern California, and just beginning research for her book of women directors, *Women Who Make Movies* (1975).

⁴⁴ Jacobs, *The Rise of the American Film: A Critical Study*, 415; 12.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 532.

⁴⁶ Beth Sullivan, 'Bed and Sofa/Master of the House,' *Women & Film* 1 (1972), 21

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 21.

⁴⁸ Jacoba Atlas, 'Beauty/Enigma/Mother: Woman in *Children of Paradise*, *Jules and Jim*, and *Alice's Restaurant*,' *Women & Film* 3-4 (1973), 38. I suggest that this originally read 'intrinsically' and has been mistyped from the manuscript.

⁴⁹ Atlas, 'Beauty/Enigma/Mother,' 38.

now shape cultural attitudes, as well as reflect them.⁵⁰ And Mohanna extends her reflectionist metaphor when she explains that ‘without trying to, movies record [social] changes, and in proportion to their influence, make some small changes of their own. Life feeds the screen and is fed, in turn, by its own reflection on that screen.’⁵¹ Film’s ability to mould society’s attitudes toward women, and equally, women’s attitudes toward themselves was of particular interest to these feminist critics.

In several instances, the cinema’s effect is described as a process of ‘reinforcement.’ In issue two, Beverly Walker refers to cinema as ‘one of the most potent mediums for conveying and reinforcing stereotypic attitudes.’⁵² The use of the term implicitly draws on simplified understanding of behaviourist psychology’s notion of reinforcement, but no explanation is given of how this process functions. Mohanna however illustrates her point with the example of the Flapper or ‘It Girl,’ as epitomized by Clara Bow in films such as *It* (Clarence G. Badger, 1927). She traces the transition from the meek heroines found in D.W. Griffiths’ *Birth of a Nation* (1915) and *Broken Blossoms* (1919) to the ‘It Girl,’ whose characterization corresponded ‘exactly with the ideal “sexually emancipated” woman of the twenties.’⁵³ But the screen flapper’s representation is deemed more than just a reflection of current women’s fashions; rather it ‘undoubtedly reinforced her image.’ ‘How many sweet “Griffith girls”, asks Mohanna, ‘went home, cut their hair and tried to be just like her?’⁵⁴ This leads Mohanna to effectively reformulate her earlier mirror metaphor; instead, ‘the screen reflects life but in such concentrated magnitude that it seems more desirable than the original. It becomes for a while, a more potent reality than life itself.’⁵⁵

Siew-Hwa Beh, on the other hand, moves away from the notion of film as a neutral ‘mirror’ that reflects social attitudes, treating it instead as a propagandistic medium. Her article ‘Reflections on Recent Trends in Hollywood Films’ assesses contemporary American cinema responding to, and in fact resisting, the social changes demanded by the women’s movement.⁵⁶ Historically, writes Beh, commercial film has always responded in some way to real-world events, a response that she characterizes as

⁵⁰ Sharon Smith, ‘The Image of Women in Film: Some Suggestions for Future Research,’ *Women & Film* 1 (1972), 13.

⁵¹ Mohanna, 7.

⁵² Beverley Walker, ‘From Novel to Film: Stanley Kubrick’s *Clockwork Orange*,’ *Women & Film* 2 (1972), 9.

⁵³ Mohanna, 8. Her discussion of the It girl is informed by American film historian and critic Arthur Knight’s *The Liveliest Art: A Panoramic History of the Movies* (1957), 96.

⁵⁴ Ibid. She is drawing on John Simon who writes that ‘millions of girls copied [Bow]’ in *Private Screenings: Views of the Cinema of the Sixties* (New York: Macmillan, 1967), 41.

⁵⁵ Mohanna, 8.

⁵⁶ Beh, ‘Reflections on Recent Trends in Hollywood Films,’ *Women & Film* 2 (1972), 16-24.

always 'co-optive' and produced by the 'logic of the corporate state.'⁵⁷ Usually, she argues, the status quo goes unchallenged, with directors and performers often contributing to the oversimplification of the social issues dealt with by a film through their promotional activities.⁵⁸ Furthermore, such films serve the needs of 'the privileged elite who need to counteract revolutionary trends and thus reinforce their position.'⁵⁹ She takes up a Marcusean perspective similar to that articulated in the editorial in issue one when she explains that in an alienated society such films 'substitute gratification in destructive machismo and misogynistic violence.'⁶⁰ The knock-on effect, she points out, is that 'by fulfilling these needs any potentially rebellious energy is sidetracked into inactive, passive, non-political or reactionary forms,' an argument that echoes Marcuse's conception of institutionalized desublimation.⁶¹

Stereotypes and myths

In the vocabulary of 'images of women' criticism the term 'stereotype' is often used interchangeably with 'role,' 'sex-role,' 'ideal' or 'myth.' Mohanna for instance talks in one short section of the stereotype of 'man-as-adventurer,' the 'ideal of the super male' and the 'overblown male myth.'⁶² Confusingly, the term 'roles' is used for both dramatic characters and 'sex-roles' in the sociological sense; in many articles, the assumption is that the paucity of parts for women actors is directly linked to the restricted 'sex roles' in society. The stereotypes referred to vary between articles. Smith identifies several tropes in her discussion of films reviewed in a then recent issue of *Variety*: 'woman as whore' (*Dagmar's Hotpants Inc.*, Vernon P. Becker, 1971 and *1000 Convicts and a Woman*, Austin Ray, 1971); the 'childlike but knowing [...] stereotype' (*La Cavale*, Michel Mitrani, 1971); the 'woman-as-evil theme' (*Blood from the Mummy's Tomb*, Seth Holt, 1971); and 'woman as object of male fantasies and power' (*Boulevard du rhum*, Robert Enrico, 1971).⁶³ Atlas, on the other hand, uses three 'facets of a tradition bound persona [sic] called Woman' to discuss three films: 'Garance the Beauty; Catherine the Enigma; Alice the Mother.'⁶⁴ Relying on these as pre-existing types, she does not provide an outline of their basic characteristics. Instead, she assumes the reader's prior

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 16.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 17.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ *Ibid.* See my earlier discussion of Marcuse and institutionalized desublimation in Chapter I.

⁶² Mohanna, 11.

⁶³ From *Variety*, 27 October 1971, in Smith, 'The Image of Women in Film,' 14-15.

⁶⁴ Atlas, 38.

knowledge of such categorizations, and does not attempt to historicize or contextualize them.

However, in her article 'Myths, Women, Movies,' the filmmaker Teena Webb attempts to chart the evolution of 'today's stereotypes' from more ancient 'myths.'⁶⁵ To do this, she draws on the Romanian philosopher and religious historian Mircea Eliade (1907-1986), the English classicist Robert Graves (1895-1985), the American scholar of religion and mythology, Joseph Campbell (1904-1987), and the Austrian-born physiologist, Wolfgang Lederer (b. 1919), then based at University of California San Francisco Medical School. Robert Ellwood recounts that an upsurge of popular and academic interest in the mythological studies of Eliade, Campbell as well as Carl Jung first began in the 1950s and continued into the 1960s.⁶⁶ Campbell was particularly influential thanks to a series of popular books, lecture hall tours and appearances on television.⁶⁷ Eliade was referred to in a 1966 *Time* article as 'the world's foremost living interpreter of spiritual myths and symbolism,' when he was a professor at the University of Chicago's school of divinity.⁶⁸ A prolific writer in both theology and fiction, Eliade produced extensive studies on yoga and shamanism, a fact that perhaps explains his appeal to students of the counterculture.⁶⁹

Webb opens her article with a quotation from Eliade's *Myth and Reality* (1963): 'a culture's mythology reflects its deepest beliefs about the nature of the world.'⁷⁰ She argues that ancient myths grounded in gendered dichotomies are the ancestors of today's female stereotypes in 'movies' (she distinguishes 'movies' – a mass art form - from 'films' – catered to a cultural elite and less widely consumed).⁷¹ Where these beliefs were once expressed through religion, Webb explains, 'today, in secular society, they are expressed through art [...] especially movies.'⁷² She employs Lederer's term, the Great Reversal, to describe the replacement of matriarchy with patriarchy. As Lederer explains, the downgraded goddesses of the patriarchal era follow a direct line of development 'from the May Queens [...] to the carnival queens, the queens of football

⁶⁵ Webb was a member of Kartequim filmmaker's collective, based in Chicago, producing several documentary films including *Public Art in Chicago* (1973-74) and *Viva la Causa* (1974).

⁶⁶ Robert Ellwood, *The Politics of Myth: A Study of C.G. Jung, Mircea Eliade and Joseph Campbell* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), xii.

⁶⁷ *Ibid*, 127.

⁶⁸ 'Scientist of Symbols,' *Time*, 11 February 1966, 76.

⁶⁹ They include *Yoga: Immortality and Freedom* (1958) and *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy* (1964).

⁷⁰ Eliade, *Myth and Reality* (London: George Allen, 1964), 8 in Webb, 'Myths, Women, Movies,' *Women & Film 2* (1972), 66.

⁷¹ Webb, 67.

⁷² *Ibid*, 66.

games and college classes, and to the beauty queens, those aseptic sex-goddesses of our day.'⁷³

Webb argues that films are the most effective vehicles for the perpetuation of myths because of their resemblance to dreams: 'movies are the ideal medium for transmitting myths because of their similarities to the dream state.'⁷⁴ The comparison between dreams and films is a recurrent one, as she notes, referring to American philosopher Suzanne Langer's statement that 'Cinema is "like" dream [sic] in the mode of its presentation; it creates a virtual present, an order of direct apparition.'⁷⁵ The conditions of film consumption also contribute to this, remarks Webb, anticipating Laura Mulvey in pointing to 'the darkened theater, the concomitant sense of reality and nonreality, the shared experience, and the huge (larger-than-life) figures moving across the screen.'⁷⁶

Sex objects and androgynes

Perhaps the most common criticism of women's representation on screen is that they are 'objectified' as instruments for male sexual gratification. One of Beh and Salyer's initial goals for *Women & Film* had been to challenge the 'packaging of women as sex objects' by Hollywood.⁷⁷ In her analysis of *A Clockwork Orange* (1969) discussed in more detail below, Beverly Walker locates Kubrick's misogyny in his use of women's bodies for 'audience titillation' as décor and as victims of male-inflicted sexual violence. Smith too notes that women are often shown as 'purely sexual being[s]' in films and that their sexualization 'has been increasing at a tremendous rate.'⁷⁸

Mohanna identifies the 'sex goddess' as a recurring character in films from the 1920s to the present day, most recently incarnated by Jayne Mansfield and Marilyn Monroe.⁷⁹ She describes their impact on their female spectators, 'transformed on the screen into something so desirable that it became an obsession':

⁷³ Lederer, *The Fear of Women* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1968), 172, in Webb, 67.

⁷⁴ Webb, 67.

⁷⁵ Susanne K. Langer, 'A Note on the Film,' *Feeling and Form: A Theory of Art Developed from Philosophy in a New Key* (1953), 411-15, *Philosophy of Film and Motion Pictures*, ed. Noël Carroll and Jinhee Choi (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2009), 80, in Webb, 67.

⁷⁶ Webb, 67. Laura Mulvey similarly points to the effects of these conditions in 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,' *Screen* 16, no. 3 (1975).

⁷⁷ Editors, 'Overview,' *Women & Film* 1, 5-6. The critique of women's objectification was central to the women's liberation movement from its inception. One of its earliest high-profile campaigns centered on the Miss America Pageant, particularly the way the televised pageant objectified the contestants and upheld unrealistic beauty standards.

⁷⁸ Smith, 'The Image of Women in Film,' 17.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 14; Mohanna, 11.

A woman could sense her date's excitement as he watched a busty sex symbol move about, larger than life, in the darkened theatre. She might begin to feel undesirable and he might reinforce this inferiority by ogling every real life goddess who passed him in the street. Magazines like "Playboy" only reinforced her fears. Some women wore padded bras and tried to hide their intelligence. Some went even further and paid to have their breasts tightened or enlarged. A few committed suicide [...] They killed themselves because they were not Marilyn Monroe.⁸⁰

Mae West, however, is praised for her assertive sexuality. For Mohanna, her characters combine 'sexuality with a masculine ego and sense of assertion,' an ability to defend herself, all the while avoiding the passive position of sex object; instead, 'men became the objects of her desire.'⁸¹

Perhaps in an attempt to escape gender polarities, a recurrent feature of these articles is an interest in the liberating potential of androgyny. At the end of her article in issue 1, Mohanna observes that men's and women's roles 'remain almost as rigid in 1971 as they were at the turn of the century when movies began,' but she singles out *Performance* (Donald Cammell and Nicolas Roeg, 1970) as grounds for optimism.⁸² The film follows a gangster (James Fox) on the run from London mobsters who hides out in a bohemian flat inhabited by the androgynous Turner (Mick Jagger) and his lover Pherber (Anita Pallenberg). Escaping the violent machismo of his old world into a sensual and psychedelic environment, the gangster is also liberated from his rigidly enforced masculine identity and subsequently experiments with make-up, wigs and the pansexual relations of the household. Pherber's feminine appearance is decidedly less androgynous, but her frank sexuality means she challenges gender expectations in other ways. Mohanna contends that neither the gangster nor the hippie world of the film is ideal, since both contain forms of violence and each is 'filled with a different brand of unhappiness.'⁸³ However, she remarks,

But if only because it seems to offer an alternative, the film is important. It indicates that people may be changing or at least beginning to want to change [...]. We can be sure that as more and more people become aware of the imprisoning walls of sexual stereotypes, there will be fewer and fewer people who accept them blindly, both in real life and in the movies.⁸⁴

⁸⁰ Mohanna, 11.

⁸¹ Ibid, 10.

⁸² Ibid, 12. Androgyny on screen, most famously in the form of Marlene Dietrich in *Morocco* (1933), had long been associated with women's sexual freedom. It was also explored by writers during women's liberation movement, such as Ursula K. LeGuin in her *The Left Hand of Darkness* (1969).

⁸³ Mohanna, 12.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

For Mohanna, *Performance* represents the positive aspects of the counterculture: androgyny a relaxation of gender boundaries, a loosening of sexual mores and the adoption of gentler, feminine values opposed to 'aggressive materialistic lifestyles.'⁸⁵

The solution, argues Teena Webb in 'Myths, Women Movies,' is to make obvious the manipulatory function of the current myths and to create new, more satisfying ones.⁸⁶ Rather than resurrecting the powerful figure of the Goddess, she argues for the reconstruction of the androgyne.⁸⁷ The Goddess retains the divisive 'dichotomies we associate with the sexes: rationality vs. intuition, aggression vs. passivity, hard vs. soft.'⁸⁸ However, the androgyne avoids these dichotomies, 'devoid of all sexual characteristics and stereotypes.'⁸⁹ She turns to Eliade's description of the androgyne in his *Myths, Dreams, and Mysteries* (1957):

[The phenomenon of divine androgyny...] signifies more than the co-existence – or rather coalescence of the sexes in the divine being. Androgyny is an archaic and universal formula for the expression of wholeness [...]. More than a state of sexual completeness and autarchy, androgyny symbolizes the perfection of a primordial non-conditioned state.⁹⁰

Webb sees this state as central to childhood, since 'children are often excellent sexually undifferentiated creatures.' She argues that more representations of androgynous children in films would 'help displace the almost pure archetypal forms that appear in the first myths we encounter, those in fairy tales.'⁹¹ The idea of androgyne is 'terrifying to most people,' Webb notes, but nonetheless, she is optimistic. She closes her article by observing that 'hopefully the reconstruction of the new androgyne would lead to a view of the world as a whole, not as a set of irreconcilable contraries [...]. And hopefully movies will be the instigator of this new myth.'⁹²

The theme of androgyny would continue to feature in *Women & Film*, albeit somewhat marginally. Issue 3-4 features an introductory epigraph from the 1973 book *Toward a Recognition of Androgyny*, in which the feminist Columbia professor (and pseudonymous crime novelist) Carolyn Heilbrun argues that human salvation requires moving away from 'the prison of gender toward a world in which individual roles and

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Webb, 67.

⁸⁷ Ibid, 69.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Eliade, *Myths, Dreams and Mysteries: The Encounter between Contemporary Faiths and Archaic Realities*, trans. Philip Mairet [1967] (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1975), 174, in Webb, 69.

⁹¹ Webb, 69.

⁹² Ibid.

the modes of personal behavior can be freely chosen.’⁹³ Heilbrun defines androgyny as a ‘condition under which the characteristics of the sexes, and the human impulses expressed by men and women, are not rigidly assigned.’⁹⁴ A scholar of the Bloomsbury circle, Heilbrun draws on Virginia Woolf’s writing on androgyny in *A Room of One’s Own* (1929) as well as her novel *Orlando* (1922), in which the titular character transforms from a man to a woman. Despite Heilbrun’s epigraph, no further discussion of her work appears in the issue, nor is it taken up again in any that follow.

As this overview has shown, the ‘images of women’ criticism in *Women & Film* is informed by an eclectic range of approaches, from the classical aesthetics of Plato and Aristotle and 19th century realism, to behaviourism, sociology, religious and mythological studies, and the Marxism of Herbert Marcuse. Many of these approaches circulated in the academic curricula of the 1960s and early 1970s, while others filtered down through mass media reviewing and feature journalism. These discussions are preoccupied by character and narrative rather than by the aesthetic aspects specific to the cinema. How women are represented by women characters and actors, and what happens to them in the narrative are the key concerns of these critics, who focus primarily on performance and what will come to be known as ‘star personae,’ such as the ‘girl-next-door’ or the ‘vamp.’ Little or no attention is paid to cinematography, framing, focus, point of view, colour, pace or editing, although some do consider the conditions of spectatorship. This is somewhat surprising since several authors, including Beh, Smith and Webb, were training to be filmmakers and would presumably have been au fait with such techniques and terminology. Ultimately, the ‘images of women’ criticism in *Women & Film* is not medium specific. The term ‘images of women’ itself suggests still images, like those from painting, photography and advertising which feminists were also critiquing. Crucially, these pervasive images could be analyzed at length because they were either repeated endlessly (television adverts) or were static (photography and painting).

As with the feminist analysis of static images, a direct connection was often made between the images produced and their creator’s gender. In *Women & Film*, several contributors attribute the ‘images of women’ in a film to its male director, while others look to women filmmakers for alternative representations. The quest for women auteurs is the focus of chapters six and seven; in the section that follows, however, I

⁹³ Carolyn Heilbrun, *Toward a Recognition of Androgyny* [1973] (New York: W.W. Norton, 1993), iv.

⁹⁴ *Ibid*, x.

examine the former concern and the ways in which several of the magazine's critics deploy 'images of women' criticism in tandem with the auteur theory.

Considerations of film authorship

The auteur theory is an approach to film criticism that places the director in the central creative role of the filmmaking process and seeks to identify their particular styles, craft or *mise en scène* in each of their films. It originated with the work of several critics writing for the French *Cahiers du cinema* journal; over a series of articles published from the late 1950s and into the 1960s, figures such as Alexandre Astuc, Jacques Rivette and François Truffaut laid out *la politique des auteurs*, a very loose framework for the evaluation of film based on the role of the director, as part of their reconsideration of Hollywood studio filmmaking.⁹⁵ The 'auteur' director is credited with the development of a recognizable style and set of themes in his work; for Bazin, for example, 'the *politique des auteurs* consists [...] of choosing the personal factor in artistic creation as a standard of reference, and then assuming that it continues and even progresses from one film to the next.'⁹⁶ *Cahiers* championed directors such as Howard Hawks, Alfred Hitchcock and John Ford alongside the then emerging French New Wave directors, many of whom were also contributors.⁹⁷

In the United States, these ideas were popularized and somewhat reformulated by the critic Andrew Sarris, who translated *la politique des auteurs* into the 'auteur theory.'⁹⁸ His definition consists of three 'criteria of value': the director's technical expertise; his 'distinguishable personality'; and the more elusive concept of 'interior meaning' of the film, a result of the tension between the former two criteria, and likened by Sarris to Astuc's notion of *mise-en-scène*.⁹⁹ His reformulation was highly influential on American film scholarship as well as having a significant impact on Hollywood and independent filmmaking.

⁹⁵ See François Truffaut, 'A Certain Tendency in the French Cinema' [1954], *Movies and Methods*, ed. Bill Nichols (Berkeley: University of California, 1976), 224-37.

⁹⁶ Andre Bazin, 'On the Politique Des Auteurs,' trans. Peter Graham, *Cahiers Du Cinema: The 1950s Neo-Realism, Hollywood, New Wave*, ed. Jim Hillier (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul; British Film Institute, 1985), 255.

⁹⁷ See Jacques Rivette, 'The Genius of Howard Hawks,' [1953] trans. Russell Campbell and Marvin Pister in Hillier, *Cahiers du Cinema: The 1950s*, 126-131.

⁹⁸ Andrew Sarris, 'Notes on the Auteur Theory in 1962,' *Film Theory and Criticism* (1999), 515. Originally published in *Film Culture* (Winter, 1962-63).

⁹⁹ Sarris, 'Notes,' 516-517. See Alexandre Astuc, 'What is *mise en scène*?' [1959] trans. Liza Heron, Hillier, *Cahiers Du Cinema*, 266-268.

Despite Beh and Salyer's dismissal of the auteur theory in their debut editorial as an oppressively masculine (and implicitly individualist and hierarchical) theory of cultural origination, and despite Smith's warning that filmmakers – male and female – are themselves 'molded or tempered by the culture' they inhabit, several contributors to *Women & Film* stress the authorial role of the director.¹⁰⁰ Such is the case with April Ford's 'Hawks Women: Don't You Think I Could Know a Girl?'¹⁰¹ *Cahiers* articles by Bazin and Rivette had been key to the re-evaluation of Hawks' work by Sarris and the English critic Robin Wood.¹⁰² Wood's 1968 book *Howard Hawks* informs much of Ford's article; he was an influential proponent of auteur theory in British and American film criticism, influenced by both the *Cahiers* critics and the textual analysis advocated by F.R. Leavis.¹⁰³

Ford proposes that Hawks creates more 'interesting' female characters than his Hollywood contemporaries. Using Wood's analysis to support her argument, she also argues for a female authorial role in his films by crediting some of his women leads with the creative authorship of their characters. She begins by explaining that 'Hawks' actors express their personalities through their actions. [He] never deals in abstract psychology, but makes every motion of his actors a manifestation of character.'¹⁰⁴ She is here drawing on Wood's description of the collaborative process favoured by Hawks, in which 'his raw materials are not only the story and the characters, but also the players. [...] Dialogue and situation are often modified during filming as the personality of the actor becomes fused with the character he is playing.'¹⁰⁵ This, Ford believes, distracts the viewer from the fact that Hawks 'passes over many of his female leads by endowing them with little more than deep voices, snappy clothes, and a profound dependence on men.'¹⁰⁶ The success of this approach varies with casting: according to Ford, the women in some of Hawks' later films, 'actresses-cum-fashion models' such as Joanna Dru in *Red River* (1948), Charlene Holt in *El Dorado*, (1966) and Jennifer O'Neill in *Rio Lobo* (1970), 'contribute very little to collaboration' compared to Katherine Hepburn (*Bringing Up Baby*, 1938) and Rosalind Russell (*His Girl Friday*, 1940).¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁰ Editors, 'Overview,' 5-6. Smith, 'The Image of Women in Film,' 13.

¹⁰¹ Ford was a friend of Siew-Hwa Beh's from Los Angeles.

¹⁰² Sarris includes Hawks in his Pantheon Directors category, writing that 'until recently [he] was the least known and least appreciated Hollywood director of any stature,' *The American Cinema: Directors and Directions 1929-1968* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1996), 53.

¹⁰³ Ford quotes Wood but does not cite the book itself: *Howard Hawks* (London: Secker & Warburg; BFI, 1968).

¹⁰⁴ April Ford, 'Hawk's Women: Don't You Think I Could Know a Girl?' *Women & Film* 1, 26.

¹⁰⁵ Wood, 13.

¹⁰⁶ Ford, 26.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

Ellen Keneshea takes on another favourite of auteur critics, Douglas Sirk, in her article for issue two. Rather than celebrating the creation of more 'real' or 'complex' female characters, Keneshea lights on Sirk's anti-realism, reading his films *There's Always Tomorrow* (1955) and *Imitation of Life* (1959) as satires that highlight the oppressiveness of American patriarchal society.¹⁰⁸ Sirk was another director whose work achieved renewed interest thanks to the editors of *Cahiers du cinéma*, with Jean-Luc Godard and Jean-Louis Comolli both writing about him.¹⁰⁹ In 1971, the British film scholar Jon Halliday published his collection of interviews *Sirk on Sirk*, recasting the director as a leftwing intellectual. Keneshea follows the lead of auteurist critics, drawing at times on the director's own words from *Sirk on Sirk*.¹¹⁰ Sirk is discussed as an over-looked auteur, striving against Universal Studios' demand for 'glossy' films, in which 'souped up sentimentalism unerringly reflects and forwards the status quo.'¹¹¹ Keneshea sees Sirk as ultimately 'making the case for the deadliness of middle-class America' and its institutions, particularly that of the nuclear family. Happiness is an illusion in his films, and modern work and family life lead to disconnected relationships between husband, wife and children. Children represent 'tragedies which are starting over again, always and always,' and adults are incomplete, undeveloped, thwarted or constantly aspiring to ascend the pointless hierarchy of material gain.¹¹²

While she does not draw on any named auteur critic, Beverly Walker also takes an auteurist approach in her consideration of Stanley Kubrick's *A Clockwork Orange* (1969). However, instead of arguing that the director's artistry transcends society's views of women, she blames Kubrick for the film's sexism, which she argues has exaggerated many aspects of Burgess's original novel. 'If Oscars were awarded for Best Achievement in Misogyny,' she writes, '*A Clockwork Orange* would surely have been last year's winner.'¹¹³ Walker claims Kubrick's 'relentless woman-hating' has gone unremarked by critics, with few observing how women are treated on screen despite 'all the naked ladies Kubrick has astutely used as commercial window dressing.'¹¹⁴ In *A Clockwork Orange*, the director has succeeded in making 'an intellectual's pornographic film,' she argues, pointing to the 'distancing' techniques he uses to undercut the

¹⁰⁸ Ellen Keneshea, 'The Not So Tender Trap: Sirk: *There's Always Tomorrow* and *Imitation of Life*,' *Women & Film* 2 (1972), 51-55. Keneshea was an MA student in Film at UCLA at the time.

¹⁰⁹ Jean-Luc Godard, 'Des larmes et de la vitesse' *Cahiers du cinéma* (April 1959): 51-54 and Serge Daney and Jean-Louis Noames, 'Entretien avec Douglas Sirk,' *Cahiers du cinéma* (April 1967): 19-25.

¹¹⁰ Keneshea, 52.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Sirk in *Sirk on Sirk: Interviews with Jon Halliday* (London: Secker and Warburg; BFI, 1971), 107, in Keneshea, 53.

¹¹³ Walker, 'From Novel to Film: Stanley Kubrick's *Clockwork Orange*,' 4.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

seriousness of the violence carried out by his characters and achieve its 'comic strip' surrealism: 'wide-angle lens photography, slow motion, speeded up motion, heightened sound effects, the shock effect of "Singin' in the Rain."'115 She also charges Kubrick with possessing 'a chronic inability to treat women as human beings,' comparing *A Clockwork Orange* to his earlier *Lolita* (1962), deemed his only film to feature women in any significant way.¹¹⁶ And unlike *Lolita*, the misogyny of *A Clockwork Orange* cannot be blamed on its source, Anthony Burgess's 1962 novella. Even Burgess, she points out, noted that Kubrick's film was a 'radical remaking' of his book.¹¹⁷ According to her, 'Kubrick systematically changes both the intent and content of a large part of Burgess' novel' and these digressions are evidence of the director's misogyny.¹¹⁸

She proceeds by identifying elements that have been altered or inserted by Kubrick's adaptation, at times drawing on quotations from the original novel to show that the book's sexual encounters have been embellished by the director. While sex features little in the novel, Walker contends that in Kubrick's film, 'sex alienates the men from the women, but equally, the men from each other,' with the penis used as a literal symbol of power.¹¹⁹ She refers to a scene in the book in which the narrator rapes two 10-year old girls after plying them with whiskey; Kubrick modifies it, replacing the girls with a more willing pair of teenagers. Moreover, the encounter is 'speeded-up, Keystone Cops style,' making the scene light-hearted and comic for the audience.¹²⁰ Instead of the shocking depiction of pedophilic assault, Kubrick offers women up for audience titillation at every opportunity. One of the gang's victims, who appears fully clothed in the book, is substituted in the film by 'an amply endowed woman, [...] fully nude, breasts swaying and pubic hair displayed as she struggles weakly for freedom.'¹²¹

Walker posits that Kubrick unexpectedly inserts sexual imagery into the film. This is epitomized by the set design for the Korova Milk Bar, 'completely the work of Kubrick's imagination,' she argues, since no description appears in the book.¹²² These props are in fact pastiches of sculptures by the British artist Allen Jones. 'Words are inadequate to describe the mockery of the female here,' remarks Walker; women's

¹¹⁵ Ibid, 5; Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Walker refers to an interview with the author, it is in fact 'Author Has His Say on Clockwork Film,' *Los Angeles Times*, 13 February 1972, 18-19. Laura Mulvey also comments on the sexist themes in director's previous films in 'Death gets a Kiss from Kubrick', *7 Days*, 19 January 1972, 21.

¹¹⁸ Walker, 'From Novel to Film,' 7.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Ibid, 8.

bodies become milk dispensers – ‘legs spread apart, breasts jutting out, faces impassive’ – as well as tables, where the patrons ‘casually place their glasses or rest their feet.’¹²³ Jones’ original works *Hatstand*, *Table*, and *Chair*, completed in 1969 and known collectively as ‘Women as Furniture,’ prompted similar criticism from British feminists when first exhibited in London in 1970.¹²⁴ By closely comparing the original text with Kubrick’s adaptation, she turns auteurist logic against itself by blaming the film’s misogyny on its director.

Conclusions

As these examples demonstrate, many articles in *Women & Film*’s first two issues deploy ‘images of women’ criticism, sometimes in conjunction with an auteurist attribution of authorship to a film’s director. Their authors make use of a diverse set of critical approaches, drawing on longstanding ideas of Western art criticism in the service of a feminist critique of film. They give us a sense of the bibliography of film studies in the early 1970s and the ways in which it overlapped with the feminist theory of the period. They are testament to the resourcefulness of early feminist scholars dealing with a medium whose academic study was still being established.

Interestingly, double issue 3-4 marks an end to the publication of the editors’ own writings; no further articles by either Beh or Salyer appear in succeeding issues, with the exception of some reviews by Beh in issue 5-6.¹²⁵ The opening editorial observes that hitherto the magazine has functioned as a ‘mirror reflecting the evolving consciousness of feminists concerned with film and political analysis.’¹²⁶ The editors declare ‘the need to begin to formulate a theory of film in congruence with the evolving body of feminist theory’ and call on women working in the fields of media and education to join the ‘struggle towards formulation of a theory or theories of feminist cinema.’¹²⁷ For the editors, the need to build a theoretical base for feminist film criticism is guided by the desire for its work to inform feminist film practice. ‘If feminist filmmakers do not generate a conscious, articulated theory of their filmmaking practice,’ they comment, ‘there is a danger of recapitulating the dominant patriarchal

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ See Laura Mulvey, ‘You Don’t Know What is Happening, Do You, Mr. Jones?’ *Spare Rib* 8 (February 1973), 13-30.

¹²⁵ This is not the case for their partners; both Mike Shedlin and Bill Nichols continue to have their work published in later issues, although Nichols’ contribution is restricted to book reviews.

¹²⁶ Editors, ‘A Note from the Editors,’ *Women & Film* 3-4 (1973), 5.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

ideology when we attempt to follow our “spontaneous” urges to express ourselves.’¹²⁸ Additionally, they present a reformulation of their earlier reflectionist understating of the nature of film, stating that

Almost every radical film magazine (including *Women & Film*) has immediately formulated statements about film as an ideological tool of patriarchal culture or capitalism, seeing bourgeois film in a direct, linear, causal relationship to it. However, it is much more complex than that – film is not a *reflection* of society but is embedded in it with complex, mediated linkages to other social and economic formations. Until a theory of film in culture has been more precisely articulated it will be difficult to make statements on the political impact of any film.’¹²⁹

The need for the construction of a ‘theory or theories of feminist cinema’ had, to some extent, been highlighted by *Women & Film*’s critical reception. A later contributor, Janet Bergstrom, recalls that ‘Claire Johnston’s pamphlet *Notes on Women’s Cinema* (1973) proposed an agenda that was [...] impossible to ignore.’¹³⁰ In it, Johnston is critical of the subjective and sociological approaches found in the magazine.¹³¹ She dismisses its editors’ description of Hollywood cinema as the USA’s ‘principal vehicle for ideological oppression’ as ‘crude determinism’ and is wary of the approaches taken by Gilbert and Martineau: Gilbert for her oversimplification of the workings of ideology, Martineau for adopting an overly subjective perspective vulnerable to co-option by ‘conventional male, bourgeois criticism.’¹³² ‘The film criticism which has been generated so far’, Johnston argues in the introduction, ‘takes as its starting point the manipulation of women as sexual objects by the media. The critique has been derived from a view of media rather than from a consideration of the specificity of the cinema.’¹³³ In her ensuing article, ‘Women’s Cinema as Counter-cinema’, she claims

It is not enough to discuss the oppression of women within the text of the film,’ she concludes; ‘the language of the cinema, the depiction of reality must also be interrogated, so that a break with ideology and text is effected.’¹³⁴

As the ensuing chapter will show, the ensuing issues of *Women & Film* attempt in several ways to respond to Johnston’s call for such an interrogation.

¹²⁸ Ibid, 4.

¹²⁹ Ibid, 5. Original emphasis.

¹³⁰ Janet Bergstrom, ‘American Feminism and French Film Theory,’ *Iris*, no. 10 (1990), 185.

¹³¹ Gilbert’s ‘To Be Our Own Muse: The Dialectics of a Culture Heroine’ is reprinted from *Women & Film* no. 2. Johnston, ‘Introduction,’ *Notes on Women’s Cinema*, 3. Johnston would soon go on to combine the auteurist approach with semiotic and psychoanalytic perspectives in her book *The Work of Dorothy Arzner: towards a Feminist Cinema* (London: BFI, 1975). Her book reflects the wider overlap between semiotic and auteurist approaches, also evident in the work of Peter Wollen.

¹³² Beh & Salyer, ‘Overview,’ *Women & Film* vol. 1, no. 1 (1972), 3; Johnston, ‘Introduction,’ *Notes on Women’s Cinema*, 3; Ibid, 3.

¹³³ Johnston, ‘Introduction,’ *Notes on Women’s Cinema*, 3.

¹³⁴ Johnston, ‘Women’s Cinema as Counter-Cinema,’ *Notes on Women’s Cinema*, 29.

V

1970s Film Theory in *Women & Film*

As Chapter IV demonstrates, images of women criticism makes up a large part of the writing published in *Women & Film*'s first two issues. But approaches informed by the new film theories of the 1970s are also evident in the magazine. The call for 'a theory or theories of feminist cinema' made by its editors in issue 3-4 published in 1973 was due not only to a shift in the wider field of film studies, but also because of *Women & Film*'s evolving personnel.¹ Those who responded to the editorial's call to action were part of a new contingent of contributors.² Among them were Chuck Kleinhans and Julia Lesage, then in the process of setting up their own journal, *Jump Cut* (1974-present); and the four women who in 1976 founded the journal *Camera Obscura* (1976-present): Janet Bergstrom (using the pen name Janet Parker), Sandy Flitterman, Elisabeth Lyon (then Hart Lyon) and Constance Penley. These feminists, scholars and cinephiles were deeply engaged with the new film theory emerging from Europe, particularly the semiotics of Roland Barthes, Umberto Eco and Christian Metz.³ This chapter therefore details the changes taking place on the magazine's masthead as well as those on its pages.

The influence of *Women & Film*'s new contributors is felt in the magazine's evolving aesthetic. Issue 2 had already seen the introduction of a decorative Art Deco inspired font, replacing the hand drawn title on the cover of issue 1. Issue 3-4 marks a further shift away from the hand-drawn aesthetic (and flimsy paper covers) of 1 and 2, using instead a reproduction of a painting by pop artist Wayne Thiebaud entitled *Booth Girl* (1964) on its thicker card cover (fig. 33). Inside, the familiar mimeograph type is

¹ Editors, 'A Note from the Editors,' *Women & Film* 3-4 (1973), 5. Constance Penley has suggested that she may have even contributed to the writing of this editorial. Interview with author, London, 25 June 2017.

² Most of their responses came a year later, in issue 5-6 published in June. Editors, 'A Note from the Editors,' *Women & Film* 5-6 (1974), 4.

³ As well as presenting more theoretically informed work, issue 5-6 sees the establishment of three sections: 'The Ideological Massage/Reviews,' a section 'dedicated to reviews of mainstream, man-made cinema'; 'Independent Women's Cinema,' i.e. 'films made by women independently of the (male) commercial film industry,' including documentary, narrative fiction, 'biographical portraits,' experimental film, and, 'those feminist films which attempt to deconstruct the aesthetic/political codes of patriarchal culture,' each requiring 'a specific mode of analysis'; and 'Third World Perspectives,' showcasing women's filmmaking from the Third World. Editors, 'A Note from the Editors,' (1974), 5.

replaced by a neater and smaller sans serif font and the resulting layouts appear more restrained and academic. This continues in issue 5-6, which also features a more professional looking and enigmatic photographic cover (fig. 34).⁴ However, my focus here is on these new contributors' engagement with semiotic and structuralist theory and their deployment of these new paradigms in relation to film and feminism. I begin with Julia Lesage's overview of feminist film criticism, which, according to *Women & Film's* editors, 'offers directions for a possible feminist film theory.'⁵ Important in this regard are her and her collaborator Chuck Kleinhans' scholarly training, their previous writing and their involvement in the wider theoretical movements of the period.

The biggest impact on *Women & Film's* development was brought about by the involvement of Bergstrom, Flitterman, Lyon and Penley. Here, I recount how this collaboration arose and examine a key moment in its evolution: an interview with the theorist and filmmaker Noël Burch by a group that included Bergstrom, Penley, Flitterman and Lyon (but crucially, not Beh and Salyer) which is followed by a review of his influential book, *Theory of Film Practice*, by Penley.⁶ According to its central protagonists, this interview prompted conflicts over the importance of structuralist and semiotic film theories to the magazine's feminist project and brought into question the nascent editorial collective. This schism and the departure of the future *Camera Obscura* collective had a significant influence on the evolution of feminist film criticism during the second half of the 1970s.

Finally, I look at Eileen McGarry's 'Documentary, Realism, and Women's Cinema,' published in *Women & Film's* final issue 7, an article that continues the magazine's engagement with structuralist and semiotic film theory, specifically as it relates to the feminist documentaries of the period, and the implicit demands made by 'images of women' critics for more 'realistic' depictions of women. Taken together, these texts chart *Women & Film's* encounter with 1970s film theory and map out the debates that would define the discipline for at least the next decade. Each text reveals some of the ways that 1970s film theory was transmitted between individuals and institutions in the United States and Europe (particularly France and the United Kingdom). They also position *Women & Film* as a bridge between leftist and feminist cultural critique of the 1960s, and 1970s feminist film theory.

⁴ The title font has again changed, this time to a classic serif typeface.

⁵ Editors, 'A Note from the Editors,' (1974), 4

⁶ Ibid.

Julia Lesage, *Jump Cut* and 'Feminist Film Criticism: Theory and Practice'

In April 1972, not long after the publication of *Women & Film's* first issue, Siew-Hwa Beh and Bill Nichols attended the first Student Conference on Film Study, held at Oberlin College, Ohio. Nichols presented a paper drawn from his doctoral research on Newsreel filmmaking and Beh, who brought along copies of *Women & Film* to distribute, spoke about 'The Image of Women in the Cinema.'⁷ It was here that they met two fellow delegates Julia Lesage and Chuck Kleinhans. The 'gimmick' of this conference, Kleinhans has since explained, was that it was student-led: university departments that taught film studies would recommend their most talented students to present on 'new developments' such as semiotics, psychoanalysis, and feminism, the assumption being that professors were not *au fait* with these new theories.⁸ The conference's theme was the 'Goals, Methods, and Scope of Film Study in the 70s,' and featured keynote lectures from the film theorist Christian Metz, as well as Yves de Lauriot, the chief proponent of *cinéma engagé*.⁹

The impact of semiotic theory on feminist film criticism and the potential shift away from images of women criticism is presaged in Beh's presentation for the conference. Her paper, which includes wording from several of her *Women & Film* articles, features the discussion of women characters and plots looked at in the previous chapter. Seemingly rewritten over the course of the event, the paper comments:

Evidence of these stereotypes [of women] can be witnessed in plots, mise-en-scene, and in methods of film technique such as lighting, framing, lens use, editing, and sound. After listening to M. Metz last night, I really hope that semiologists could demonstrate semiotically the abuse in the use of the image of women in cinema.¹⁰

⁷ See *1972 Oberlin Film Conference: Selected Essays and Discussion Transcripts*, Vol. II, ed. Christian Koch and John Powers (Ohio: Oberlin College, 1974). <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED106881.pdf> (11.08.2017); Julia Lesage in Chuck Kleinhans and Julia Lesage, interview with author, Eugene, OR, 19 October 2013.

⁸ Kleinhans, Lesage and Kleinhans interview.

⁹ Lesage, Lesage and Kleinhans interview. *Cinéma engagé* was a model for militant political filmmaking proposed by the French critic and filmmaker de Lauriot. Also in attendance were Noël Carroll, Brian Henderson and David Bordwell. Metz's paper was entitled 'On Trying to Introduce a Distinction Between Cinema and Film.'

¹⁰ Beh, 'The Image of Women in the Cinema,' *1972 Oberlin Film Conference*, 300-310. Beh's contribution combines an edited text with discussion transcriptions from audio recordings, the latter providing an illuminating picture of the event. Beh is interrupted and challenged several times by audience members; on the whole, these challenges come from men, while more supportive interjections come from women, including Lesage.

She goes on to present some brief analyses of the ways in which certain cinematic techniques marginalize or exclude women characters. When women are allowed into the frame, she explains, they are either restricted to its periphery or subjected to objectifying close-ups. Lighting is used in a similar way: 'manipulated solely for [...] male aesthetic satisfaction.'¹¹ She also notes the use of diffusion lenses to 'emphasize feminine softness' and argues that editing techniques 'seem to follow only one principle: appeal to the male reaction. It is as if film is too expensive to be wasted on women's reactions, unless they somehow reaffirm the man's.' Finally, she turns to sound, and 'the exploitation of women's screams of horror, or the sounds of women's pleasure, in sex.'¹² Although Beh's article for issue two briefly observes framing and editing, further formal analysis does not appear in her later writing. And as her language indicates, she does not appear to see herself as one of the 'semiologists' who will do this work. Instead, such studies were undertaken by some of *Women & Film's* new contributors, including Julia Lesage.

As her Oberlin paper 'Semiology of the Film: A review of Theoretical Articles to 1970' indicates, Lesage was interested in the emerging theoretical currents of film study of the period. But she also had experience in making and teaching film: between 1967 and 1970, while teaching English at the Pontifical Catholic University of Peru, in Lima, she also became involved in a filmmaking school run by the Peruvian director Armando Robles Godoy (1923-2010) where she learnt to make 16mm films.¹³ In 1971, she embarked on a doctorate in Comparative Literature at the University of Indiana, writing her thesis on Jean-Luc Godard and Brechtian dramatic theory. Here, she met her long-term partner Kleinhans, with whom she would collaborate on numerous projects (including editing *Jump Cut*, which they founded with fellow Indiana doctoral student John Hess in 1974).¹⁴ Kleinhans and Lesage specialized in 19th century literature during their comparative literature studies, but as was the case for contemporaries like Beh and Salyer, much of their education in contemporary political and cultural debates was pursued outside of the classroom. As Lesage recalled in our interview, during that period,

The university was a place where you got [...] intellectual background or intellectual history [...]. But we never expected our professors to teach us the

¹¹ Beh, 'The Image of Women in the Cinema,' 301.

¹² Ibid. Her audience laughs when she points out that 'never would we hear the sounds made by men in bed.'

¹³ Lesage, interview. She got this job through a Catholic lay organization Papal Volunteers for Latin America (PAVLA). Lesage, email to author, 18 July 2015. Robles Godoy directed *The Green Wall* (1971), which Lesage writes about in *Women & Film* 3-4.

¹⁴ Lesage, interview. Hess died in 2015.

kinds of things that we were going to build our intellectual life around. We assumed that you would get that on your own.¹⁵

Similarly, she remarked, 'the intellectual scholarship around women, I just assumed that I and my peers would forge it, would create it.' Their extra-curricular activities included Marxist study groups, socialist feminist groups, as well as following developments in film theory, feminism and leftist politics and culture in independent journals and publications from abroad, such as *SubStance* or *Screen*. Thanks to a student friend with a subscription, Kleinhans and Lesage both had access to the *Working Papers in Cultural Studies* coming out of Birmingham University's Centre for Cultural Studies and were reading the work of Stuart Hall as well as translations of structuralist critics such as Umberto Eco.¹⁶

Following the 1972 Oberlin conference, Kleinhans and Lesage travelled to Europe to attend the week-long workshop in film theory held by *Cahiers du cinéma* in Avignon, followed by the BFI summer school at the University of Stirling in Scotland. Over two weeks, the participants explored 'Technique/Style/Meaning,' a course whose focus was to 'examine critically [these] inter-related notions,' using films by Orson Wells, William Wyler and Jean Renoir.¹⁷ The course description explains that participants would investigate the 'main currents of critical opinion,' including the challenges made by French critics to such 'tenets of established critical practice as the concept of "wholeness", [...] the supposedly representational, depictory [sic] character of the cinema, the film as embodiment of the creative world-view of one individual author.'¹⁸ The reading list includes Metz, André Bazin, Raymond Bellour, Peter Wollen, Jean-Louis Comolli and Jean Narboni, as well as several articles from *Screen*.¹⁹ The summer school consisted of screenings, informal presentations by staff and visitors such as Victor Perkins, Sam Rohdie and Jim Hillier, and small group discussions.

¹⁵ Lesage, interview.

¹⁶ Kleinhans, interview. Founded in 1971, *SubStance* is a peer-reviewed journal of critical theory, poetry and literature published by the University of Wisconsin. Articles were published in both French and English on Barthes, Lacan and Merleau-Ponty.

¹⁷ 'Summer School 1972,' *BFI Summer Schools 1971-1979: A Dossier*, ed. Nicky North and Jim Cook (London BFI Education Department, 1981), 10. See also Terry Bolas, *Screen Education: From Film Appreciation to Media Studies* (Bristol: Intellect Books, 2009), 214-218. Lesage attended the 1971 course at Eastbourne College of Education on 'Realism: Theory & Practice' and British documentary and Italian realist cinema, led by Hillier, Rohdie and Jon Halliday. The course's aim was to 'chart the ways in which realism became the dominant aesthetic principle of the British Cinema,' (4). See 'Summer School 1971,' *BFI Summer Schools*; Summer School 1971 leaflet.

¹⁸ 'Summer School 1972,' 10.

¹⁹ Patrick Ogle, 'Technological and Aesthetic Influences Upon the Development of Deep Focus Cinematography in the United States,' 45-72; Paul Willemen, 'On realism in the cinema,' 37-44, *Screen* 13.1 (1972).

Following her meeting with Beh and Nichols at the Oberlin conference, Lesage joined *Women & Film's* editorial team for the 1973 double issue 3-4, which saw the publication of her and Kleinhans' first articles for the magazine: Lesage's '*The Green Wall: The Peruvian Woman and Us*,' about the work of Robles-Godoy; and Kleinhans' '*Two or Three Things I Know about Her*,' on Godard's 1967 film.²⁰ While Lesage's article concentrates primarily on character and plot, Kleinhans' article begins to apply a medium-specific understanding of film to create a feminist reading of Godard's work that expressly extends Beh's arguments in her review of *Vivre sa vie* (*Women & Film* 1). His analysis is aided by Godard's explicit interrogation of film as a medium, and the attention he draws to visual as well as narrative cinematic conventions. According to Kleinhans, the film works 'within bourgeois form' – classical Hollywood filmmaking conventions – 'yet chaffs [sic] at its restrictions.'²¹ Instead Godard uses 'anti-narrative and 'anti-sympathetic devices,' such as Marina Vlady's emotionless and 'flat' performance as Juliette.²² Kleinhans refers to this as a 'Brechtian' technique that prevents audiences from forming a 'close identification' with her and instead creates 'critical distance': 'our response [...] throughout the film, is to see Juliette's life critically and with self-awareness and thereby respond to it more intellectually.'²³ Instead of using stills or frame enlargements (although the article is illustrated with two large publicity stills), Kleinhans' analysis relies on excerpts of dialogue with descriptions of setting, action, framing and editing. He describes a sequence in which Juliette, who works as a prostitute, is shown with a customer. Unlike the attempts at realism found in a film such as *Klute* (Alan J. Pakula, 1971), observes Kleinhans, Godard isolates the two characters and distorts Juliette's face, 'forcing it out of ordinary perspective.'²⁴ Through camera framing, argues Kleinhans, Godard shows 'the flatness and alienation inherent in the transaction.'²⁵ Similarly, Godard undercuts the expectations of *cinéma vérité* when he interrupts (visually but not acoustically) an interview with a woman on the street with silent shots of consumer goods.

As Kleinhans' language and literary comparisons (19th century realism, Proust, the nouveau roman, Symbolist poetry, Mallarmé) testify, his article does not attempt to deploy the film theories of Bazin or semiotics of Metz he had encountered at the BFI school. Lesage, on the other hand, had published several articles (some co-written with Kleinhans) on French cinema and film theory as a doctoral student. These pieces, as

²⁰ Lesage is listed as a contributing editor.

²¹ Kleinhans, 'Two or Three Things I Know about Her,' *Women & Film* 3-4 (1973), 68.

²² *Ibid*, 66.

²³ *Ibid*. The film in fact features Vlady quoting from Brecht on the role of the actor.

²⁴ *Ibid*, 70.

²⁵ *Ibid*.

well as her second article for *Women & Film* in issue 5-6, indicate that she was well-versed in the theoretical debates in French and American film theory, as well as those happening in literature and structuralism more broadly. She read much of this work, such as Roland Barthes's *S/Z* (1970), in French, having developed a reading knowledge during her doctorate and her travels abroad.²⁶

Lesage's article in issue 5-6 is the first in the magazine to reflect on the particular character of feminist film criticism and, more specifically, to consider its trajectory.²⁷ Though she does not make any reference to Johnston's critique of *Women & Film* or sociological criticism in *Notes on Women's Cinema*, Lesage's thoughts on the aims and strategies of feminist film criticism, and her suggestion for new directions, similarly consider the strengths and weaknesses of the work done so far. Like Johnston's writing, hers reflects a growing desire among feminists working on film to take stock following a period of heightened activity, both on the page and on the screen.

Towards an 'Ecology of Film': Kleinhans and Lesage's schema

Lesage's article centers on her proposed methodological approaches for feminist film critics. One of these is a schema that she originally presented in a paper, co-written with Kleinhans, at the Student Conference on Film Study (fig. 35). In April 1973, Kleinhans and Lesage returned to the conference, this time in Washington DC, to present 'A Systematic Approach to Audience Response to Film.' The original paper is split into three parts, the first of which draws on her PhD research and an analysis of Godard and the Dziga Vertov group's *Vent d'est* (1970, France). The second section presents the schema, what they call the 'Ecology of Film'; a methodology for studying film 'as a total process, from its inception to its reception by an audience.'²⁸ The final part examines types of audience responses to films, from simple to complex, emotional to intellectual.

²⁶ Lesage, email to author, 18 July 2015. Between 1973-74, she wrote an article in which she applied the semiotic analysis developed by Barthes in *S/Z* to the study of cinema, using *La Règle du jeu* as a test case. In it, she asserts the appeal of Barthes' work, and the usefulness of this book in particular, as a tool for teaching film and contributing to the work of a radical critic: making visible the illusory processes at work within an artwork to impinge on its 'naturalness.' Lesage, 'S/Z and Rules of the Game,' *Jump Cut* no. 12-13 (1976): 45-51. The English version of *S/Z* was not published until 1974. Lesage refers to her article in the footnotes for her 1974 *Women & Film* article as awaiting publication in *SubStance*, but it was subsequently rejected and did not appear until 1976, in *Jump Cut*. She completed her thesis on Godard in 1976.

²⁷ This article was reprinted in feminist film magazine *Frauen und Film* (in German) in 1975 and in Patricia Erens' *Sexual Stratagems: The World of Women in Film* (New York: Horizon Press, 1979).

²⁸ Lesage, 'Feminist Film Criticism: Theory and Practice,' *Women & Film* 5-6 (1974), 13.

Lesage reuses this schema, including its explanatory text, in 'Feminist Film Criticism: Theory and Practice,' positing it as a methodological reply to the inadequacy of 'regarding only the film, or only the maker-film-audience segment.'²⁹ Her method instead proposes an Althusserian examination of a film's conjunctural moment, 'the entirety of the film production-distribution process.'³⁰ However, Lesage does not use the language of Althusser, using instead the term milieu, derived from literary theory. The French critic Hippolyte Taine pioneered the concept in his *History of English Literature* published in English in 1873. His concept of 'race, milieu, moment' - translated in the English version to 'race, surroundings, epoch' - identified the three main aspects influencing a work of literature. Kleinhans had read Taine during his undergraduate studies at Wisconsin, and it was he who introduced the term when they were coming up with the schema.³¹ Taine argued for the study of a work's context, particularly as it related to its author; he wanted to 'to try to see men in their workshops, in their offices, in their fields, with their sky, their dress, cultivations, meals.'³² The effect of milieu or surroundings he deemed the most 'efficacious of the invisible causes which mould the primitive man,' and his definition included both natural and social environment.³³

The schema consists of five aspects of analysis in addition to the study of the film-text: milieu 1; maker; audience; milieu 2 and production/distribution. According to Kleinhans, it was based on the Shannon and Weaver communication model: sender-message-receiver.³⁴ The notion of milieu, he recalls,

Was to account for the Marxist/historical context at each end of the spectrum. And of course to introduce space and time as parts of the communication process [...] assumed that you were talking about virtually instant communication: face-to-face; or telephone, or TV broadcast, radio broadcast, etc. Obviously with literature or film, you have to deal with different time frames and, often, different cultural frames (nation, language, etc.).³⁵

The concept thus allows Lesage to 'account for changes due to reception in a different historical period from which the film was made,' crucial for a feminist consideration of

²⁹ Ibid, 14.

³⁰ Kleinhans and Lesage, 'A Systematic Approach to Audience Response to Film,' given at the Student Conference on Film Study (Washington D.C, 1973), 3. Johnston critical of this approach referring to it as an 'economic-reductionist/social-behaviourist "grand theory",' in 'Feminist Politics and Film History,' *Screen* 16, no. 3 (1975), 124.

³¹ Kleinhans, email to author, 25 August 2015.

³² Hippolyte Taine, *History of English Literature*, trans. H. Van Laun (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1873), 5.

³³ Taine, 19-21.

³⁴ Kleinhans, email to author, 25 August 2015. This basic model for the transmission of information was developed by the American mathematicians Claude Elwood Shannon and Warren Weaver in their book *The Mathematical Theory of Communication* (1949).

³⁵ Kleinhans, email to author, 25 August 2015.

film.³⁶ She hopes that 'feminist film criticism will constantly relate film to milieu with a specific vision of how sexism can be attacked.'³⁷

'A good theory,' Lesage explains, 'includes an explanation of the mechanisms operating *within* the film (form, content, etc.) and the mechanisms that go beyond the product that is the film (such as the film industry, distribution, audience expectation, etc.)'³⁸ In the schema, milieu 1, or 'prefilmic' milieu, combines the past and 'the present situation. [...] the economic base [...] and ideological superstructure.'³⁹ According to Lesage, this aspect is of particular interest to feminist critics, since, she argues,

That sexism which we can find in almost all of established cinema can be found in cinematic tradition, language structures, artistic conventions (especially in the photographing of women), social conventions, and specific social situations. These are all part of milieu 1.⁴⁰

Lesage uses the term maker as opposed to director because, as she points out, unlike other media (novels, paintings etc.), the 'maker in a film [...] is almost always [...] a collective entity,' regardless of whether they consciously choose to work as a collective.⁴¹ She later explains, 'the maker of a film receives all of milieu 1 and additionally has her/his/their own individual psychology, historical situation, and creative imagination' informing their filmmaking.⁴² According to her, for many feminist filmmakers, a 'reaction against their milieu is a driving force' for their work, shaping both 'the content of the films they make and their fight to establish themselves either within or on the margin of the film industry.'⁴³ She cites the audience and the audience's milieu – milieu 2 – as other important aspects to consider. This milieu, she says, is 'always to some extent historically/temporally/spatially/socially different from the maker's milieu and the audience brings its experiences within its milieu to its judgment of a film.'⁴⁴ It is here that feminist film criticism can have a significant impact, argues Lesage, by 'attacking sexism and promoting women's films' and thus encouraging 'people to view films that are a part of their milieu in a new way.'⁴⁵

This relationship is the focus of the first section of her and Kleinhans' earlier paper from which the schema is borrowed. There, they examined how an audience familiar with Godard and Gorin's milieu – specifically their political and cinematic

³⁶ Lesage, 'Feminist Film Criticism,' 13.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Ibid.*, 14.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

experiences – would interpret the highly political and structurally unconventional *Vent d'est*. In her *Women & Film* article, Lesage instead illustrates this point with a reflection on a fifteen-minute documentary, *Roseland* (1973) by Chicago-based filmmaker Royanne Rosenberg.⁴⁶ The film, in which Rosenberg ‘played off her own admiration for a very fat woman against the audience’s preconceived notions and uneasiness about obesity in women,’ highlights for her the fact that ‘the specific situation of both the filmmaker and the audience plays a determining role, for the audience may not understand the creator’s “style”.’ She goes on

Roseland confuses many women, who react out of their own structured attitude toward obesity and do not understand that the film’s emphasis on Rose’s size was intended to convey the director’s respect for her as a monumental, almost mythical earth-goddess figure. Since Rose is presented in cinéma-vérité style the audience reacts as they always react to a fat person; there are no structures in the film to overcome the ambiguity of attraction/rejection which the image of obesity generates.⁴⁷

A way to circumvent this pitfall, Lesage implies, is to show a film like *Roseland* in the same way that video makers often exhibit their work: ‘video typically offers more feedback than film because it is usually shown to small groups by the makers.’⁴⁸ She notes that some women filmmakers and collectives are attempting ‘to make film a communicative process’ by showing their films in this way.⁴⁹

The final aspect of Kleinhans and Lesage’s schema is that of the production/distribution system. This affects all other ‘sub-systems’ Lesage explains: ‘involved in distribution are producers, distributors, exhibitors, critics and audiences – all of whom are influenced by the economic base of the society in which they live.’⁵⁰ As many feminist filmmakers and producers remarked at the time (and continue to do today), Lesage points to distribution as one of the key hurdles for feminist filmmakers. ‘Women,’ she observes, ‘are struggling to open alternate circuits of distribution because the established distribution agencies reject politically sensitive films. [...] Alternative circuits – distributing 16mm prints, usually in colleges or schools – reach mostly the already “convinced.”’⁵¹ She proposes instead ‘a mass feminist distribution linked to political activity; at minimum [sic] to audience education.’⁵² The task for *Women & Film* and feminist critics in general is to document how the mainstream and

⁴⁶ A film she most likely saw when it was screened at Michigan’s Ann Arbor film festival in 1973. Rosenberg directed another short, *The Autopsy* (1972).

⁴⁷ Lesage, ‘Feminist Film Criticism,’ 14.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁵² *Ibid.*

alternative distribution circuits operate and to 'publicize and encourage' the work of existing alternative, feminist-orientated distributors.⁵³

The role of feminist film criticism and critics

Lesage's schema and its explanation are presented within the context of a more general reflection on the broader project of feminist film criticism and the role of *Women & Film* within it. This aspect of her article is based on a workshop given by herself and fellow student Maureen Turim at the Midwest Women's Film Conference in Madison, Wisconsin, in June of 1973.⁵⁴ The aim of this presentation, Lesage says, was 'to set out some theoretical guidelines and parameters [...and] to share [...] our own experiences as critics'; this is carried over into her article, along with an emphasis on 'the necessary role of theory in establishing a feminist cinema.'⁵⁵ Lesage was for a time a member of the socialist feminist Chicago Women's Union and as such, her article is focused on ways in which to bring about political change, through women's filmmaking, as well as film criticism.⁵⁶ 'Unlike establishment film criticism,' she asserts, 'feminist film criticism can and should aid political activity.'⁵⁷ While proposing a holistic approach to film analysis, Lesage also advocates that feminist critics be more explicit about their political and critical perspectives, arguing that

More candor about one's politics in film reviews is useful in dispelling once and for all the idea that media just provides entertainment [...]; politics and culture are inseparable [sic] and the feminist critic had [sic] ideas on how to fight sexism in film.⁵⁸

She goes on to say that 'the critic owes it to her readers to make her own basic assumptions perfectly clear so that the reader's response may also be lucid.'⁵⁹ A similar demand is made in the editorial of this issue for writers to provide a 'critical evaluation' of their article, interview or festival report. The editors' suggest that contributors provide a 'critical evaluation' of their work. 'Why did you choose to

⁵³ Ibid. She names New Day Films (New York); Cinema Femina (New York) and Women's Film Co-Op (Massachusetts) as examples of feminist distributors in her footnotes.

⁵⁴ Turim studied with Raymond Bellour, Barthes and Metz in Paris shortly after. She also attended seminars given by Michel Marie, Thierry Kuntzel, Gerald LeBlanc and Mark Ferro. As a foreign student, Turim was able to attend seminars across the several Parisian universities teaching film studies (Vincennes, Nanterre, the École Pratique des Hautes Études), unlike French students, who were not allowed to do so, being exclusively registered to one institution. See Turim, 'Film Study in Paris,' *SubStance* 3, no. 9 (Spring 1974): 193-98.

⁵⁵ Lesage, 'Feminist Film Criticism,' 12; Ibid, 15.

⁵⁶ Lesage, interview.

⁵⁷ Lesage, 'Feminist Film Criticism,' 13.

⁵⁸ Ibid, 12.

⁵⁹ Ibid, 16.

interview this person?' they ask, 'Why is it interesting that *you* are interviewing the subject in terms of your own interests and background? How does the subject's work specifically contribute to film and feminism?'⁶⁰ With the widening of the theoretical frameworks employed in the magazine comes the need to specify which ones a critic subscribes to. This requirement reflects the influence of structuralist-marxist theory on *Women & Film's* wider editorial group, heralding the theoretical turn that would shape film theory more widely for the next decade or so. Although not directly referenced by Lesage, this idea, often referred to as auto-critique, originates from Marxist scholarship, particularly Maoism and is used by Althusser in his book *Essays in Self-criticism* (1976; *Éléments d'autocritique*, 1974). In it, he reflects on his work from the 1960s and its critical reception, and attempts to account for his intentions and his theoretical and political stances at the time, acknowledging his mistakes and defending his reasoning.⁶¹ Crucially, a feminist critic must make clear not only 'the assumptions which underly [sic] her analysis of film' but also her relationship to the women's movement. And according to Lesage, such candor can provoke a 'political response' from the reader toward the writing and the film being discussed: 'it is only when the critic writes with her politics up front that the readers can respond in kind and make a political critique of both the film and the review.'⁶²

Lesage expands these ideas by discussing the more general job of feminist film criticism, often using *Women & Film* as an example. Firstly, feminists can use film criticism 'to attack sexism in a film' and contribute to 'the growing appreciation of long-neglected women's films,' as well as 'provide a basis on which to evaluate and constructively criticize those films.'⁶³ *Women & Film* offers a platform for this work, 'rapidly moving beyond a critique of the mechanisms of sexism in the content of individual films to feminist perspectives on film theory and a support for and evaluation of the work of women in film.'⁶⁴ She considers this earlier stage, turning her attention to the critical engagement with 'images of women' in film. While she appreciates 'strong women characters,' she highlights 'a danger in raising the strong-female role model to the level of prescription.'⁶⁵ This is informed in part by her suspicion of 'the whole concept of hero (or anti-hero),' which she deems a 'carry-over from nineteenth century romantic literature.'⁶⁶ Furthermore, she underlines the need

⁶⁰ Editors, 'A Note from the Editors,' *Women & Film* 5-6 (1974), 4.

⁶¹ Louis Althusser, *Essays in Self-Criticism*, trans. Grahame Lock (London: NLB, 1976), 104-150.

⁶² Lesage, 'Feminist Film Criticism,' 12.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 16.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

for accurate portrayals that do not involve 'strong' characters. She calls for 'films that delineate women's situations, women's problems without showing the women characters as strong, liberated or rebellious.'⁶⁷ Such films, she says, are as rare as positive portrayals and could contribute to feminist consciousness-raising.

As a practitioner – she was a co-founder of the Bloomington Feminist Filmmaking Collective in 1971– Lesage is always conscious of how theoretical work contributes to the filmmaking process. For her, analysis and criticism must always relate back to feminist filmmaking. She argues, for example, that the magazine

Needs to document in detail the position of women within the process of production in Hollywood films. We must also note *how* it is that women can begin to produce films more or less independently – tracing the sources of available income and distribution.⁶⁸

Feminist critics should also specifically address the work being done by women filmmakers, she asserts, and 'offer sisters making films, perhaps especially documentaries, a critique of the form of their presentation', something that Eileen McGarry addresses in her article, discussed below.⁶⁹ Lesage asserts that *Women & Film* has become a useful text for 'women's courses' and she hopes that it will also help influence the production and distribution of women's films.⁷⁰ This can be done, she says, by critiquing industry practices, drawing attention to forgotten work by women as well as 'demythologiz[ing] some of cinema's traditional heroes and themes.'⁷¹ She also calls for the examination of work by less explicitly feminist but pioneering critics such as Susan Sontag, Penelope Gilliatt (who reviewed films for the *New Yorker*), Renata Adler (*New York Times* critic 1968-69), and French critics Claire Clouzot (*Écran, Sight and Sound*) and Marie-Claire Ropars-Wuilleumier (*Esprit*).⁷²

Lesage's text represents an important early reflection on the tendencies within feminist film criticism and its (tentative) interactions with 1970s film theory. Her proposals leave room for a wide array of approaches for feminists wishing to challenge to status quo in film. Despite her deep involvement in work of contemporary film theorists, she only brings their work into play occasionally, and is resistant to the predominantly formalist approaches associated with semiotic film analysis. This is perhaps a result of her work as a practitioner and teacher of filmmaking, experiences that contribute to her proposal for a balanced and holistic approach to the many

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid, 15. Her emphasis.

⁶⁹ Ibid, 17.

⁷⁰ Ibid, 12.

⁷¹ Ibid, 13.

⁷² Ibid, 12.

potential intersections between film and feminism. This view would also come across in *Jump Cut*, which successfully combined an eclectic range of approaches to film analysis as well as retaining an explicitly radical political perspective. It specifically addressed issues on contemporary cinema in order to not 'leave the vast area of current film to journalistic consumer guides' and stressed a commitment to 'theories often unfamiliar to Americans, such as structuralism, semiology, and Marxism.'⁷³

Meanwhile in Berkeley: The Women & Film Collective 1972-1974

Around the time that Beh, Kleinhans, Lesage and Nichols were attending the Oberlin conference, and between the publication of the first and second issues of *Women & Film*, Sandra Salyer returned to Berkeley to live in a communal household.⁷⁴ She soon became a frequent visitor to the Pacific Film Archive (PFA), a cinema and archive then newly housed in the Berkeley Art Museum's recently built complex. The founder, Sheldon Renan had begun organizing screenings on the Berkeley campus as early as 1966, while writing his *An Introduction to Underground Film* (1967).⁷⁵ Inspired by the Paris Cinémathèque and New York's MOMA, the PFA was officially founded in 1967. Several influential local figures assisted with programming, including San Francisco Film Festival organizer Albert Johnson, Berkeley student Tom Luddy, and later, Bertrand Augst of the French department at Berkeley.⁷⁶ Luddy was also involved in a university film society dedicated to F.W. Murnau, the Cinema Guild repertory theatre and the Telegraph Repertory Theatre, where he was programme director. PFA screenings and Q&As – including with Jean-Luc Godard in 1968 and Fritz Lang in 1969 – were held at the University's Wheeler Auditorium, where, according to one source, despite 'tear gas and fire hoses brought in by police against a student demonstration in April 1970, an audience of 500 attended an Ingmar Bergman film.'⁷⁷

A dedicated cinema space was established at the Berkeley Art Museum in January 1971, and Luddy became program director in 1972. Conceived as both a cinema and archive from the start, PFA encouraged local independent filmmakers to store their

⁷³ Editors, 'The Last Word: Inaugural Issue of *Jump Cut*,' *Jump Cut* no. 1 (1974), unpaginated.

⁷⁴ Salyer, email to author, 8 September 2017. Known as the 'Rose Garden House,' 2022 Delaware Street is listed as a second correspondence in issues 2 and 3-4. She lived there with *Laughing Gas* collaborator David Wallechinsky and his sister Amy Wallace, a student in clairvoyance at the Berkeley Psychic Institute.

⁷⁵ Lee Amazonas, 'Guerilla Cinematheque Comes of Age: The Pacific Film Archive,' *Chronicle of the University of California*, no. 6 (Spring 2004), 148.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 149; Augst, email to author, 27 October 2017.

⁷⁷ Steven Jenkins, 'Movie Romance,' *California Magazine*, Fall 2013, 42; Amazonas, 151.

films there for preservation.⁷⁸ 1972 also saw the establishment of the PFA Library and Film Study Centre by eventual *Women & Film* contributor Linda Artel.⁷⁹ The archive became a hub for local film culture and an important site in the magazine's history: Salyer recalls that she sometimes walked between her home and the Archive several times a day, a twenty minute walk that took her through the Berkeley campus; Janet Bergstrom recollects that 'everything was sort of happening around the Pacific Film Archive'; while Elisabeth Lyon refers to Luddy as 'the epicenter of all things film in Berkeley.'⁸⁰ Its significance for *Women & Film* is signaled by the promotion that appears at the back of issue 2 (fig. 36): it describes the PFA as a 'dynamic facility,' and its archive as home to many 'films of particular interest to women in film.'⁸¹

Through Luddy, Renan and the PFA, Salyer met Constance Penley.⁸² Penley had encountered the women's liberation movement through a consciousness-raising group during her time as an undergraduate in English at the University of Florida.⁸³ Jean Luc Godard's *Pierrot le fou* (1965) was a formative film for her, sparking her fascination with cinema. 'I remember coming out of seeing that film,' she recounts, 'and saying "Okay, I know I just saw a film, [...] but I have no idea what I saw up there on that screen."⁸⁴ She first encountered structuralist theory in a literature seminar with W.R. Robinson, where she read Jacques Ehrmann's special 1966 issue of *Yale French Studies* (later published as *Structuralism* in 1970), which included the first English translation of Jacques Lacan's work.⁸⁵ Robinson taught film 'on the side' and Penley recalls that she and several other students, many of whom were also in her consciousness-raising group, would sit in on his class.⁸⁶ 'Discovering continental theory,' she reflects, 'was like

⁷⁸ Amazonas, 154.

⁷⁹ Ibid, 155. Artel reviews *Put Yourself in My Place* (Francine Winham, 1974, UK) in *Women & Film* 5-6 (1974). As a student at Berkeley in 1964, Artel took part in the Free Speech Movement and later wrote *Positive Images: Non-Sexist Films for Young People* (San Francisco: Booklegger Press, 1976) with Susan Wengraf.

⁸⁰ Salyer, email to author, 8 Sept 2017; Janet Bergstrom, interview with author, Los Angeles, CA, 26 October 2013; Sandy Flitterman-Lewis, interview with author, Hoboken, NJ, 3 November 2013.

⁸¹ 'The Pacific Film Archive,' *Women & Film* 2 (1972), 70.

⁸² As well as Artel, Carol Davidson (later Carol Wikarska), contributing editor for issues 3-4 and 5-6 and associate editor for issue 7, also joined the magazine thanks to the PFA connection. Her article '*Letter to Jane: A Critique*' appears in issue 3-4.

⁸³ Penley, interview.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ W.R. Robinson edited *Man and the Movies* (1967) an early collection of film criticism by authors and literary scholars. Ehrmann's edited issue includes a translation of Lacan's 'The insistence of the letter in the unconscious' (1957) and Claude Levi-Strauss's 'Overture to *le Cru et le cuit*' (1964). See Ehrmann, *Structuralism* (New York; Anchor Books, 1970).

⁸⁶ Penley, interview.

the tools for opening up the universe. [...] it was a way of framing things in a way I'd never been able to understand them before.'⁸⁷

After graduating with a Masters in Education from Florida in 1971, Penley moved to Berkeley, sneaking onto a flight from Florida and then hitchhiking from LA.⁸⁸ Though she would not recommence her academic studies until 1974, she continued to develop her interest in film theory by attending lectures and sitting in on graduate seminars at Berkeley.⁸⁹ She became a regular at the PFA and started doing work experience on the loading dock which allowed her free cinema tickets. After meeting Salyer around 1972, she began working on *Women & Film* and the pair became roommates in a series of house shares.⁹⁰ In May 1973, they interviewed the French screenwriter and novelist Christiane Rochefort, along with six other *Women & Film* contributors and Rochefort's assistant, Annette Levy (fig. 37 and fig. 38).⁹¹ The interview was published the following month in issue 3-4, in which Penley is credited as a contributing editor.⁹²

This issue also features her short article on Ingmar Bergman's *Cries and Whispers* (1972), a viewing experience Penley equates with 'being emotionally and psychically raped.'⁹³ 'Once again,' writes Penley, 'a man uses women driven to the edge of experience as sacrifices to his own salvation and then calls it Art.' Somewhat blending Ellen Keneshea's arguments on film as myth and auteur criticism in issue 2, Penley deems film 'the major mythmaking force of our time [...] and the sum total of a director's work' as constituting 'a single myth.'⁹⁴ She considers Bergman to have a 'near-morbid interest in the suffering of women,' which he combines with 'the obsessive quest for salvation,' the other major thematic focus of his films. Penley finds it difficult to consider Bergman 'a "woman's director" when his female characters merely cover the usual range of types from neurotic to erotic,' which, she notes include 'victim, temptress, evil incarnate, and earth mother.'⁹⁵ Penley's article very much

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ She began her Masters in Rhetoric at University of California, Berkeley in 1974.

⁹⁰ Salyer, interview: 'Constance and I were roommates in a three-way household at a couple of different times. I must have met Constance first and she expressed an interest in the magazine and we started working together.'

⁹¹ 'An Interview with Christiane Rochefort,' *Women & Film* 3-4 (1973): 6-14. Also present were Beh, Janet Bergstrom and Robin Menken, wife of Joe McDonald of the psychedelic band Country Joe and the Fish. Her house was the artist-in-residence house for PFA where she hosted figures like Dušan Makavejev. Salyer's friend and contributing editor for issue 3-4 Joanna Boudreaux was also present (and may have taken the photos in figures 37 and 38). Salyer, email to author, 16 November 2017.

⁹² Penley, 'Cries and Whispers,' *Women & Film* 3-4 (1973): 55-56. See Appendix A for full mastheads of each issue.

⁹³ Ibid, 55.

⁹⁴ See previous chapter for discussion of Keneshea's article; Penley, 'Cries and Whispers,' 55.

⁹⁵ Penley, 'Cries and Whispers,' 55.

resembles the 'images of women' criticism discussed in the previous chapter. She does not employ the kinds of theories or language that would come under discussion in the ensuing issue. Instead she draws on reviews by Vivian Gornick (*Village Voice*), Pauline Kael and Gail Rock (*Ms.*).⁹⁶ She sets up Rock's reading – who praises Bergman's portrayal of the four women in the film as possessing 'a reality that is rare among female characters imagined by men' – against Kael's criticism that they represent 'women as the Other, [...] mysterious sensual goddesses of male fantasy.'⁹⁷ Echoing Kael, Penley concludes that *Cries and Whispers* 'is the filmic paradigm of woman as Other,' deeming it 'useful [...] if you need a crash course in objectification [...].'⁹⁸

Another PFA contact and new contributing editor for issue 3-4 is Janet Bergstrom. Bergstrom had studied Comparative Literature at the University of Wisconsin in Madison. Although unable to study film there, her cinephilia was ignited by attending the numerous film societies that operated in Madison. Madison was also a hub for feminism at the time, and she recalls witnessing these two positions collide at a screening of *British Sounds* attended by Godard and Gorin. 'All I remember,' she says of the film, 'was [a naked woman] coming down the stairway and then the camera [...] holding on her naked crotch for an interminable amount of time with this didactic voice reading from a text.'⁹⁹ In a 'gigantic auditorium' filled with 'at least a thousand people,' she recalls the two filmmakers being 'broadsided' by feminists furious at the scene. 'This was an audience of people who loved and adored Godard,' she explains, but 'also liked to argue about [him]. But it was confusing at the same time: [...] why would he do that? [...] It obviously wasn't a simple thing like saying "Oh, he's a sexist".'¹⁰⁰

Like Penley, Bergstrom was drawn to the Bay area and its vibrant politics and counterculture. After graduating from Wisconsin in 1972, she found an apartment to share in Berkeley. She recalls that she first came across *Women & Film* in a Maoist bookstore – most likely Yen-an, just off Telegraph Ave - in Berkeley. 'They had a little wire stand on the end of some shelf' she remembers, 'and then there was this magazine

⁹⁶ These references are not cited with foot or endnotes, nor is there a bibliography. She also refers to Vernon Young's *Cinema Borealis: Ingmar Bergman and the Swedish Ethos* (New York: David Lewis, 1971).

⁹⁷ Gail Rock, "'Cries and Whispers": A Bergman Film of Anguish and Insight,' *Ms.* March 1973, 60-65; Pauline Kael, 'Flesh,' *New Yorker*, 6 January 1973, reprinted in *Reeling* (Boston; Little Brown, 1976), 91. Vivian Gornick, 'Woman as Outsider,' *Woman in Sexist Society: Studies in Power and Powerlessness* eds. Gornick and Barbara K. Moran (New York: Basic Books, 1971) 70-84.

⁹⁸ Penley, 'Cries and Whispers,' 56. Her emphasis.

⁹⁹ Bergstrom, interview.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

called *Women & Film*. And I thought: 'Women and Film, that's me!'¹⁰¹ Bergstrom got a job at the bookstore in the Berkeley Art Museum partly because it entitled her to free cinema tickets.¹⁰² She advanced from doing inventory to becoming the buyer, giving her direct access to the latest publications on film theory, semiotics and structuralism. She also joined several discussion groups held at the PFA, the largest being Politics and Film. 'It was very confrontational,' she writes, and 'it took courage to intervene since whatever you said was bound to be attacked.'¹⁰³ 'Many people (especially loud men) were trying to get the floor at the same time,' she points out; 'these were not polite reading groups.'¹⁰⁴

She recalls that she most likely met Salyer and Penley through a women and film discussion group, which met once a week.¹⁰⁵ It seems that the group overlapped with the magazine's circle of contributors but was also 'pretty freewheeling.'¹⁰⁶ Bergstrom remembers,

We would read something, and then we would get together and, supposedly, talk about it. But not everybody had read it and not everybody had any background - and most people didn't - in whatever it was [...]. [We were] trying to make some advances in what we were all talking about.¹⁰⁷

She recalled that due to the absence of Beh, who was still living in Santa Monica, Salyer was looking for help with the magazine.¹⁰⁸ Bergstrom was invited to a meeting for potential new contributors and got involved, taking part in the interview with Rochefort.

By issue 5-6, published in 1974, Penley and Bergstrom appear under the new role of associate editors, alongside Lesage and Nichols, and are joined by the remaining two future *Camera Obscura* founders, Sandy Flitterman and Elisabeth Lyon. Flitterman had been an undergraduate student in French and Comparative Literature at Berkeley, where she had met Lyon. She had spent a year in Bordeaux between 1966-67, during

¹⁰¹ Bergstrom, interview. See also Kathy Geritz, "'You Can't Do That': Portraits of Three Feminists in Film,' *Radical Light: Alternative Film and Video in the San Francisco Bay Area, 1945 - 2000*, eds. Steve Anker, Geritz and Steve Seid (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 135-144. Penley recounts an almost identical experience: 'I walked into Cody's Books on Telegraph Avenue and saw this magazine called *Women & Film* and thought "I have arrived." These are my two interests together in a magazine. [...] I've since heard Janet Bergstrom tell that same story. And I'm no longer sure whether that's my memory or Janet's - or maybe we both had that experience.' Penley, interview. A list of stockists provided on page 2 of issue 7 confirms that Cody's stocked the magazine by 1975, if not before.

¹⁰² Bergstrom, interview.

¹⁰³ Bergstrom, *Radical Light*, 141.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Bergstrom, interview; Bergstrom, *Radical Light*, 141.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Bergstrom, interview.

¹⁰⁸ Bergstrom, interview: 'Saunie decided that she wanted help and to bring on some associate editors.'

which she had 'discovered' Godard and the new wave.¹⁰⁹ She graduated in 1968 and received her MA in Comparative Literature in 1971. She began her doctoral research soon after, under the supervision of Bertrand Augst of the French Department, with whom she had worked since her undergraduate days.¹¹⁰

Augst had joined the department in 1958, initially teaching 18th and 19th century drama. 'In the early 60s, Film Studies as we know them today didn't exist' he remembers, and 'Film theory was very limited [...] beside [André] Bazin's 'What is Cinema?' [...]; a few essays by German historians, [Siegfried] Kracauer for example [... and] a few essays by [Sergei] Eisenstein and [Lev] Kuleshov.'¹¹¹ Having no budget to hire films, he occasionally borrowed titles from Luddy, or had him programme films from his syllabus at the PFA. 'When I began teaching film courses,' Augst remembers, 'not only there were few films available for rental but there were no textbooks, so I prepared handouts [with] definitions of basic concepts and technical terms, translations or summaries of key articles or essays.'¹¹² He read French publications on film and followed the development of film analysis and film theory.

I was sick and tired of those vague studies which were little less than glorified summaries of the plots or the writer's fantasies, ignoring the essential of what makes cinema an art form. I was impressed by the work of [Claude] Levi-Straus and Roman Jakobson and wanted a greater precision of film analysis. This is why I started using Noël Burch's approach, followed soon after by Christian Metz's and his students' early essays in film semiology.

Augst also lacked the means to show films in his classroom and traditional projectors did not allow the film to be stopped or slowed down without a risk of the film itself catching fire. In lieu of frame enlargements, stills or a script, he would sometimes use a recording of a film's soundtrack so that his students could break down and analyze parts of a film.¹¹³

As one of Augst's students, Flitterman's work evolved with that of her supervisor as she pursued research into French cinema, surrealism, and critical theory, particularly semiotics. Augst, Flitterman and Lyon also produced film notes for Luddy's screenings at the Telegraph Repertory Theatre and PFA.¹¹⁴ Lyon had received her BA

¹⁰⁹ Flitterman, interview.

¹¹⁰ She was awarded her PhD in 1982 and published her thesis on French women directors. See chapter VI for more on this.

¹¹¹ Augst, email to author, 26 October 2017.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Ibid; Flitterman, interview. Frustrated with the department's conservatism and reluctance to embrace the theoretical study of film, in 1972 Augst set up a study abroad programme in Paris and hired many of the French theorists he had been reading and teaching, including Metz, Raymond Bellour and Jean Mitry to instruct visiting Berkeley students that would include Flitterman, Penley and Lyon in 1976-77.

from Berkeley in 1972, where she had studied film semiology. She undertook an MA in the recently established Cinema Studies department at NYU, where she took a course with, among others, Noël Burch.¹¹⁵ She returned to Berkeley in 1973 and began working part-time at the PFA, assisting in the production of the PFA's monthly *Filmcalendar*, edited by Linda Weiner. Flitterman and Lyon eventually met Penley and Salyer and began working on the magazine with them.

Beyond Theory of Film Practice: Noël Burch, Interviewed and Reviewed

Although Lyon was a former student of Noël Burch's and considered his *Praxis du cinéma* (1969) a bible during her undergraduate degree, Flitterman recalls that it was Augst who suggested they interview him for the magazine.¹¹⁶ Born in California, Burch had lived in Paris since the early 1950s, where he co-founded the Institut de Formation Cinématographique (IFC), and his primary relationship to film was as a practitioner. Before turning to film theory, Burch had worked on several short films, including *Recreation* (Robert Breer, 1956), *Marie et le Curé* (Diourka Medveczky, 1967), and his own *Novociat* (1960), referred to as *Novitiae* in the article, as well as Pierre Kast's feature *Le bel âge* (1960) and the TV series *Cineastes de nos temps* (Office de Radiodiffusion Télévision Française, 1968-1970). As he claims in his interview, 'I learned to read films by making them. I didn't learn by thinking about them or going to see them.'¹¹⁷ The English-language edition of Burch's *Praxis du cinema, Theory of Film Practice*, was published in 1973, and had been developed from ten articles previously published in *Cahiers du cinéma* drawn from lectures he had given at the Institut in 1967.¹¹⁸ It presents a series of formal analyses of films, beginning with an examination of the various ways in which one shot can transition onto another, to the different ways in which sound and dialogue can constitute meaning.

The interview with Burch is the only one of its kind to be published in the magazine: while interviews with filmmakers are common, the majority are with women directors, and no other interviews with theorists, male or female, appear. Like the interview with author and screenwriter Christiane Rochefort, published in issue 3-

¹¹⁵ Lyon, email to author, 2 December 2017. NYU had been one of the earliest universities to offer a film studies course, including history and aesthetics, in 1933. The department was established in 1967 by Annette Michelson and Jay Leda.

¹¹⁶ Flitterman, interview.

¹¹⁷ Noël Burch, 'Beyond Theory of Film Practice: An Interview with Noel Burch,' *Women & Film* 5-6 (1974), 25.

¹¹⁸ Burch, *Theory of Film Practice*, trans. Helen R. Lane (New York: Praeger, 1973).

4, this article is unsigned.¹¹⁹ Questions posed to the interviewee are simply credited to 'W&F.' Unlike the Rochefort exchange, which specifies that eight women interviewed her, no information is provided as to the number of people with Burch. According to Janet Bergstrom, up to thirteen women were present at Luddy's house, where the interview took place, including herself, Flitterman, Lyon and Penley.¹²⁰

The main ideas discussed by Burch in this interview relate to his conception of film history and the development of visual conventions for cinematic realism, what he refers to as codicity, a term not used in *Theory of Film Practice*. Burch's chief interest lies in the silent era, which he sees as a period during which cinematic codes were both constructed and broken down. He identifies the films of Vertov, Dreyer, Eisenstein, Lang, Porter and Wiene - particularly *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1922) - as key works of 'deconstruction.' After being asked to define the term 'deconstruction,' Burch clarifies

Let's leave the word deconstruction for the moment because it's a more modern word than the actual origin of this concept, [...] which involves [...] an aesthetic message [...] produced through the subversion, through the breaking down of, though creating a crisis in what we call the dominant modes of representation in a given medium.'¹²¹

According to Burch, '*Caligari* is a very specific, direct challenge to break down practically all elements of codicity as they were at that time.'¹²² He does not provide a succinct definition of what he means by codes, or codicity, presumably because of an assumption of a shared understanding of such terminology with his interviewers. In fact, throughout the interview, he makes passing references to theorists and ideas with little exegesis. Helpfully, therefore, the exchange is followed by a glossary of terms (fig. 39), most likely produced by the interview transcriber, Bergstrom.¹²³

Another idea discussed repeatedly in this interview is Burch's concept of 'reading' films. For him a 'reading' of a film is defined as 'a viewing which [...] reinstitutes the existence of the signifier.'¹²⁴ Further on in the interview, he describes it as 'an awareness of codes or at least of codicity. And an awareness of how they are functioning. [...] the awareness of the way in which ideology is producing itself.'¹²⁵

¹¹⁹ I have yet to establish further names outside of the *Camera Obscura* contingent. Bergstrom recalls that she transcribed the interview. Bergstrom, interview.

¹²⁰ Flitterman, interview; Bergstrom, interview.

¹²¹ Burch, 'Beyond Theory of Film Practice,' 22. He associates this original concept with the structural linguistics being done by the Prague school in the late 1920s, the theorists Roman Jakobson (1896-1982) and Jan Mukarovsky (1891-1975).

¹²² Burch, 'Beyond Theory of Film Practice,' 22.

¹²³ 'Beyond Theory of Film Practice,' 32.

¹²⁴ Burch, 'Beyond Theory of Film Practice,' 25.

¹²⁵ Ibid, 26.

According to Burch, viewers automatically read a film as a 'diegetic world' rather than being aware of the film as a 'chain of signifieds' or 'series of signs' presented to us on screen.¹²⁶ Filmmakers, on the other hand, are better at 'reading' a film; Burch claims that making films teaches one to understand them more fully than simply watching or writing about them, an assertion that reflects his own experience.

The interviewers suggest a distinction between the individual's development of skills in reading film, which Burch appears to be most concerned with, and a 'collective practice informed by the science of film criticism.'¹²⁷ This collective practice, replies Burch, will only take place after 'the revolution' has taken place; 'you're not going to modify the perception of the masses until the structure of society has changed.'¹²⁸ 'Right now,' he maintains, 'it is an absolutely individual process.' This process he likens to undergoing psychotherapy, describing the struggle he has undergone 'to teach myself to just look at and to read films fairly attentively.'¹²⁹ Acquiring this ability, he claims, has taken him twelve or thirteen years. He has likewise witnessed the efforts of his friends to achieve the same skills. 'Once one has done it,' he explains, 'one feels somewhat in the position of Freud going through the auto-analysis which took practically all his life.'¹³⁰ What's more, the skills required are not accessible to the majority of people, and cannot simply be taught:

The only way [...] is to have people make films with a theoretical orientation. [...] to make films within a context in which they are continually being led to question, and to try to bring themselves the theoretical implications of the work they are doing.¹³¹

For Burch, practice is key to unlocking the theoretical aspects of film. He also cites the 'filmmaker-theoretician' students that he teaches at the IFC, whose practice he now wholly identifies with.¹³²

Perhaps the most interesting part of the interview centers on Burch's definition of political film, and his dismissal of certain influential feminist films. He recounts that, before his political radicalization in 1968, he had ambitions to 'one day become a famous filmmaker and make movies.'¹³³ In 1960, he completed the short, *Novitiae*, in which a peeping tom is caught watching a group of women in a self-defense class. Rather than turn him in to the police, their teacher forces him to carry out domestic

¹²⁶ Ibid, 25.

¹²⁷ Women & Film interviewers, 'Beyond Theory of Film Practice,' 25.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Burch, 'Beyond Theory of Film Practice,' 27.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Ibid, 25.

¹³² Ibid, 28.

¹³³ Ibid, 28.

chores and perform a series of submissive and masochistic acts as well as being repeatedly beaten-up. Since then, he remarks, he has made a series of films that reflect his newfound political consciousness. These include his collaborations with Andre S. Labarthe for French television, *Cinéastes de notre temps*. Burch stresses the importance of 'minimizing the extent to which the ideological modes of representation are employed' and it is for this reason, he remarks, that he rejects the films of Nelly Kaplan and *Les stances à Sophie* (Moshe Mizrahi, 1970) as political films.¹³⁴ He instead praises 'some American militant [...] women's films,' notably *Janie's Janie* by San Francisco Newsreel (1972). Burch emphasizes that a film's political potency depends on the context in which it is shown, and he uses an example from his most recent research into Japanese cinema to illustrate his point. He cites the work of director Shinsuke Ogawa and his filmmaking group who were 'directly and personally' involved in the struggle of the peasants who feature in their films, such as their documentary *Narita: The Peasants of the Second Fortress* (1971).¹³⁵ 'These films were used within the struggle because the peasants became involved in the development of the films and in what they showed,' he recounts.¹³⁶ He contrasts the political resonance of these films when screened in Japan to their exhibition elsewhere, where they become 'spectacle.'¹³⁷ He further explains

I feel the people who produce the film should be those who are involved in this political activity, and the film must have as its reality its use in this political context. Once it comes out of this it can be interesting to look at but it's totally transformed.¹³⁸

Burch evokes *Janie's Janie* most probably because it shares similarities with his Japanese example, having been made collectively by Newsreel members Geri Ashur, Peter Barton, Marilyn Mulford and Stephanie Pawleski. Furthermore, in order to reach a wider audience and generate debate and consciousness-raising, like many Newsreel films it was shown mostly outside dominant circuits of exhibition, for instance, to women's groups.

Here, the interviewers question Burch's definition of political film, and point to his emphasis on class struggle. 'When we're talking about political struggle,' they assert, 'we're talking about women against man [sic].'¹³⁹ Their disagreement, Burch

¹³⁴ Ibid, 29.

¹³⁵ Ibid. The film, part of a trilogy, portrays a group of Japanese farmers campaigning against the construction of an airport extension, proposed to accommodate increased air traffic from planes carrying supplies to forces in Vietnam, on their land.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Women & Film interviewers, 'Beyond Theory of Film Practice,' 29.

replies, may lie in the different 'way [they] situate the women's struggle within the general framework of the class struggle.'¹⁴⁰ The interviewers respond by returning to the notion of political film, arguing for Nelly Kaplan as a political filmmaker since her films, they argue, 'grow out of a concrete political struggle, [...] give evidence to the process of making a film within the film, and [are used] specifically to clarify the political struggle.'¹⁴¹ Burch, however, stresses the importance of the 'mode of production':

When I say come out of a political struggle, I mean literally and absolutely. I mean by its production. [...] Obviously these facts [...] determine the writing, the "écriture," the language, if you like, of this film; they determine everything [...]. The manifest content of [films such as Kaplan's] may – weakly in my opinion – echo some of the concepts to be found in the writings of feminist theoreticians. But that is all one can say about that film. This is in no sense a film which develops out of a struggle.¹⁴²

The interview moves on to Burch's thoughts on the impact of sound technology on cinema, regrettably since the issue of political struggle is the only point during which the discussion lights on issues directly relating to feminist film.

A striking aspect of this article is its introductory 'Critique and Auto-Critique' section. Like the interview itself, this addition is unsigned, but given the use of the collective pronoun, it speaks collectively for the interviewers. This innovation corresponds to the demand made in the editorial, and echoed by Lesage, for writers to provide a 'critical evaluation' of their writing, perspective and approach. The purpose of this introduction, state Burch's interviewers, is to '[illuminate] some of the contradictions apparent in both the text and methodology of the interview,' specifically, 'to analyze briefly some incongruities on the part of Burch (critique) and second, as part of our learning process and evolution [...] (autocritique).'143 The critique section highlights 'a contradiction between [Burch's] political theory and his personal practice.'¹⁴⁴ According to the interviewers, he showed little interest in *Women & Film's* critical 'evolution' and dismissed it as 'sociological.'¹⁴⁵ He is also criticized for displaying an 'overwhelmingly paternalistic-pedantic attitude toward us both as women and as film critics/students,' behaviour which undermined his stature as a

¹⁴⁰ Burch, 'Beyond Theory of Film Practice,' 29.

¹⁴¹ Women & Film interviewers, 'Beyond Theory of Film Practice,' 29.

¹⁴² Burch, 'Beyond Theory of Film Practice,' 29.

¹⁴³ Women & Film interviewers, 'Beyond Theory of Film Practice,' 20. Burch was interviewed in the autumn of 1973, shortly after his tenure in the NYU Cinema Studies department, on his way to Japan.

¹⁴⁴ Women & Film interviewers, 'Beyond Theory of Film Practice,' 20.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

theorist and feminist ally in the eyes of the interviewers.¹⁴⁶ The assertion about the interviewee's lack of interest in *Women & Film* appears at least partially true. Lyon remembers Burch as a 'singularly ungenerous and arrogant presence in the classroom' at NYU and the transcript certainly depicts a tense atmosphere.¹⁴⁷ The length and rambling nature of his responses demonstrate his dominance of the discussion, and more than once he interrupts the interviewers' questions or responses. His condescending attitude is apparent in several of his replies, such as 'I can define political struggle if you like.'¹⁴⁸ While this interview would have a significant impact on the editorial group and the magazine's direction, in the short-term Penley enacts a kind of critical 'revenge' in the ensuing pages.

Theory of Film Practice: Analysis and Review by Constance Penley

Penley begins her review of Burch's *Theory of Film Practice* with the assertion that its first two sections are more useful to film scholars than the last 'interesting but rambling' chapters.¹⁴⁹ Despite his repeated comparisons of film structure with musical composition, she applauds his attempt to develop an analysis of film that draws on 'the building blocks of film, not on notions derived from theater or literature' and praises the book as 'an analytical tool, a conceptual apparatus to take to the "reading" and making of film.'¹⁵⁰ However, Penley soon turns to what she deems 'a fundamental problem' in his book: his reluctance to provide an auto-critique of his work. Reflecting on his interview, as well as comments in the preface to the English-language translation of the book, she criticizes his apparent refusal to fully engage with or reformulate the ideas still present in the 1973 English edition with which he now disagrees. According to Penley, 'he says he has gone so far beyond it [...] that he does not care to answer questions about his theory,' since his political radicalization and theoretical self-education, despite the opportunity for revision presented by this new English-language edition. However, Burch does acknowledge mistakes and misconceptions in the footnotes to his text. In his preface, he claims that the book 'grossly overreaches itself,' and that the original French version was fraught with 'elusively vague descriptions and downright errors.'¹⁵¹ In some cases, these have been

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Lyon, email to author, 29 July 2016.

¹⁴⁸ Burch, 'Beyond Theory of Film Practice,' 29.

¹⁴⁹ Constance Penley, 'Theory of Film Practice: Analysis and Review,' *Women & Film* 5-6 (1974), 32.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Burch, *Theory of Film Practice*, xvi; xvii.

corrected, but he admits that others have been left untouched or merely commented on in the footnotes. Penley deems this a 'rather sleazy rhetorical stance for a good Marxist to take.'¹⁵²

She then attempts to 'situate his theory' in order to 'better understand [his] selections and omissions as ideologically informed.'¹⁵³ She begins by comparing Burch's conception of cinema with Christian Metz's in *Langage et Cinéma* (1971), and finds it wanting. Penley asserts that Burch 'posits the essence of cinema as being the "organic," "total" unity of the materials of the medium *exclusively*'; his theory, she points out, 'is focused on film as an autonomous object [and] the only concerns for the filmmaker should be purely formal.'¹⁵⁴ Metz, on the other hand, suggests the study of film 'not only as a cinematic "language" but also a social system.' Crucially,

He [...] insists that cinema is a matrix of the specific [(montage, camera movement [...]etc.)] and the non-specific or "cultural codes" (eg. [...] codes of dress, perception, symbolism, etc.). The totality of film (seen as a language and as a system) must be seen as a combination of the specifically cinematic *and* non-cinematic cultural codes.¹⁵⁵

This is the only way that an analysis can take into account 'the function of ideology within the film both at the level of content and of expression' she argues.¹⁵⁶ She characterizes Burch's focus on medium specificity as 'fetishistic' and blames his obliviousness to 'anything other than purely formal material' as a barrier to his consideration of the role of ideology. What's more, argues Penley, his myopic approach leads his analysis of Andy Warhol's *Chelsea Girls* (1966) to overlook a key strategy. Burch remarks that the film's usual exhibition format, in which the film's two reels were screened simultaneously, is 'so elementary a procedure compared with the richness and complexity of the material [...] that only a few striking but isolated plastic effects produced by the fortuitous juxtaposition of two images seem worth remembering.'¹⁵⁷ For Penley however, the double projection succeeds in 'subverting several fixed notions on the nature of the well-made film including the convention that the organizing principle of the film be the causality of the narrative events.'¹⁵⁸ She finds similar underestimations by Burch of films by Werner Herzog, Max Ophüls and Jean-Marie Straub.

¹⁵² Penley, 'Theory of Film Practice,' 33.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid. Her emphasis.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ Burch, *Theory of Film Practice*, 118.

¹⁵⁸ Penley, 'Theory of Film Practice,' 33.

Penley also criticizes Burch's employment of the term 'dialectic,' deeming his use of this term 'vague.' He uses it to 'describe all the possibilities for the rigorous structuring of formal elements,' she writes. This is acknowledged by Burch in his preface, where he admits the term 'may not constitute the universally productive hypothesis I once believed it to be.'¹⁵⁹ The confusion is made greater for Penley by Burch's repeated but unhelpful attempts to define the word. He first compares it to 'structure,' and then later, to 'rhythm.' 'Structures,' he writes, 'almost always seem to occur in dialectical form' and 'necessarily evolve[e] within a parameter defined by one or more pairs of clearly delineated poles.'¹⁶⁰ Both conceptualizations 'get you nowhere' she complains.

Penley concludes her review by reiterating her earlier remark that 'parts' of *Theory of Film Practice* 'could still be useful to film students,' provided they remain vigilant to its shortcomings.¹⁶¹ Finally, she expresses the hope that Burch's forthcoming work on Japanese and early cinema will develop 'the theoretical under-pinnings and political self-awareness that are lacking' in this book.¹⁶² In the interview with Burch, the interviewers make several attempts to question him about his earlier book and the ideas therein. However, he appears keen to disassociate himself from its shortcomings, and is far more interested in laying out new theories informed by the work of Metz, Eco and others.

Collectives, Critique and Camera Obscura

As the autocritique preceding the Burch interview hints, this encounter with the theorist threw the fragile collective editorial team into crisis. Their exchange with Burch, the interviewers assert, failed to transcend the hierarchical interview format and meet the criteria for creating '*dialogues*, where we all participate equally.'¹⁶³ The group put this down to their inability to overcome their 'sex role conditioning' and conclude that their 'collectively passive role' and 'lack of assertion' with Burch was symptomatic of their 'internalized authoritarianism.'¹⁶⁴ In response, they point out,

We have been evolving a more self-conscious group practice. In concrete terms this means a more rigorous definition of our goals and methodology: [...]

¹⁵⁹ Burch, *Theory of Film Practice*, xix.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid, 66; 66.

¹⁶¹ Penley, 'Theory of Film Practice,' 34.

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Women & Film interviewers, 'Beyond Theory of Film Practice,' 20.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

evolving a mode of questioning not only more supportive of each other's line of thought, but more rigorously attuned to our collective interests.¹⁶⁵

Flitterman specifically points to this interview as a turning point for the group, after which the diverging goals for the magazine that were held by the old and new contributors were revealed. She remembers that 'there became this kind of question of "What direction do we want to go in?"'¹⁶⁶

Two issues arose in the wake of the interview, or more accurately one disagreement drew attention to another. The other future *Camera Obscura* founders, Flitterman states, 'wanted to make an argument for theory.'¹⁶⁷ But their belief in the centrality of the new film theories to feminist film criticism as a project brought into focus the ambiguities surrounding the group's working structure. In the magazine's first editorial, Beh and Salyer had expressed the hope that a 'collective' of contributors would 'emerge.'¹⁶⁸ Salyer, who had been part of a collective during her time at *Everywoman*, considered her collaboration with Penley and Bergstrom, and later Flitterman and Lyon, to be collective.¹⁶⁹ As Penley recalls, 'it was Berkeley; everybody wanted to work collectively [...] There was this ideal that if you were on the left [...] you must work together collectively and for feminists that was even more of an issue. [...] How are we going to try to work in a way that evades patriarchal hierarchy?'¹⁷⁰ Yet despite its pervasiveness, it seems there were few clear models and little guidance on how to implement these ideals practically. According to Lyon, a collective editorship was never achieved, despite the desire for one; Flitterman too describes the future *Camera Obscura* editors as working 'under' Beh and Salyer.¹⁷¹ What's more, no mention is ever made of a collective on the masthead or anywhere else in the magazine, which is only ever described as a 'non-profit organization'; Salyer and Beh remain as co-editors throughout, with all other contributors listed as contributing editors, or from issue 5-6, the seemingly elevated position of associate editors.

As a result of this lasting hierarchy, the associate editors were excluded from everyday decision-making. 'We would find out that people had written in,' Penley remembers, 'about articles that we had written and we didn't have keys to the

¹⁶⁵ Ibid. The significance of this interview is also noted in the *Camera Obscura* Collective's 'Chronology,' *Camera Obscura* 1-2, no. 3-4 (Summer 1979), 9.

¹⁶⁶ Flitterman, interview.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ Editors, 'Overview,' *Women & Film* 1 (1972), 6.

¹⁶⁹ Salyer, interview.

¹⁷⁰ Penley, interview.

¹⁷¹ Lyon, email to author, 29 July 2016; Flitterman, interview.

mailbox.¹⁷² The crisis within the group is not apparent in the issue in which the Burch interview appears, number 5-6, published in mid-1974. However, its editorial does reveal the difficulties the magazine then faced regarding its funding and distribution. Despite the 100% renewal rate of subscriptions, an international readership and its 'phenomenal' success, the magazine is said to lack funding, staff and resources. 'We have no office,' write the editors, 'and writers are not yet paid.' The blame is laid on 'the sexist culture governed by attitudes that do not allow "women's work" to be taken seriously.' Because of this, they continue, 'there may be no new issues of *Women & Film*.'¹⁷³

With the magazine's material and organizational future in jeopardy, the pseudo-collective sought help from a mediator. According to Penley, they enlisted the services of a former nun well known for her work mediating labour disputes.¹⁷⁴ Beh was absent from the sessions and represented by Salyer, since by this point she and Nichols had moved to Canada, where Nichols took up his first teaching job at Queen's University in Ontario.¹⁷⁵ However, by all accounts, the process was unsuccessful and in December 1974, Penley, Flitterman, Bergstrom and Lyon resigned from *Women & Film*.¹⁷⁶ In 1975, Plexus, a San Francisco-based feminist newspaper published a letter, described as 'a statement of purpose from the new *Camera Obscura* collective' explaining their departure from the magazine and announcing their new venture, *Camera Obscura*. It reads:

For the past few months, *Women and Film* magazine has been engaged in an intense examination of our internal political structure and objectives. This process has revealed opposing conceptions of the nature of the project – both the method of production & the final product. The conflict centered around the issues of collectivity vs. individualism.

The four of us (the associate editors who live in Berkeley) are firmly committed to the idea that the collective process must necessarily be inscribed & imbedded within feminist theory & practice and that hierarchical authoritarian structures are antithetical to any concept of feminism. Over a period of as long as two years for some of us, we have been working under the assumption that the *Women and Film* staff was in process [sic] toward achieving a collective. Gradually, however, our frustration with the situation grew as it became clearer that collectivity was impossible within the existing structure of *Women and Film*. Without access to and control over the means of production, our work was necessarily alienated labor.

Recently, we all (the four of us and Saunie Salyer representing herself and Siew-Hwa Beh as co-editors) participated in an illuminating if fruitless arbitration process with a feminist therapist/mediator. This long & painful process has

¹⁷² Penley, interview.

¹⁷³ Editors, 'A Note from the Editors,' *Women & Film* 5-6 (1974), 4.

¹⁷⁴ Penley, interview.

¹⁷⁵ Nichols, email to author, 11 August 2017.

¹⁷⁶ Bergstrom, *Radical Light*, 141.

resulted in a serious re-evaluation of the nature of our feminist political activity. We are committed to collective work, to defining ourselves as social beings rather than individualists, to intensive study and writing on the issues of feminism and film theory. Therefore, we will not be working on the staff of *Women and Film* any longer.

We have established another project, *Camera Obscura* a Journal of Feminism and Film theory, which fits better our conception of a feminist activity; we have plans to begin publication soon, primarily of our collective writing, with occasional contributions by other writers.

642-1124

Janet Bergstrom

Sandy Flitterman

Liz Lyon

Connie Penley¹⁷⁷

Although the disagreement is here said to lie with the collective vs. traditionally hierarchical editorship of the magazine, those involved refer to the centrality of the issue of theory and reader accessibility to the split. As their respective biographies show, Bergstrom, Flitterman, Lyon and Penley had all encountered, and subsequently embraced, semiotic theory during undergraduate degrees taught by professors like Augst who were part of a vanguard of a theoretical revolution that would transform, albeit slowly, humanities departments in the US. Augst would have a lasting influence on *Camera Obscura* and its editors and contributed to the journal several times.¹⁷⁸ Penley reflects that 'we were so hungry for ways to analyze, not just film, but analyze patriarchy, analyze the world...we felt that that was what we wanted to do. Our interest in theory was not just about aesthetics, it was very much about politics.'¹⁷⁹

As a graduate student at UCLA, Bill Nichols was also at the forefront of this crosspollination between semiotic theory and film analysis; his book reviews for the magazine, and the publication of his first *Movies and Methods* anthology (1976) testify to this. In a review of a book on Metz, Eco, Pasolini, Morris, Peirce, and Barthes by Gianfranco Bettetini, *The Language and Technique of the Film* (The Hague: Mouton, 1974) he comments that the author seems 'as confused as the rest of us when it comes to laying out a coherent, rigorous semiotics of film and of elaborating the sustained work of Metz or Eco into a comprehensive, materialist theory.'¹⁸⁰ In *Women & Film's*

¹⁷⁷ 'Camera Obscura,' Letters section, *Plexus* 1 no. 13 (February 1975), unpaginated.

¹⁷⁸ Bergstrom, Flitterman, Penley all cite his influence on their work of this period and early issues of the journal. Bergstrom, email to author, 15 November 2017; Flitterman, interview; Penley, interview. Augst contributed seven articles to the journal between 1976 and 1981.

¹⁷⁹ Penley, interview.

¹⁸⁰ Nichols, 'Books,' *Women & Film* 7 (1975), 119.

final issue, he describes *Screen* as 'since roughly 1970, THE single most important journal publishing theoretical material, especially in structuralism and semiology.'¹⁸¹

But, as my earlier account of the Oberlin conference shows, Beh was not engaged with these theoretical currents in the same way, and while Salyer may have encountered the writings of structuralist theorists as a literature student, her critical approach remained theoretically pluralist. Reflecting back on the conflict, Salyer affirms

It was kind of a street verses academic conflict [...]. There was definitely a desire to keep [...] the magazine [...] available to your non-academic person. That was the thrust of the alternative press: [...] straightforwardness, [...] unpretentiousness; [...] accessibility. [...] That's what *Everywoman* was, to me, that's what *Women & Film* was. We received articles from people with all different kinds of perspectives and experiences and every perspective was fine.¹⁸²

Given that Beh and Salyer were resistant to structuralist theory it follows that they were resistant to sharing power with a group so keen to make it the central tenet of a feminist critique of film. Beh's absence undoubtedly made negotiations harder, with communication restricted to letter writing.

Begstrom, Flitterman, Lyon and Penley began working on *Camera Obscura* in late 1974. The first issue was published in the fall of 1976, and Flitterman describes the period in between as a time of 'intense discussions, conversations, not just among ourselves but we had a study group that was made up partly of academics and partly of people who were just interested.'¹⁸³ Crucially, its publication was supported by three Berkeley-based funds, although it was not an official university publication.¹⁸⁴ This interim also saw the publication of Laura Mulvey's 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema' in *Screen*. In 1973, while Bergstrom and Penley were entering *Women & Film* and beginning to formulate the feminist film theory that they would continue to explore in *Camera Obscura*, Mulvey presented a paper at Bergstrom's alma mater, the University of Wisconsin in Madison, that formed the basis of her influential 1975 article. *Camera Obscura's* first issue, which cited Mulvey's essay as a starting point, heralded a decisive shift for feminist film criticism toward a more sustained engagement with European structuralist theory as well as psychoanalysis. The language of its opening editorial bears the influence of the theorists its editors had encountered as scholars and in reading groups. 'An awareness that any theory of how to change consciousness,' they stress, 'requires a notion of how consciousness is

¹⁸¹ Ibid, 114. His emphasis.

¹⁸² Salyer, interview.

¹⁸³ Flitterman, interview.

¹⁸⁴ Funded by the Berkeley Civic Art Commission, the Committee on Publications of the University of California Berkeley and the Associated Students of UCB.

formed, calling for the examination of 'the ideological effects of the cinematic apparatus on the spectator/subject.'¹⁸⁵

Persistence of Vision: *Women & Film's* last issue

The final text I shall discuss is Eileen McGarry's 'Documentary, Realism and Women's Cinema,' published in issue 7, the final issue of *Women & Film*, published in 1975.¹⁸⁶ While the previous *Women & Film* editorial had heralded a new critical focus for the magazine, announced the setting up of new sections, and celebrated its international readership, this issue's editorial testifies to the emotional toll the editorial split has taken on the magazine. Restricted to a single page, the text is overshadowed by an illustration (fig. 40). A phallus-shaped man (indicated by his hairy arms) is huffing, puffing and blowing down a huge pen. A tiny woman attempts to hold it up, while another figure clings to it for dear life. The women have clearly attempted to fight the patriarchy with writing, but this is depicted - literally - as an uphill struggle. Also caught in the gust are a \$5 note and several coins, surely representing the tiny sums supporting the venture. This sense of futility and frustration is reiterated in a commentary below, which describe writing the editorial as 'a loathsome and difficult task' thanks to a newly acquired anxiety about language:

There is a feeling of being devoured by words which paralyzes and alienates. We feel guilty in the act of producing more words for an already glutted market. Guilty of self-deception that our words carry a new significance because of the strength of our original vision.¹⁸⁷

While this may refer to verbal exhaustion that followed from the mediation process, this paralysis could also be the result of the onslaught of new terminology that came with structuralism and the interrogation of words and signs brought about by semiotic theory. 'Setting up alternatives,' the editors continue, 'is like walking through a maze of trapdoors - each door leading to the status quo.' And in a possible reference to the power struggle with Bergstrom, Flitterman, Lyon and Penley, the authors reflect that 'we seem to need the very power we cringe to behold. Our greatest resources, the imagination and love we give freely, are greedily eaten to fuel the fire of the other.' This

¹⁸⁵ Camera Obscura Collective, 'Feminism and Film: Critical Approaches', *Camera Obscura* 1, no. 1 (Fall 1976), 3; 10.

¹⁸⁶ McGarry's text has been cited frequently by documentary scholars but does not appear to have ever been reprinted. See Michelle Citron and Ellen Sieter, 'The Woman with the Movie Camera,' *Jump Cut* no. 26, (December 1981): 61-62.

¹⁸⁷ Editors, 'Editorial,' *Women & Film* 7 (1975), 3.

may even obliquely refer to the fact that, according to Penley, she and her fellow *Camera Obscura* editors covertly made off with *Women & Film*'s list of subscribers.¹⁸⁸

Yet despite the sense of linguistic and financial collapse intimated by this editorial, issue 7 is nonetheless packed with content, including Martineau's impassioned writing on festivals, numerous interviews with women filmmakers (Jill Godmilow, Eleanor Perry, the New Day Co-op) and dozens of reviews of films by women. Lesage remains an associate editor, alongside Nichols, Barbara Martineau and Carol Wikarska, while Salyer and Beh are still listed as the magazine's editors.¹⁸⁹ It also lists stockists across the United States as well as in Canada, Australia and the UK.¹⁹⁰ In fact this issue announces that *Women & Film* is now published by the aptly named Persistence of Vision, Inc., a newly formed 'non-profit, educational organization' funded by the National Endowment for the Arts.¹⁹¹

Documentary, Realism and Women's Cinema by Eileen McGarry

Eileen McGarry's article demonstrates that the departure of the future *Camera Obscura* editors did not halt the magazine's engagement with the new film theories of this period. McGarry was a doctoral student at UCLA, writing her thesis on the American animation company Jay Ward productions.¹⁹² With Nichols, she was one of the seven that made up the department's very first doctoral cohort.¹⁹³ Drawing on Bazin, Kracauer and Metz as well as *Screen* critics such as Paul Willemen, McGarry's article is the most direct response to Johnston's critique in *Notes on Women's Cinema*. Specifically, she challenges realist cinema and documentary as a feminist political tool, and like Johnston, her questioning can be seen as a response to the wave of feminist documentary filmmaking of the early 1970s. Feminists looking to escape the stereotypes found in conventional fiction cinema put much stock in the non-fiction form as a way of combatting negative stereotypes and presenting issues relating to women's lives. The results were films such as *Three Lives* (Women's Liberation Cinema, 1971, USA) and *It Happens to Us* (Amalie Rothschild, 1972, USA), in which their female

¹⁸⁸ Penley, interview.

¹⁸⁹ Wikarska (previously Davidson) was a roommate of Bergstrom's and later a projectionist at the Pacific Film Archive. Bergstrom, email to author, 15 November 2017; 'About the Contributors,' *Women & Film* 5-6 (1974), 110.

¹⁹⁰ The British sellers include the National Film Theatre Bookshop in Waterloo. 'Women & Film: Bookstores,' *Women & Film* 7 (1975), 2.

¹⁹¹ The editorial also notes that this funding has enabled the payment of contributors as well as the establishment of a women's film archive. See chapter IV for more on this.

¹⁹² 'Notes on Contributors,' *Women & Film* 7 (1975), 126. Jay Ward Studios was founded in 1948 and is best known for the cartoon characters Rocky and Bullwinkle.

¹⁹³ Nichols, email to author, 14 November 2017.

subjects speak directly to camera about their lives and experiences as women. Others made use of the aesthetic of *cinéma vérité* in an attempt to depict a more accurate picture of women's lives in feature length fiction, such as the actor Barbara Loden's directorial debut, *Wanda* (1970, USA). However, according to Johnston,

If we view the image of woman as a sign within the sexist ideology, we see that the portrayal of woman is merely one item subject to the law of verisimilitude, a law which directors worked with or reacted against. The law of verisimilitude (that which determines the impression of realism) in the cinema is precisely responsible for the repression of the image of woman as woman and the celebration of her non-existence.¹⁹⁴

The focus of McGarry's investigation is this law of verisimilitude, and furthermore, its relationship to women on and off screen. To do this, she draws on the anti-realist debates taking place among British film scholars, citing several articles from a 1972 *Screen* special issue on realism.¹⁹⁵ She relies most heavily on Paul Willemen's article 'On realism in the cinema' in which he argues that realism is a stylistic choice, and its coding inescapable. McGarry uses Willemen's logic to pull apart Stephen Mamber's theorization of *cinéma vérité* as a form of filmmaking 'divorced from fictional elements,' in his book *Cinema Verite in America: Studies in Uncontrolled Cinema* (1974).¹⁹⁶ Mamber here presents a study of the American proponents of *cinéma vérité*, or direct cinema as it is sometimes called, including the films of Robert Drew, Richard Leacock, D.A. Pennebaker and Frederick Wiseman. His definition of the tendency relies on his notion of 'uncontrolled situations,' in which 'the filmmaker acts as an observer, attempting not to alter the situations he witnesses.'¹⁹⁷

Coding reality

McGarry begins the first of two parts of her article by destabilizing the notion of objective reality and its characterization as 'neutral' or 'innocent.'¹⁹⁸ She does this by invoking Althusser, and his assertion that 'there is no physical existence apart from human practice.'¹⁹⁹ Further, she claims, 'there is no human practice which is without

¹⁹⁴ Johnston, 'Women's Cinema as counter-cinema,' *Notes on Women's Cinema*, ed. Johnston, [1973] (London: SEFT; BFI, 1975), 26.

¹⁹⁵ *Screen* 13, no. 1 (Spring 1972). She references nearly all the articles in her bibliography and cites several in-text.

¹⁹⁶ Stephen Mamber, *Cinema Verite in America: Studies in Uncontrolled Cinema* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1974), 1. It is interesting that McGarry deploys Willemen in response to Johnston as the pair was a couple at the time.

¹⁹⁷ Mamber, 2.

¹⁹⁸ Eileen McGarry, 'Documentary, Realism and Women's Cinema,' *Women & Film* 7 (1975), 50.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.* McGarry is paraphrasing from the entry on 'practice' in Ben Brewster's glossary in his English translation of Althusser's *For Marx* (New York; Random House, 1970), 253.

intention, and therefore, political implication.²⁰⁰ What we perceive and understand is argued to be coded: 'within this context of human practice, there are definite configurations of shared perceptions, ideas, and experiences which are expressed by systematic patterns of communication. This is what is known as *coding*.'²⁰¹ Reality is coded 'long before the filmmaker arrives,' McGarry concludes.²⁰² She turns to theorists of cinematic realism, such as André Bazin and Siegfried Kracauer, remarking that they were oblivious to the 'codifications of reality.'²⁰³ In their work, she asserts, they 'transmit those codes in reality intact under the guise of *the neutrality of reality*.'²⁰⁴ She here uses a term taken from Willemen, the pro-filmic event, which he defines as 'what happens in front of the camera,' to refer to this coded reality in the context of filmmaking.²⁰⁵ In fiction filmmaking, she explains, the pro-filmic event is highly manipulated.

This applies in particular to the elaborate layers of *mise-en-scène* demanded by the classic Hollywood studio film. These layers will be shaped by the ideological codes as well as those associated with its relevant cinematic genre and those of its makers, be they director, costume designer or actor. But this manipulation can also be found in non-fiction filmmaking, she argues, with the pro-filmic event equally coded. In documentary and *cinéma vérité*, she points out, the filmmaker is 'supposed to arrive on the scene and let *reality* flow through the equipment onto the film.'²⁰⁶ This may not take the form of the elaborate *mise-en-scène* of a Hollywood production, but she argues, 'certain *decisions about reality* are made.'²⁰⁷ These include the film's subjects and locations, and the presence of the film workers, their cameras, and their sound recording equipment. According to McGarry, 'all participate in, control and encode the pro-filmic event.'²⁰⁸ What's more, this encoding takes place regardless of the filmmaker's desire not to intrude on or impact his or her subject. She points to the fact that the presence of a filmmaker is a fact of the pro-filmic reality and has an impact on it, and on the subjects being filmed. The filmmaker also dictates what the camera sees, who is heard, and how, as well as what, is presented in the final edited film. McGarry concludes that regardless of the mode – fiction or non-fiction – 'reality' is a pro-filmic event in the process of filmmaking.

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

²⁰¹ Ibid. Her emphasis

²⁰² Ibid.

²⁰³ Ibid. Her emphasis.

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

²⁰⁵ Paul Willemen, 'On Realism in the Cinema,' *Screen* 13, no. 1 (1972), 38.

²⁰⁶ McGarry, 51.

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

Moreover, cinematic codes such as those of the camera, McGarry argues, are undeniably present in the non-fiction film. The formalized operation of the camera, she says, is most often overlooked by theorists of realism, particularly advocates of *cinéma vérité*. She points to Mamber's description of *cinéma vérité* as 'so simple, so *direct*,' and an attempt to 'strip away the accumulated conventions of traditional cinema in the hope of rediscovering a reality that eludes other forms of filmmaking.'²⁰⁹ She brings him to task for ignoring cinematography as one of the technical 'barriers' between subject and audience:

No matter how many barriers the cinema-verite filmmaker attempts to eliminate, however, the camera and its coding remains. Material must pass through the camera to get on the film; without camera codes there is no film. [...] even a cursory examination of the process of motion picture photography debunks the possibility of neutrality, no matter who (or what) is operating the camera.²¹⁰

Invoking Willemen more explicitly, she quotes his assertion that attempts to mask the facts of intervention and mediation implicit in the making of a film are requirements 'as long as the substance and form of the content are forced to remain unchanged, due to commercial, political or ideological censorship.'²¹¹ And he finds this mystification at work in both British realist documentary and Free Cinema. According to McGarry, the result is the 'enthronement of ideologically formed codes in the pro-filmic event as *reality untarnished*.'²¹² She criticizes Brian Henderson's work on deep focus and argues that

The style of photography known as deep-focus is as encoded a mediation of reality as any other style: an attempt to portray the film as continuous, complex, and independently determined (self-determined), as therefore *natural* and absolutely analogous to *reality*.²¹³

She also looks at Christopher Williams' article in the *Screen* special issue and his argument that deep focus 'attempts to imply that the relationships within it (spatial, temporal, cultural, etc.) are somehow *natural, uncoded*, innocent of ideology.'²¹⁴ By debunking the myth of neutral camera style, McGarry argues, 'even cinema verite photography cannot claim any privileged relationship to reality.'²¹⁵

Lastly, McGarry points to editing as an 'enormous obstacle' to the representation of unmediated reality in film. This, she remarks, is also overlooked by figures such as

²⁰⁹ Ibid, 53, her emphasis; Ibid, 52.

²¹⁰ Ibid, 53.

²¹¹ Willemen, 40-41 in McGarry, 52.

²¹² McGarry, 52.

²¹³ Ibid, 53. Her emphasis.

²¹⁴ Ibid. Her emphasis.

²¹⁵ Ibid.

Bazin and Mamber.²¹⁶ While Mamber acknowledges that a 'cinéma vérité film does bear the selective influence of its creator,' he asserts that the filmmaker transfers his non-interventionist filmmaking stance to the editing process by presenting material without 'limiting perceptions.'²¹⁷ Yet Mamber, argues McGarry, completely underestimates both the motivations of the filmmaker and the undeniable impact of the filmmaker's presence. 'Every cinematic device,' she concludes, 'is a further mediation of reality which attempts to disguise its reproduction of ideology.'²¹⁸

Realism and feminism

In the article's second section, McGarry moves on to consider how realism relates to feminist considerations of film, or how 'realism oppresses women.' 'It still remains,' she remarks, 'in order to further demystify the aesthetic of realism, to deal with the problem of certain other codes mediating reality.'²¹⁹ She here refers to Metz's term *filmique-non-cinematographique* codes, or extracinematic codes, articulated in his *Language et Cinema* (1971).²²⁰ As McGarry explains, these encompass the 'signs systems of the natural world' such as dress, architecture, interior decoration, writing, language, sexual relations and body language.²²¹ Their interpretation, she writes, take on new significance when they are encountered on the screen.

Regarding women, she identifies codes of appearance for particular historical periods, cultures and classes, as well as codes specific to the stage or screen 'actress.' 'The audience's expectation of the use of these established codes of appearance,' she suggests, 'operate *whenever* any audience views any woman in any film.'²²² These codes are in operation in non-fiction as well as fiction film. Referring to the kinds of criticism examined in Chapter IV of this thesis, McGarry acknowledges these codes may alternatively be considered as 'stereotypes.' However, she dismisses this kind of critical language as 'somewhat worn,' instead stressing the importance of determining 'what process creates stereotypes of appearance and how they operate.'²²³ Her central point

²¹⁶ Ibid, 54.

²¹⁷ Mamber, 3 in McGarry, 54. She draws here on Willemsen's comparison of the realism of Vincent Minelli's *Two Weeks in Another Town* (1962, USA) and Agnès Varda's *Lion Love* (1969, USA/France).

²¹⁸ McGarry, 54.

²¹⁹ Ibid, 55.

²²⁰ Translated as filmic-non-cinematic codes in its English version, Metz, *Language and Cinema*, trans. Donna Jean Umiker-Sebeok (The Hague: Mouton, 1974), 46-49. McGarry cites the 1971 French edition.

²²¹ McGarry, 55.

²²² Ibid.

²²³ McGarry, 55.

is that, even in non-fiction film, a female subject's appearance 'is coded in both the *natural* and the *filmic* worlds (operating in conjunction).'²²⁴ This makes it impossible for 'the *reality* of the women's appearance being transferred *innocently* or *neutrally* to the screen.'²²⁵

McGarry turns to Claire Johnston's call in her *Notes on Women's Cinema* for feminists to reject traditional documentary and *cinéma vérité* styles and instead to adopt approaches that challenge cinema's ideological codes. In 'Women's Cinema as Counter-cinema,' Johnston writes that 'Women's cinema cannot afford such idealism [as non-intervention]; the "truth" of our oppression cannot be "captured" on celluloid with the "innocence" of the camera.'²²⁶ Alongside the rejection of formal cinematic conventions, Johnston suggests feminist should challenge the male, bourgeois status quo in film by working collectively: she deems this 'a major step forward,' and 'a formidable challenge to male privilege in the film industry,' although she rejects the notion that 'women's cinema *is* collective filmmaking.'²²⁷ 'We should seek to operate at all levels,' she emphasizes, 'within the male-dominated cinema and outside it.'²²⁸ While she does not argue for either fiction or non-fiction as the ultimate approach, she calls for strategies that straddle 'both the notion of films as a political tool and film as entertainment.'²²⁹

While McGarry's work can be seen as a critical response to the many feminist documentaries that relied on the realist mode, she points to some examples that problematize it and embody an anti-realist perspective. She too looks to collective practice as a potential radical model, and highlights a number of examples produced by Newsreel collectives: *Make Out* (1971) and *She's Beautiful When She's Angry* (1970), both by New York Newsreel; and *Herstory* (1970) and *The Woman's Film* (1971) by its San Francisco counterpart (of which Bill Nichols was a member).

She ends with a quotation from the last paragraph of Johnston's introduction to the pamphlet:

Women's cinema should not only concern itself with substituting positive female protagonists, focusing on women's problems etc: it has to go much further than this if it is to impinge on consciousness. It requires a revolutionary strategy which can only be based on an analysis of how film operates as a medium within a specific cultural system.²³⁰

²²⁴ McGarry, 55.

²²⁵ McGarry, 55.

²²⁶ Johnston, 'Women's Cinema as Counter-cinema,' 28.

²²⁷ Johnston, 'Women's Cinema as Counter-cinema,' 30-31; 31.

²²⁸ Johnston, 'Women's Cinema as Counter-cinema,' 31.

²²⁹ Johnston, 'Women's Cinema as Counter-cinema,' 31.

²³⁰ Johnston, 'Introduction,' 4, in McGarry, 57.

As McGarry's article demonstrates, the departure of the future *Camera Obscura* founders did not signal the end of the magazine's engagement with 1970s film theory. In fact, McGarry's writing testifies in particular to the rising influence of *Screen* as a publication, and prefigures the huge impact it unleashed with the publication of Laura Mulvey's 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema.'²³¹

Conclusions

As the articles discussed in this chapter demonstrate, the criticism in *Women & Film* was not restricted to sociological or 'images of women' approaches. These contributions from issues 5-6 and 7 demonstrate an increasing engagement with 1970s film theory, and brought about a more nuanced understanding of the cinematic image and the issue of representation, as well as an increased awareness of medium specificity. While the contributions that feature in the earlier issues draw on familiar (albeit problematic) concepts such as realism, myth and stereotypes, these are to some extent replaced in the later issue with a new critical vocabulary drawn from semiotic and structuralist film theory. As the glossary that accompanies the Burch interview demonstrates, these terms were unfamiliar and complex, and required some fluency in contemporary European critical theory. It was this academic language, in part, that Beh and Salyer objected to in their disagreements with Flitterman et al. The founders of *Camera Obscura* dedicated their publication to these new theories. Unlike *Women & Film*, which is always referred to by its founders as a magazine, *Camera Obscura*, with its subtitle 'a Journal of Feminism and Film Theory,' explicitly addressed itself to a scholarly audience. Kleinhans and Lesage's *Jump Cut* seems to straddle these two positions, welcoming the scholarly language and complexities of 1970s film theory (and sometimes critiquing it) but retaining the eclectic leftist approach apparent in *Women & Film*, as well as the DIY aesthetic and affordable price.²³²

In *Women & Film*, the contributions of McGarry, Nichols and others maintained this engagement following the departure of Bergstrom, Flitterman, Lyon and Penley. Yet, on the whole, the majority of content in *Women & Film's* last two instalments centres on the work of historical and contemporary women filmmakers. The ensuing chapters examine this material, and the ways in which *Women & Film* helped shape the

²³¹ Sylvia Harvey, then an associate editor at *Screen*, also contributed to issue 7 of *Women & Film*.

²³² The first issue of *Camera Obscura* was \$2.00 (equivalent to about \$8 or £5.60), compared to *Jump Cut's* 50 cents. *Women & Film* was first priced at 75 cents, rising to \$1.50 in 1973.

emerging field of feminist film history and the canon of women's cinema through its quest for feminist auteurs.



Figure 33, left: The cover of *Women & Film* 3-4 (1973), featuring Wayne Thiebaud's *Booth Girl*, 1964.

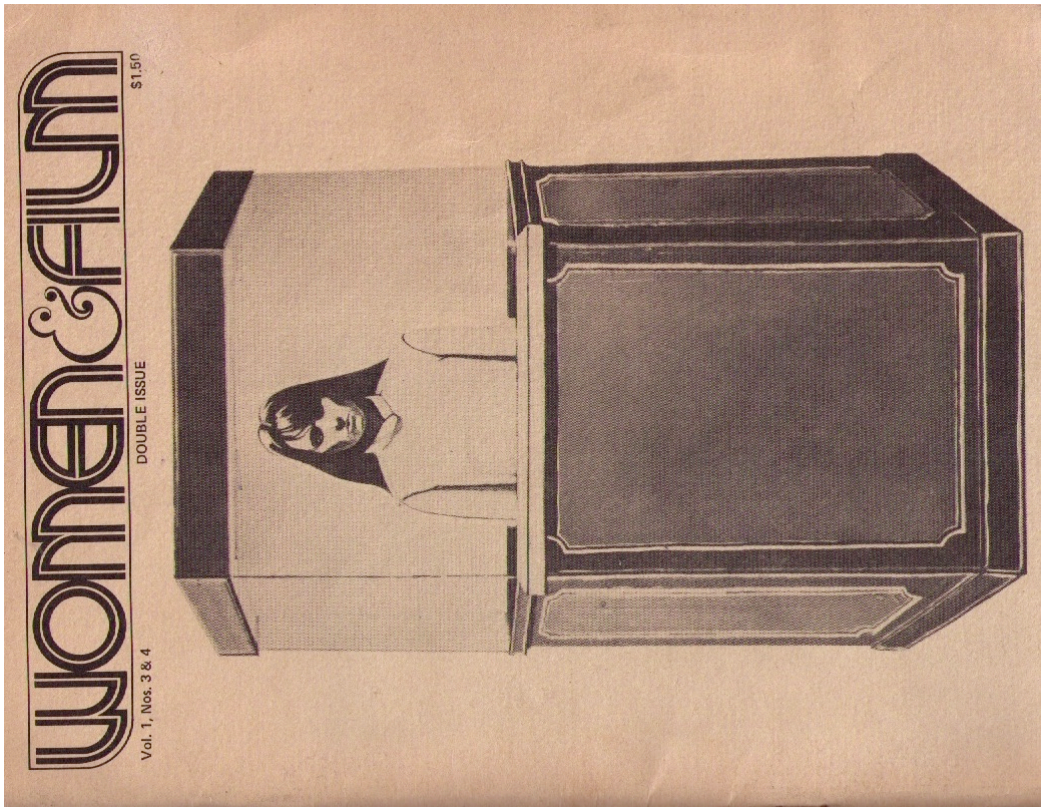


Figure 34, right: The cover of issue 5-6 (1974). The photograph is credited to Lew Watts and the cover design to Anthony Dubovsy.

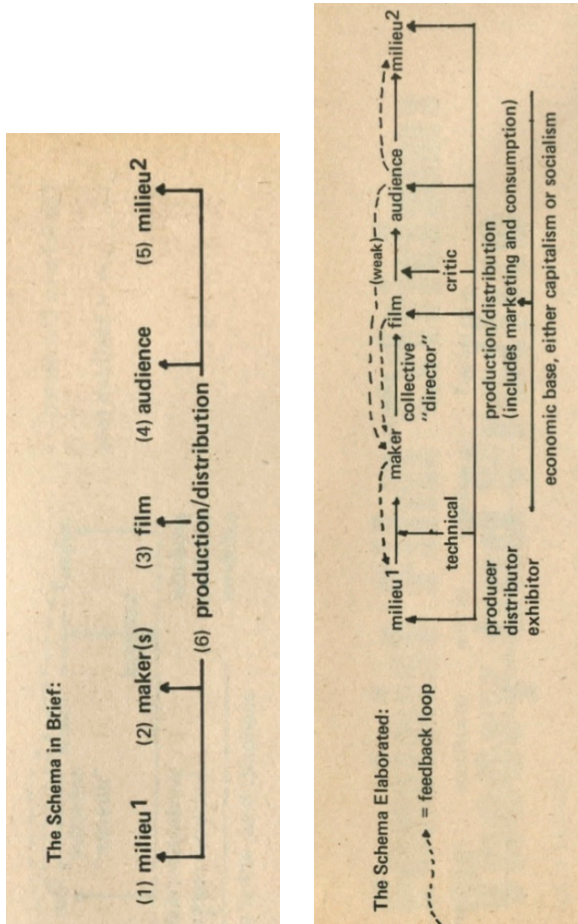


Figure 35: Kleinmans and Lesage's schema, from Lesage, 'Feminist Film Criticism: Theory and Practice,' 1974.

Figure 36, right: Promotional feature on the Pacific Film Archive in *Women & Film 2* (1972), 70.

The Pacific Film Archive in Berkeley is a dynamic facility devoted to the exhibition, preservation and study of motion pictures. The Archive Theatre shows a different program every evening, usually two separate films. The Archive Theatre has run, in addition to its regular eclectic fare—which includes everything from *Greed* to *Flaming Creatures*—a series of new Polish films, a program called *Polish Cinema*, a program called *Women & Film*, and a program called *Women & Film* (who appeared at the Archive), Buster Keaton, Preston Sturges and Josef von Sternberg, plus a series of films about Ireland and a number of documentaries about the Irish. The Archive has also been emphasizing American sound comedies, featuring the work of Hawks, Lubitsch and Cukor. Experimental movies are also shown at the Archive, including the work of filmmakers in attendance, such as Jim Wachter, Toshio Matsumoto, David Rimmer, Seitchi Fujii, and many others have appeared at the Archive to discuss their films.

For more information about the Archive, contact the Program Director, Pacific Film Archive, University of California Art Museum, The Archive works with various departments of the University to provide film screening opportunities for the community. Future projects include a larger theatre, special screening rooms with remote control projection for detailed film study, oral histories of bay area experimental film-makers, and a new experimental film-makers' collective.

Founded in 1971 by author Sheldon Renan, now executive director, the Pacific Film Archive has become one of the key cultural centers on the West Coast. It is located at 2625 Durant Ave. in Berkeley, CA 94720-1413.

THE PACIFIC FILM ARCHIVE

(Max Opahls, 1933), and scarce films by Ulicky, Genina, Epstein, Duvivier, Clarence Brown, Henrik Galeen, Leopold Jessner, Monta Bell, Urban Gad, Feyder, Dwan and Lubitsch. The theatre is equipped with specially-tooled projectors, enabling silent films to be shown at proper speed. The theatre seats are arranged so that every position affords a clear view of the screen.

The Archive Collection, presently numbering about 1200 prints, will emphasize films from the Orient, and has especially strong holdings from Nikansu Corp. in Japan. Commercials, TV episodes, cartoons, educational films, and unique historical footage, are all preserved alongside the major dramatic features in the air-conditioned vaults.

The Archive Collection, presently numbering about 1200 prints, will emphasize films from the Orient, and has especially strong holdings from Nikansu Corp. in Japan. Commercials, TV episodes, cartoons, educational films, and unique historical footage, are all preserved alongside the major dramatic features in the air-conditioned vaults.

The projection facilities are occasionally used for studio previews, and will soon be equipped with interlock for the screening of films from the University of California Art Museum. The Archive works with various departments of the University to provide film screening opportunities for the community. Future projects include a larger theatre, special screening rooms with remote control projection for detailed film study, oral histories of bay area experimental film-makers, and a new experimental film-makers' collective.

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The first motion picture players to gain world-wide attention were France's Max Linder, Mary Pickford and the Danish actress, Asta Nielsen. Asta Nielsen, for her part, was preceded by her husband, the Danish actor, Paul Aronson. The tribute to Asta Nielsen was the first great actress of the screen whose work commanded the same respect accorded to talented performers of the theatre. She has created about forty-five film roles; for the silent drama she acted the complex characters created by Stendhal and Ibsen. Her Hamlet, based on pre-Shakespearean texts and legends, has made Asta Nielsen condense Frank Wedekind's play *Blue Bird* into a film. The film, *The Blue Bird*, James Card Collection at the Pacific Film Archive includes Loulouy (Leopold Jessner, 1923), Hamlet (Sven Gade, 1920), and two films directed by husband Urban Gad, *Foot Lenny*, 1912, *The Black Dream*, 1912; all illuminated by the brilliance of ASTA NIELSEN. The Collection features many other films of particular interest to women in film.



Figure 37, above: Interviewing Christiani Rochefort, far right, with (right to left): Annette Levy, Constance Penley, Sandra Salyer and Robin Mencken. Photo by Joanna Boudreaux (?), May 1973.

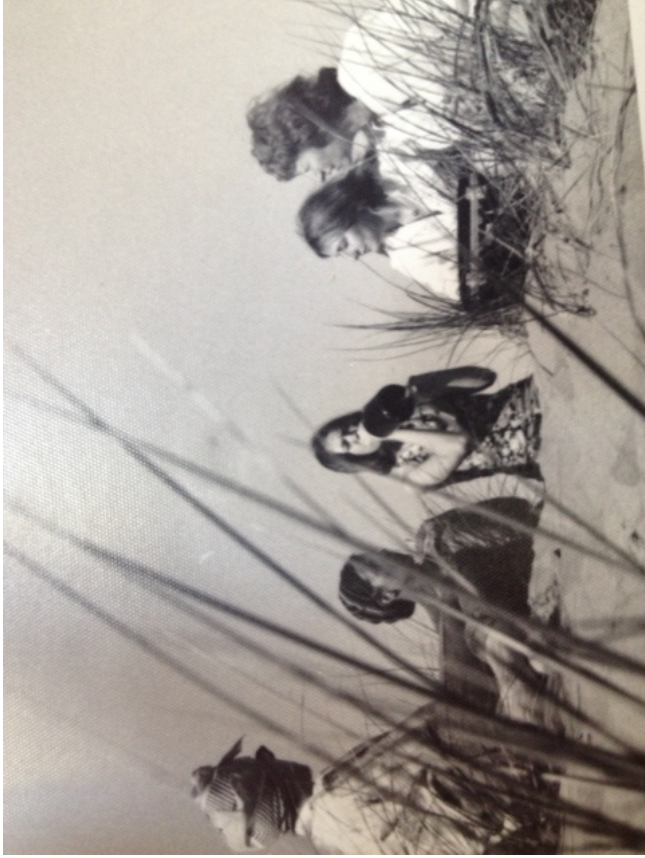


Figure 38, left: Salyer, left, with Penley. Photo by Joanna Boudreaux (?), May 1973.

Glossary

Semiology, semiotics: Semiology aims to take in any system of signs, whatever their substance and limits; images, gestures, musical sounds, objects and the complex associations of all these, which form the content of ritual, convention or public entertainment: these constitute, if not "Languages," at least systems of signification. (Roland Barthes, *Elements of Semiology*, p. 9)

Diachronic: Across time, considering linguistic phenomena as occurring over a period of time; evolutionary, historical.

Signifier: "The plane of signifiers constitutes the *plane of expression*" (as opposed to the signifieds which constitutes the *plane of content*). (R. Barthes, *op. cit.*, p. 39). For example: In the Highway Code, the red light signal can be broken down into signifier and signified—the signifier is the color red, and the signified is the meaning "to stop." The union of the signifier and signified constitutes the sign (the red light).

Reading: Involved in a semiological approach to film study, the treatment of films as "analytical, an understanding of how the film is understood, of how it signifies, of its system(s) of intelligibility." (*Screen*, Spring/Summer, 1973, p. 224). An awareness of codes, process, and how they are functioning in the film.

Transparency: Equivalence established between the representation and that which is represented.

Ideology: Burch is using "ideology" in a Marxist sense (drawing from Althusser's *For Marx*). Ideology is the "lived" relation between persons and their world, or a reflected form of this unconscious relation, for instance a "philosophy," etc. It is distinguished from a science not by its falsity, for it can be coherent and logical (for instance, theology), but by the fact that the practico-social predominates in it over the theoretical, over knowledge. Ideology is an essential element of every social formation including a capitalist, socialist, communist, or whatever.

Illusionist: Classical bourgeois cinema is based on illusion: through emotional identification with character, conditioned responses to linear narrative, and analogical representation the viewer enters the film and participates in a seemingly unconstructed and unmediated "reality."

Linear, notion of linearity: The notion of one to one, cause and effect relationship; in films the idea of doing away with multivalence, ambiguity (i.e., linear= univalent, unambiguous).

Figure 39: The glossary from the interview with Noel Burch, *Women & Film* 5-6 (1974), 32.

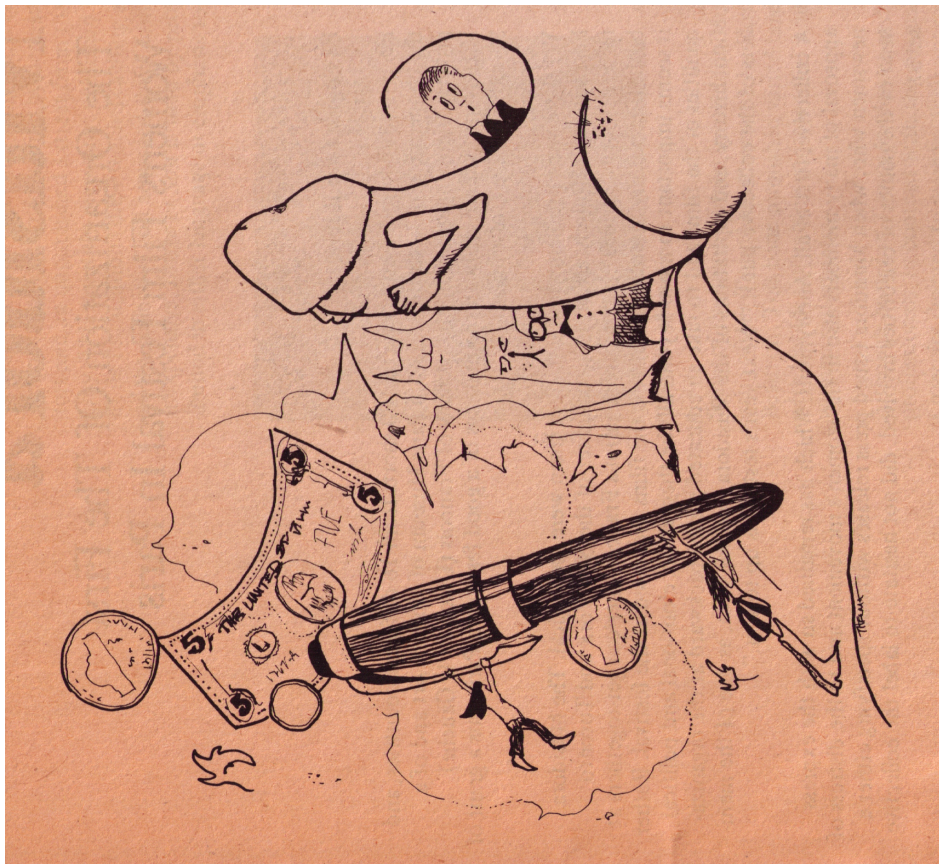


Figure 40: The illustration that accompanies the editorial for issue 7 (1975), 3.

VI

Making Women's Film History

As I noted at the end of Chapter IV, *Women & Film's* issue 3-4 marks a turning point for the magazine. This shift included the engagement with what were then innovative theories about film informed by semiotics and structuralism by a new cohort of contributors, as detailed in the previous chapter. But as the editorial from the 1973 instalment makes clear, the more urgent call was for feminists to turn their critical attention away from films made by men and to focus on films by women. This work was considered essential to the development of feminist film theory, with the editors noting that

Although it is of great importance and necessity for feminists to view, reflect upon, and to criticise major commercial film products [...], it is equally imperative to analyze films made by women independently as a step towards the formulation of [...] strategies to build and realize an alternative – a feminist cinema.¹

The explosion in women's film festivals described in Chapter III brought to light the significant contribution women had made to film history as well as the many active women filmmakers of the day. Despite this, complain *Women & Film's* editors, they received 'few writings on independent films made by women' compared to the high number on 'the commercial product.'² This disproportionate focus on men and their films, they assert, results in 'ironically validating them and confirming their right to monopolize all spheres.'³ The futility of these activities is summed up by an accompanying illustration (fig. 41). It shows a woman playing the children's game of hoop and stick, with a film reel substituted for the hoop, over which an idealised male figure is stretched. The pointlessness of this game is emphasised by the fact that the reel is rolling downhill; by definition, the woman will never catch up with it.

The purpose of this chapter then is to examine *Women & Film's* contribution to the recovery of women's film history: what role did the magazine play in the collective project of uncovering and reappraising women from cinema's history? As well as

¹ Editors, 'A Note from the Editors,' *Women & Film* 3-4 (1973), 5.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

providing an overview of the writing that appears in the magazine, I look more closely at a handful of contributors and articles that had a considerable impact on the nascent field of women's film history.

The first of these appears in issue 3-4 in 1973; Sharon Smith's 'Women Who Make Movies' is an excerpt from her then forthcoming book of the same name, published in 1975. Like many of the earliest published articles on women directors, this took the form of a series of filmographies as well as short biographical details. Gerald Peary's 'Sanka, Pink Ladies and Virginia Slims,' published in the next issue, takes a similarly collective approach, but focuses on women's contribution to early and classical Hollywood film. This issue also features the magazine's first articles to focus on a historical woman filmmaker, William Van Wert's and Sandy Flitterman's discussions of the French director Germaine Dulac. My investigations into the research and writing that went into these texts demonstrate the time, specialist skills and scholarly approach they necessitated and the unique contribution they made to what was then an emerging discipline.

Why Have There Been No Great Women Directors?

The question of women as cultural producers, and their place in literary and artistic canons, was a central issue for feminists of the early 1970s. In 1971, the art historian Linda Nochlin asked 'Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?' in an article that explored the ways in which women had historically been discouraged and excluded from becoming professional artists.⁴ Women writers also wondered about their literary foremothers. Many sought to shed light on works by women previously excluded from the canon and provide new opportunities for contemporary women writers by setting up feminist and women's presses.⁵ Women were likewise questioning their apparent absence from cinema's history and the 1970s film industry. Were there women directors of silent and early film? Who were the women making films now? Sharon Smith recalls that during her time as a filmmaking student at Middlebury College in Vermont, she

⁴ Linda Nochlin, 'Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?' *ARTnews*, January, 1971, 22-39.

⁵ One example is the Feminist Press, founded in New York in 1970, specifically to publish 'lost' women writers so that they could be read by college students. See Florence Howe, 'Lost and Found – and What Happened Next: Some Reflections on the Search for Women Writers Begun by the Feminist Press in 1970,' *Contemporary Women's Writing* 8, no. 2 (2014): 136-53.

became very curious about whether or not there had been any other females trying to make movies. [...] The guys in my class and my teachers all assured me that I was one of the very first in the entire world ever to try to make a movie or get into the industry at all.⁶

Ariel Dougherty, who founded Women Make Movies, an organization aimed at training women to make films, in 1969, remembers that during her undergraduate degree at Sarah Lawrence in New York, the only woman-directed film in her history of cinema course was Leni Riefenstahl's *The Triumph of the Will* (1935).⁷ The filmmaker Barbara Hammer likewise only saw the work of one woman in her film history course at San Francisco State University, Maya Deren's *Meshes of the Afternoon* (1946).⁸

The emergence of *Women & Film* was concurrent with an increase in scholarly historical research into women directors of early and classical cinema. This work initially appears to have been done by male scholars. The French film historian Charles Ford published an early article on Alice Guy Blaché (1873-1968) in *Films in Review* in 1964, that identified her as the 'first female producer' and also noted her pioneering use of 'cinematic tricks which have been usually attributed to Méliès.'⁹ Guy Blaché, who is often referred to as 'the first ever' woman director in the world, was also the subject of Francis Lacassin's article for *Sight and Sound*, published just before *Women & Film's* first issue. Lacassin writes

There are enough women filmmakers now for it to be easy to forget just how recent a phenomenon they are. [...] Until 1939, there were only a dozen women directors in the world. From 1915 to 1925, you could count them on the fingers of one hand. In 1914 there were two of them. And before that there was only one.¹⁰

Her career, he remarked, had for the most part been 'forgotten or attributed to other people.'¹¹

In 1972, Laura X of the Women's History Research Center in Berkeley produced 'Films by/and/or about Women Internationally, Past and Present,' a pamphlet that

⁶ Sharon Smith, interview with author, Canaan, ME, 6 May 2015.

⁷ Ariel Dougherty, interview with author, New York, NY, 30 April 2015. The course was the first film study program offered by the college and founded by a lecturer from the English department, William Park. Park taught the history of cinema alongside practical filmmaking classes led by Will Leach. Dougherty, email to author, 9 April 2016.

⁸ Barbara Hammer, interview with author, New York, NY, 30 April 2015.

⁹ Charles Ford, 'The First Female Producer (Was a Gaumont Secretary and Is Still Alive at 91),' *Films in Review* 15, no. 3 (March 1964), 142.

¹⁰ Francis Lacassin, 'Out of Oblivion: Alice Guy Blaché,' *Sight and Sound* 40, no. 3 (Summer 1971), 151.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

listed over 400 films by or about women.¹² That same year, Richard Henshaw published his 'Women Directors: 150 Filmographies' in *Film Comment*; he opens by commenting that 'in spite of the attitudes of male critics and historians, [Lotte] Reiniger, [Germaine] Dulac, [Leni] Reifenstahl, [Maya] Deren, [Agnès] Varda and [Věra] Chytilová have received the recognition they deserve; most other women filmmakers have not.'¹³ He further points out that his article is not intended as 'a political statement [...] in relation to the women's movement,' but acknowledges the obvious 'overlapping of interest.'¹⁴ He provides information on 150 women directors active prior to 1964 in predominantly commercial feature filmmaking. He stresses that Guy Blaché was not only 'the first woman filmmaker' but also 'an authentic motion picture pioneer,' and that the American Hollywood director Dorothy Arzner was the only woman whose career survived the 1920s.¹⁵ He ends his article on a hopeful note, remarking that 'the flood gates that closed opportunity to women filmmakers appear secure no more.'¹⁶

One major outcome of the search for historical women's filmmaking was, of course, the explosion in women's film festivals discussed in Chapter III. Festivals presented one of the few opportunities for the public exhibition of films by early women directors. The women organising these events often made special efforts to draw attention to early women directors, such as the BFI retrospective on Arzner organised by Claire Johnston in 1975, and helped to create a contemporary audience for their work. Without these opportunities, exposure to these films was limited to scholars, researchers and archivists with access to archives. As a result, much of the discussion of early women directors takes place in articles on festivals, alongside reviews of new work by women.

Researching early women directors during this pre-digital era was a difficult task. Those wishing to explore their work required access to archives (if prints of their films were even available; many were not). These archives were sometimes situated outside the United States, and the materials in them in a foreign language, providing a further obstacle to American historians who did not enjoy the privileged status of research

¹² Laura X, aka Laura Rand Orthwein Jr., founded the Women's History Research Center, which published the pamphlet in Berkeley in 1968. Despite the local connection, she does not appear to have had any contact with *Women & Film*. See <http://lauraxinstitute.wix.com/>.

¹³ Richard Henshaw, 'Women Directors: 150 Filmographies,' *Film Comment* 8, no. 4 (1972), 33. Henshaw was a film historian and professor at Antioch College, Ohio and appeared on the 1972 International Festival of Women's Films panel on female film aesthetics.

¹⁴ Henshaw, 33.

¹⁵ *Ibid*; *Ibid*, 34.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, 35. To contemporary readers, this appears a somewhat false hope given the continuing discrimination, exclusion and sexual harassment women face in Hollywood.

student with financial backing from an institution.¹⁷ Unsurprisingly therefore, very few articles in the magazine focus exclusively on individual women directors who were active prior to the 1960s.

Women Who Makes Movies

Although much of *Women & Film's* first issue is concerned with the evaluation of female characters in mainstream Hollywood and European films made by men, some attention is also paid to work by women. There is an interview with Judy Smith of San Francisco Newsreel, the group behind *The Woman's Film* (1971), and half of the reviews are of films by women: *Three Lives* (Women's Liberation Cinema, 1971) and *La Fiancée du pirate* (Nelly Kaplan, 1969). However, this kind of content is in the minority, an imbalance that continues into issue 2 and through to 3-4. In the magazine's second instalment, the critique of male-directed films makes up just over half of its total content (72 films out of a total 138), with articles on Stanley Kubrick, Roberto Rossellini and Douglas Sirk, among others.¹⁸ However, this is countered by coverage of the First International Festival of Women's Films and 'High School Women & Film: A Report from New York City' by Jeanne Betancourt, on the reception of several US feminist consciousness-raising films, including *I Am Somebody* (Madeline Anderson, 1970), *It Happens to Us* (Amalie Rothschild, 1972) and *A to B* (Nell Cox, 1969), by a group of female high school students.

The editors eventually addressed the gender imbalance in the magazine's content in issue 3-4 published in 1973. Once again, the continuing disproportion is clear in the table of contents, with articles on the works of Jean-Luc Godard, Ken Russell, Paul Morrissey, Ingmar Bergman, Alan J. Pakula, Armando Robles Godoy, and an interview with Eric Rohmer. But this issue also contains the first major challenge to the male monopoly in the magazine with the inclusion of 'Women Who Make Movies,' an extract

¹⁷ These obstacles did not appear to be obvious to Anthony Slide, who takes feminist scholars to task for failing to engage with early women directors. 'Few women writers,' he complains in his book *Early Women Directors*, 'seemed willing to undertake the research necessary to uncover the facts concerning women directors before the coming of sound. It was far easier to protest about discrimination [...] than to accept that there were more women directors at work in the American film industry prior to 1920 than during any part of its history,' Slide, *Early Women Directors: Their Role in the Development of the Silent Cinema* (South Brunswick: A.S. Barnes, 1977), 9. Between 1971 and 1975, Slide was Louis B. Mayer research associate at the American Film Institute's Center for Advanced Film Studies; an associate film archivist at the AFI; and later, resident film historian at the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

¹⁸ See the table of contents for this issue in Appendix A for details of these and subsequent articles referred to in this overview.

from Sharon Smith's then forthcoming book of the same name, published in 1975. As a filmmaking student on the Masters programme at Middlebury, Smith's curiosity about earlier women filmmakers, and her misgivings about the discouraging responses she received from her teachers and fellow students led her to investigate.

I needed a thesis topic [...]. So I started doing to some research. I went to libraries [...] and I did research and I found, for example, Dorothy Arzner. [...] I gradually started making a little scribbled list [...].¹⁹

Not long after, Smith recounts, she had gathered enough names of women filmmakers to fill three or four boxes of index cards. In the foreword to her book, she points out that 'if, in the telling, the charge of discrimination recurs, it is because discrimination has been, and to an unfortunate extent still is, intrinsic to the story of women who make films.'²⁰ She hoped, however, that her findings 'might spur more people to hire women, and more women to enter filmmaking.'²¹ In our interview, she further reflects:

I wanted the information to get out. [...] I really wanted to promote the cause of women becoming filmmakers, that was what it was all about. I thought it would be helpful for other women to know there was a precedent: there had been women filmmakers since the 1890s.²²

The inclusion of Smith's extract in the magazine is one of the most significant contributions made to the wider quest to identify female film auteurs during this period. It provides the filmographies and very brief discussions of 170 women filmmakers from 25 countries over sixteen pages. Without Smith's article, the percentage of films by women discussed in this issue is around 15% (20 out of 138); when Smith's article is included in this total, this percentage shifts to almost 80% (629 out of 802).²³ Her article appears alongside several others on women: the interview with Christiane Rochefort (discussed in the previous chapter); a short article *The Girls* (Mai Zetterling, 1968) by experimental filmmaker Abigail Child; a discussion of Mae West's career as actress, screenwriter and director by Kristina Nordstrom (organizer of New York's First International Festival of Women's Films); and an article on the consciousness-raising film *Home Born Baby* (1973) by one of its co-creators, Sally Pugh. In her article on the 1972 New York Erotic Film Festival, Lucille Iverson also briefly discusses Constance Beeson's experimental films *Unfolding* (1969) and *Holding* (1971), and *Orange* (Karen Johnson, 1969). A report on the Women's Video Festival, held at the

¹⁹ Smith, interview.

²⁰ Smith, *Women Who Make Movies* (New York: Hopkinson and Blake, 1975), i.

²¹ Smith, 'The Image of Women in Film: Some Suggestions for Future Research,' *Women & Film* 1 (1972), 21.

²² Smith, interview.

²³ My criteria for 'films by women' includes films co-directed with men.

Kitchen gallery in New York by Jeanne Betancourt, further bolsters the number of works by women discussed.

Articles such as these filled the then gaping void of information on women's contributions to cinema and provided the names (and in some cases resurrected the careers) of scores of directors but also screenwriters, animators and editors to the magazine's audience of feminists, educators, aspiring filmmakers and festival organizers. The sharing of this previously 'lost' knowledge was a crucial step in providing impetus to the developing women's film movement, and a likely source for many of the era's festival programmers. However, in her interview, Smith revealed a sadly ironic personal outcome of her research regarding her own aspirations to become a filmmaker: 'there was obviously no future in it for me. [...] Based on my own research [...] there was an enormous struggle still to come for any female who wanted to be behind the camera.'²⁴ She chose instead to move to a derelict farmhouse in Maine and 'do the back to the land thing.'²⁵

Sanka, Pink Ladies and Virginia Slims

By the magazine's double issue 5-6 in 1974, the imbalance between the discussion of films directed by men and by women has largely been corrected. This issue features interviews with Agnès Varda, Lina Wertmüller, Gitta Nickel and Barbara Loden, as well as the first article on work by a woman of colour, Sarah Maldoror. There are also several articles on individual directors, including a review by Chuck Kleinhans of Yvonne Rainer's first film, *Lives of Performers* (1972). Not only does women's filmmaking dominate, this issue also sees the establishment of a new 'permanent' Independent Women's Cinema review section. As the editors explain, this is

To keep abreast of films made by women independently of the (male) commercial film industry. Each of the forms – political documentary, fictional narrative, biographical portraits, experimental – requires a specific mode of analysis. We hope to address ourselves most exhaustively to those feminist films which attempt to deconstruct the aesthetic/political codes of patriarchal culture.²⁶

It features reviews of *Womanhouse* (Johanna Demetrakas, 1974), *Women of the Rhondda* (Esther Ronay, Mary Kelly et al, 1972); and a series of films shown at the Ann Arbour Women's Film Festival that included two shorts by Michelle Citron (*April 3*,

²⁴ Smith, interview.

²⁵ Smith, interview.

²⁶ Editors, 'A Note from the Editors,' *Women & Film* 5-6 (1974), 5.

1973 and *Self-Defense*, both 1973) and a selection of films by filmmakers from *Women Make Movies*.²⁷ Writing on mainstream (man-made) film is now restricted to a new section, 'The Ideological Massage: Reviews of Commercial Cinema.'²⁸

This issue also features the magazine's first articles on historical women directors; as with the writing that engages with structuralism and semiotics discussed earlier, this historical work was produced by new contributors drawn from the magazine's widening network of readers. Gerald Peary, whose 'Sanka, Pink Ladies and Virginia Slims' appears in 5-6, was a doctoral student at the University of Wisconsin, preparing his thesis on gangster films of the 1930s. Before writing for *Women & Film*, he published on Arzner and Guy Blaché in the leftist and feminist-leaning *Velvet Light Trap*, founded by a fellow Madison student, Russell Campbell.²⁹ Peary had come across Arzner's work thanks to the university's collection of RKO films on 16mm. He recalls that

All of us who were film crazy would spend our days at Madison's State Historical Society watching those films, 3 or 4 in a day. We would project them ourselves. The Warners films were filled with women at work as waitresses, dancers, whatever, blue-collar jobs, perfect to write about. The RKO collection included two films: *Christopher Strong* and *Dance, Girl, Dance*, directed by Dorothy Arzner.³⁰

Peary collaborated on the Arzner article with his then girlfriend, Karyn Kay, an undergraduate student at Madison: 'Together we watched the Arzner films, which nobody knew about. We were elated, amazed. [...] Karyn and I became passionate about discovering other women filmmakers, so rare in those days.' They eventually made contact with Arzner, then in her seventies, conducting several phone interviews with her before meeting in person at her home in the Californian desert. This was later published in the BFI's pamphlet, *The Work of Dorothy Arzner: Toward a Feminist Cinema* (1975), edited by Claire Johnston. Kay and Peary's joint research culminated in their book, *Women & Cinema: a Critical Anthology* (Dutton & Co, 1977).

Peary recalls that he 'would scroll day by day through the microfilm files of early *Variety*, *The Motion Picture World*, etc., and [...] copy out any item, sometimes just a

²⁷ See index in Appendix D for full list of films reviewed.

²⁸ In this issue, this entails a discussion of *Summer Wishes, Winter Dreams* (Gilbert Cates, 1973, USA) by Samantha Willow. The names Kathi, Steve and Dorothy are listed in parentheses following Willow's. I have yet to find out who they are and what connection they have to *Women & Film*. The film discussed in the following issue is *Freebie and The Bean* (Richard Rush, 1974, USA) by Michael Shedlin.

²⁹ Gerald Peary, 'The Czarina of the Silent Screen: Solax's Alice Guy Blaché,' *Velvet Light Trap*, no. 6 (1972): 3-8; Karyn Kay and Gerald Peary, 'Dorothy Arzner's "Dance, Girl, Dance",' *Velvet Light Trap*, no. 10 (Fall 1973): 26-31.

³⁰ Peary, email to author, 4 April 2016.

paragraph, I found on women in film.’³¹ These findings became ‘Sanka, Pink Ladies and Virginia Slims,’ the title of which is a riff on ‘Coffee, Brandy, Cigars,’ Herman G. Weinberg’s regular column in *Films in Review*. Peary’s article is an annotated list of around 16 women filmmakers, not only directors but also screenwriters, producers, editors and distributors working in Hollywood, and beyond.³² In keeping with the style of ‘Coffee, Brandy, Cigars,’ Peary’s article spends little time on the content or themes of the films mentioned, focusing instead on industry gossip. He recounts ‘one of the greatest chauvinist events in film history’ in which the 1930 audience of a London Film Society screening ‘razzed and hissed’ Dinah Shurey’s *The Last Post* (1929). He quotes from a *Variety* report on the event, which names Dorothy Arzner’s *Fashions For Women* (1927) as ‘the only film which was appreciated.’³³ He also cites the remark that Germaine Dulac’s *The Seashell and the Clergyman* demonstrated ‘how sexy the women can be when it comes to pictorial symbolism. Film was full of educated dirt.’³⁴ He awards the most attention to Lois Weber, described as ‘undoubtedly the most successful and respected woman director in the whole silent era.’³⁵ He refers to several directors not previously mentioned in the magazine, including Miriam Nesbitt, Ruth Bryan Owen, Dorothy Davenport, and Dinah Shurey, as well as screenwriter Dorothy Farnum, described as a scenarist and also ‘probably the first woman to hold an executive position within a foreign company,’ and the ‘gag writer’ Beth Brown.³⁶

1970s Women’s Film History and the omission of lesbian identity

Peary and Kay’s research raises an issue within feminist film history that is impossible to ignore, namely the failure to acknowledge Arzner’s lesbianism. Writing in 1984, former *Women & Film* contributor Barbara Martineau points out that ‘most discussions of Dorothy Arzner’s films, [...] carefully avoid any mention of Arzner’s appearance in relation to some of the images in her films,’ specifically, the ‘tailored, “mannish”’ clothing worn by well-known lesbian figures such as the author Radclyffe Hall as well as Arzner herself and two characters in her film *Dance, Girl, Dance* (1930).³⁷ ‘Such a reading’ she suggests, ‘provides a whole new way of relating to the film and to other

³¹ Ibid. It was through this meticulous trawling that he stumbled on Guy Blaché’s largely forgotten article ‘Women’s Place in Photoproduction,’ reprinted in his *Velvet Light Trap* article.

³² Peary, email to author, 4 April 2016.

³³ Peary, ‘Sanka, Pink Ladies, & Virginia Slims,’ *Women & Film* 5-6 (1974), 83.

³⁴ Unspecified *Variety* article, Peary, ‘Sanka, Pink Ladies,’ 83.

³⁵ Peary, ‘Sanka, Pink Ladies,’ 84.

³⁶ Ibid, 82.

³⁷ Writing as Sarah Halprin, ‘Women and Film: Writing in the Margins,’ *Jump Cut*, no. 29 (February 1984), unpaginated.

Arzner films,' particularly in relation to the representation of lesbian identity. Judith Mayne has similarly noted that research such as Peary and Kay's appears bizarrely oblivious to Arzner's lesbianism, and subsequently to the homoerotic resonances in her films. This also applies, she writes, to the many images that illustrate the scholarship on Arzner from this era, in which she appears dressed in suits and ties, long associated with butch lesbian identity. Despite this visibility, feminist critics of the 1970s did not comment on this, nor did they speculate about how Arzner's lesbianism might be connected to the themes of her films.³⁸

Clearly, some contributors were reluctant to address sexual identity out of a sense of propriety and respect for privacy: discussing a living person's homosexuality was still a dangerous thing to do in the early 1970s. Reflecting on this omission in the present day, Peary explained that 'it was a totally different world then [...]. Although we were sure she was a lesbian, Karyn and I would never in a million years have "outed" her. If we would have asked her about her sexuality, I am sure that Arzner, a very private person, would have been horrified and probably cut us off.'³⁹ Moreover, there was also a tendency within second wave feminism to 'universalise' – and possibly essentialize – straight white women by ignoring differences of race, class, and sexuality. The focus on patriarchal oppression, the emphasis on the scholarly retrieval of women's work and a kind of heteronormative myopia frequently resulted in the obscuring or side-lining of lesbian identity and representation.

Women & Film contributors on Germaine Dulac

While Peary's article provides a brief overview of several women's careers, William Van Wert's and Sandy Flitterman's writing on Germaine Dulac provides a more comprehensive view of a single filmmaker. The art critic Regina Cornwell published an early article on Dulac in 1972 in which she compared her filmmaking but also her writing and lecturing about cinema to Maya Deren's.⁴⁰ Dulac is mentioned early on in *Women & Film*: writing in her report from the 1972 First International Festival of Women's Films in issue 2, Salyer describes Dulac's *The Smiling Madame Beudet* (1922) screened in the festival's 'Pioneers of Cinema' strand, as 'probably the earliest (1922)

³⁸ See Judith Mayne, *The Woman at the Keyhole: Feminism and Women's Cinema* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 89-107.

³⁹ Peary, email to author, 20 May 2016.

⁴⁰ Regina Cornwell, 'Maya Deren and Germaine Dulac: Activists of the Avant-Garde,' *Film Library Quarterly* 5, no. 1 (Winter 1971/72): 29-38.

explicitly feminist film.⁴¹ She also compares Dulac to Deren, whose *Meshes of the Afternoon* (1943, USA) and *At Land* (1944, USA) were shown at the festival too, and considers them equally to be 'landmarks in experimental cinema.'⁴² Both filmmakers, Salyer concludes, 'should serve as a kind of model to women who are making films today.'

William Van Wert's article salutes Dulac as 'the first feminist filmmaker,' a title which rests on the fact that she was 'intensely interested in the image of women in film,' and his article attempts to demonstrate this through an analysis of *The Smiling Madame Beudet* and *The Seashell and the Clergyman*.⁴³ He characterizes Dulac as a filmmaker who 'has been largely overlooked or else slandered by most film historians.'⁴⁴ This is partly due, he argues, to the fact that she was making surrealist films well before Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dalí. Another factor is that her films were not widely distributed outside of France, or indeed, within it. But, he suggests, her interest in female subjects could perhaps have also contributed to her being underappreciated. As he points out, *Madame Beudet* is 'one of the few films of the decade in which a woman is [the] main character.'⁴⁵

The film, at just under forty minutes long, follows the plight of the unhappy wife of a fabric merchant (Germaine Dermoz) who regularly retreats into fantasy to escape her husband's bullying. At one point, she visualizes a handsome tennis player, seen in the pages of a magazine, enter the room, pick up her husband and carry him away struggling. Her husband (Alexandre Arquillière) repeatedly torments her by putting an unloaded gun to his head in a dramatic show of frustration and emotional blackmail. When he goes out to the opera with a fellow merchant and his wife, Madame Beudet is subject to a series of hallucinations prompted by the lines of a poem from Charles Baudelaire's *Les fleurs du mal* (1861). A ghostly superimposition of Monsieur Beudet climbs through the window, jeers at her, and repeats his mocking gesture with the gun. As if sleepwalking, Madame Beudet opens her husband's desk drawer and loads the gun with bullets. The following day, Monsieur Beudet suffers a pang of remorse at his treatment of his wife, after he breaks a doll belonging to her. In a pantomimic performance of his annoyance with her in front of his colleague, he smacks the doll,

⁴¹ Salyer, 'Selected Short Subjects,' *Women & Film 2* (1972), 37.

⁴² Ibid, 45. A list of works and brief biography of Dulac also features in Smith's 'Women Who Make Movies,' *Women & Film 3-4*, (1973), 79.

⁴³ William Van Wert, 'Germaine Dulac: First Feminist Filmmaker,' *Women & Film 5-6* (1974), 55. This article was reprinted in *Women and the Cinema*, ed. Karyn Kay and Gerald Peary (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1977), 213-223.

⁴⁴ Van Wert, 'Germaine Dulac,' 55.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

decapitating it. That his behaviour is unreasonable is emphasised by his colleagues' disapproval and his remark that 'the doll is fragile, a bit like a woman.' Her husband soon forgets his earlier remorse when he argues with his wife over the household accounts. He pulls out the gun, first pointing it at his head, then at her, 'the more deserving.' He fires and misses, hitting a vase instead. Immediately assuming that his wife had loaded the gun because she wanted to kill herself, he cries and embraces her. But Madame Beudet appears unmoved, perhaps disappointed that neither she nor her husband received the bullet. Above them, a picture frame morphs into a puppet theatre showing two marionettes mirroring their reconciliation and suggesting the unrelenting nature of Madame Beudet's situation, doomed to be bullied and assaulted by her husband, in Punch and Judy fashion, again and again.⁴⁶

Dulac's treatment of the story is significant, Van Wert argues, because of her use of point-of-view shots depicting not only Madame Beudet's perspective but also her fantasies. One example is the scene in which she imagines the tennis player coming to life from the pages of her magazine. This fantasy, explains Van Wert, is a reaction to her husband's earlier violent outburst. The tennis player 'becomes her symbolic lover, her agent of revenge upon her stupid husband.'⁴⁷ Despite her fantasy of revenge and rescue, she maintains 'the docile posture of subdued housewife.'⁴⁸ Dulac's use of the subjective point-of-view shot, as well as 'trick photography,' make this parallel fantasy world possible. 'We know [the tennis player] is part of the fantasy,' notes Van Wert, 'since we can see through his body to the walls behind.'⁴⁹ Van Wert also comments on the use of the mirror-cum-puppet-show in the final scene. What he terms a *mise-en-abîme* – or 'play within a play' – he deems 'typical of Germaine Dulac's amazing ability to capsule whole worlds of feeling in brief, static shots, and to use the symbolic possibilities of the camera.'⁵⁰

Van Wert also examines Dulac's *The Seashell and The Clergyman*, referring to it as 'the first truly Surrealistic film.'⁵¹ The film follows a priest (Alexander Allin) seized by a jealous desire for a woman (Génica Athanasiou) and murderous rage toward her lover, an army general (Lucien Bataille). The priest is frequently tormented by visions of the two together and by fantasies in which he strangles the general. The film uses slow motion, superimposition and split screens, often involving water, to create distorted

⁴⁶ The French equivalent of Punch and Judy is Guignol and his wife Madelon.

⁴⁷ Van Wert, 'Germaine Dulac,' 55.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 56. The *mise-en-abîme* generally refers to a work of art that contains a miniature version of itself within it. The term originates from the study of heraldry.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

dreamlike images and sequences. The Surrealist artist and writer Antonin Artaud wrote the film's original script, and according to Van Wert, as a fellow surrealist, Dulac 'exploits the Freudian symbolism of her male colleagues' in the film.⁵² *The Seashell* is an exception, he argues, to the conventions of surrealist art, which traditionally feature 'male fantasies and stereotypes of women' and celebrate 'free sex and violence' that revels in 'the double standard.'⁵³

Van Wert reads a feminist authorial gesture in the stylistic shift that takes place at the end of the film. He notes a move from the surrealism of the priest's 'subjective point of view shot' to the realism of 'the objective, authorial camera shot' that highlights the priest's projection of his romantic fantasies onto the woman as he strangles an invisible figure and transfers her into a crystal ball. The final shot, which shows Athanasiou's face in a crystal ball reveals, suggests Van Wert, 'women as sex objects trapped inside the crystal-ball prisons that are the minds of such men.'⁵⁴

Flitterman would later discover that this scene was not in fact the ending of the film but the end of its second reel. The print then in circulation, belonging to New York's Museum of Modern Art, and the one referred to by Van Wert, had the reels out of sequence. During her doctoral research, Flitterman recounts, she

discovered that [...] the second reel was put at the end and the end reel was put in the middle, and because this was a surrealist film, everybody just thought this was kind of crazy, but the film was supposed to end with the guy drinking the black liquid out of the shell.⁵⁵

She made this discovery by examining Dulac's screenplay for the film, a task she had embarked on in response to accusations that Dulac had altered Artaud's story, discussed in more detail below.

Heart of the Avant-Garde: Sandy Flitterman on Germaine Dulac

Sandy Flitterman's article in the same issue complements Van Wert's with an outline of Dulac's life and career. Salyer, she recalls, suggested she translate one of the most detailed works on Dulac, Charles Ford's pamphlet produced for the magazine *L'avant-scène du cinéma*, to accompany Van Wert's article, which had already been accepted for

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid, 57.

⁵⁵ Flitterman interview. Van Wert cites the MOMA print as his source at the end of his article, 103. See her note in *To Desire Differently: Feminism and the French Cinema* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 139.

publication.⁵⁶ Ford was one of the few scholars to have written extensively on Dulac, and estimates her as ‘the most important of the seven theoreticians who so greatly contributed, during the silent period, to define cinema’s essence and to delineate its aims and limits.’⁵⁷ To avoid potential copyright issues, Flitterman translated sections from Ford but inserted some of her own commentary. As Flitterman reveals in her footnotes, her article also draws on the work of French film historian Georges Sadoul.

Flitterman opens by emphasizing Dulac’s role both as filmmaker and theoretician, as a campaigner for “pure cinema,” but also a practitioner who ‘strove to reconcile cinema as a means of artistic expression with its inherent commercial contingencies.’⁵⁸ She highlights Dulac’s feminist credentials, citing her work for the feminist journals *La Fronde* (1887-1905) and *La Française* (1906-1934). As Flitterman recounts, Dulac gradually shifted from writing about theatre to a consideration of film as the ideal artistic medium: she is reported to have explained that ‘of all the arts, not one has been able to sum up my feelings like the cinema. Only through the image have I been able to express all my thoughts.’⁵⁹ She goes on to outline Dulac’s journey into filmmaking, beginning with an interest in still photography and her involvement in *Caligula* (Ugo Falena, 1917) at the behest of her friend, the French actress Stacia de Napierkowska. She points out that, thanks to war-time conscription during WWI, the absence of men provided an ‘opportune moment for a woman entering the film industry,’ with women ‘accepted and even encouraged’ in the studios.⁶⁰

Flitterman sees Dulac’s early films, such as the serial *Ames de fou* (1918) as ‘articulating a conception of cinema as art, [...] in which artistry was more important than commercial value. [...] An evocative cinema, one which aimed at creating effects rather than producing plots with commercial audience appeal.’⁶¹ She identifies the films made following the death of her chief collaborator, Louis Delluc, as those in which Dulac ‘perfected her technique and formulated her theories of psychological characterization in film.’⁶² These include: *La Cigarette* (1919), *La belle Dame sans merci* (1921), and *La Mort du soleil* (1922). This work leads up to *The Smiling Madame Beudet*, in which, according to Flitterman, Dulac built on her earlier experiments in

⁵⁶ Flitterman, interview.

⁵⁷ Charles Ford, *Germaine Dulac, 1882-1942*, Anthologie du cinéma series, no. 31 (January 1968), 44, cited and translated by Flitterman, ‘Heart of the Avant-Garde,’ *Women & Film* 5-6 (1974), 61. He names the other six as Dulac’s collaborator, Louis Delluc, Ricciotto Canudo, Jean Epstein, Bela Belazs, Sergei Eisenstein and Karol Irzykowski.

⁵⁸ Flitterman, ‘Heart of the Avant-Garde,’ 58.

⁵⁹ Ford, *Germaine Dulac*, 6, Flitterman, ‘Heart of the Avant-Garde,’ 58.

⁶⁰ Flitterman, ‘Heart of the Avant-Garde,’ 58.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² *Ibid.*, 59.

'rendering the psychological states of [...] characters' by 'attempting to objectify psychological states, discovering cinematic techniques to translate the thoughts of her characters into visual terms.'⁶³ To do this, Flitterman argues, Dulac deployed all tricks and techniques then available: 'distortions, superimpositions, slow motion, unusual camera angles' as well as split screens and 'use of the subjective camera.'⁶⁴ As for *The Seashell and the Clergyman*, Flitterman declares it 'a classic of Surrealist cinema and a landmark in film history.'⁶⁵ She also remarks that although Artaud criticised her adaptation of his script for the film, claiming that it deviated from his original ideas, *The Seashell* does not differ significantly from the screenplay.⁶⁶

Of significant interest to Flitterman is Dulac's campaign for cinema to be considered as an art form, on an equal footing with theatre, literature and art. This included the founding of a network of cine-clubs across France and the exhibition of Russian, Swedish, German and other foreign films in France. Dulac also travelled around Europe screening her films, advocating her idea of 'pure cinema.' She taught film at the École Technique de Photographie et de Cinématographie in Paris throughout the 1920s. Finally, she attempted to launch a journal, *Schémas*, to publish her and her contemporaries' writings on pure cinema; the journal unfortunately only ran one issue. Flitterman argues that Dulac's theoretical writings, 'appearing at a time when cinema was just becoming an artform, are essential contributions to film history.'⁶⁷ She quotes at length those reproduced in Ford's study *Germaine Dulac 1882-1942* (1968), pointing to one statement in particular for its resonance with contemporary feminist debates in film.⁶⁸ Dulac asks her readers to 'listen in silence to our own song, to try to express our own personal vision, to define our sensibility, to make our own way. Let us learn to look, let us learn to see, let us learn to feel.'⁶⁹ For Flitterman, her statement is 'truly edifying, for it inspires strength and encourages self-esteem.'⁷⁰ She concludes her article by declaring Dulac

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid, 60.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid, 61. Three of Dulac's texts were published in P. Adams Sitney's *The Avant-Garde Film: A Reader of Theory and Criticism* (New York, NY: New York University Press, 1978): 'From Visual and Anti-visual Films' (31-35); 'The Essence of the Cinema: The Visual Idea' (36-42), and 'The Avant-Garde Cinema' (43-48). Also included was Maya Deren's 'Cinematography: The Creative Use of Reality' (60-73).

⁶⁸ Published as a supplement to *L'Avant-scène du cinéma* no. 71 (January 1968).

⁶⁹ Dulac in Ford, translated by Flitterman, 'Heart of the Avant-Garde,' 61.

⁷⁰ Flitterman, 'Heart of the Avant-Garde,' 61.

One of the most significant influences on the development of the cinema, both for her work in terms of the appreciation of cinema as a viable artform and for her formulation of its aesthetics at a crucial point in its history.⁷¹

Flitterman's contribution here does not deploy the structuralist theories she was immersed in as a graduate student of Bertrand Augst and future founder of *Camera Obscura*. However, this biographical outline formed the basis of her doctoral thesis in which she significantly extends her examination of Dulac alongside analyses of her films.⁷²

The *Women & Film* article is accompanied by a portrait of the filmmaker wearing a bow tie and flower in her lapel, drawn by Flitterman (fig. 42). However, as with Peary and Kay's discussions of Arzner, Flitterman and Van Wert do not mention Dulac's sexuality, despite the butch touches and several significant relationships and collaborations with women. As Tami Williams points out in her 2014 book on Dulac, 'extensive historical study of Dulac's work was not possible until the opening of her personal archives [...] in 1996,' which included much personal correspondence.⁷³ In retrospect, the fact that Dulac rejected heterosexuality and gender expectations adds a new dimension to the critique of heterosexual marriage in *The Smiling Madame Beudet* as well as her position within the history of surrealist and experimental filmmaking.

Maechen in Uniform

Women & Film's deliberate refocusing of its critical attention to films by women is still apparent in its final issue, which features interviews with director Jill Godmilow, screenwriter Eleanor Perry, and the New Day filmmaker's co-op. There are also articles on *Attica* (Cinda Firestone, 1974) and *Maedchen in Uniform* (Leontine Sagan, 1931) as well as reviews of 17 films in the Women's Independent Cinema section. This is further bolstered by several reports on women's film festivals: Barbara Martineau's coverage of Musidora festival in Paris and the Films by Women festival in Chicago, both in 1974 (see Chapter III); Connie Greenbaum's article, also on the Musidora festival; and filmmaker Marjorie Keller's 'Report from Knokke-Exprmentl 5.'

Nancy Scholar's discussion of Leontine Sagan's *Maedchen in Uniform* is the only other *Women & Film* article to focus exclusively on the work of a woman director from the past. It does not share the heterosexual myopia of the previous examples in its

⁷¹ Flitterman, 'Heart of the Avant-Garde,' 61.

⁷² Her study also looked at Marie Epstein and Agnès Varda and was later published as *To Desire Differently: Feminism and the French Cinema* (1990).

⁷³ Tami Williams, *Germaine Dulac: A Cinema of Sensations* (Urbana; University of Illinois Press, 2014), 2.

discussion, but it does regard the film's lesbian narrative ambivalently. Scholar's article is accompanied by a brief biography of Sagan, and production details of the film, including its US distributor, Radim Films. She pinpoints the significance of the film for feminism, stating that 'not only did a woman direct the film in 1931, but the script was based upon a play written by a woman [...] and the cast is entirely composed of women.'⁷⁴ Another important aspect is, Scholar argues, the film's historical context. Sagan's 'anti-authoritarian' film appeared during Hitler's ascent to power in 1931. As she notes, the film was eventually banned and Sagan, as well as much of the film's cast, fled Germany following its release.

Scholar identifies two opposing value systems at work in the film: the authoritarian, 'Prussian' values embodied by the boarding school's head mistress, and the 'humanitarian' values represented by the film's principal characters, schoolgirl Manuela (played by Hertha Thiele) and Fraulein von B, her teacher (Dorothea Weick). This opposition is emphasised, Scholar points out, by juxtaposing 'images [...] in order to demonstrate their interconnection and logical progression,' which she defines using Eisenstein's term 'dialectical montage':

thus the film opens with a montage of images suggesting the Prussian style: military statuary, the soldier-like steeple of the church, [...] and the clock, implying the relation of present time to past and future [...]. The camera follows the marching regimented schoolgirls (preceded by marching soldiers, thus making an analogy between the two).⁷⁵

She also argues that the association of the authoritarian values with the female headmistress is significant, as it 'warns against easy dichotomies between male and female values and indicates that the corruption of power knows no sexual boundaries.'⁷⁶

Scholar repeatedly draws connections between the film's plot and its wider historical context. After Manuela drunkenly announces her feelings for Fraulien von B, she is 'denounced by this fuehrer [the headmistress], just as homosexuals were periodically denounced and purged during the Nazi era.'⁷⁷ These connections to the outside world are conveyed by the film's use of dialectical montage; '[Sagan] proceeds to the shot of the two women in a haloed embrace with the replay of Prussian imagery:

⁷⁴ Nancy Scholar, 'Maedchen in Uniform,' *Women & Film* 7 (1975), 68.

⁷⁵ Ibid. As Eisenstein writes 'montage is not an idea composed of successive shots stuck together but an idea that derives from the collision between two shots that are independent of one another,' 'The Dramaturgy of Film Form (The Dialectical Approach to Film Form),' [1929] *The Eisenstein Reader*, ed. Richard Taylor (London: BFI, 1998), 95.

⁷⁶ Scholar, 68.

⁷⁷ Ibid, 70.

clock, military statues, garrison bugle in the background.⁷⁸ Scholar sees the meeting of these opposing forces, the authoritarian, which she identifies as 'thesis,' and the relationship between Manuela and Fraulien von B, signalling 'anti-thesis,' as leading to 'a breakdown or breakthrough in the system (synthesis).'⁷⁹ She here draws on Wilhelm Reich's theories on sexual repression and society, quoting from his *Sex-Pol Essays*: 'Repression posits its own destruction, since as a result of repression, instinctual energy is powerfully damned up until it finally breaks through the repression.'⁸⁰ Another aspect of antithesis, argues Scholar, is the acts of solidarity performed by Manuela's classmates and their defiance of the headmistress. The school's central staircase, which appears repeatedly in the film, is described as the primary 'insignia of the school's (and society's) confinements' but is appropriated as a transgressive space by the girls and eventually, by Manuela, when she leaps into the stairwell.⁸¹

This well of dangerous space thus becomes the visual indicator of the options open to the girls (and again, society by extension) if they choose to defy authority; freedom, release from confinement on the one hand, potential destruction, death on the other.⁸²

Scholar notes the homoerotic content of the film, although she never uses the word lesbian to describe either Manuela or Fraulien von B. She describes the young women's 'frenzied anticipation' as they line up to be kissed goodnight by Fraulien von B. This indicates their desperation for maternal love, argues Scholar, but also points to the 'erotic undertone of the school, an inevitable consequence of a repressive atmosphere.'⁸³ 'The erotic ambiance,' she continues, 'is made explicit when Fraulien von B and Manuela passionately kiss.'⁸⁴ Scholar reads this as an expression of the German convention in which 'love and patriotism [are equated] with motherhood.'⁸⁵ However, she does deem the 'open presentation of the possibilities of love between two women' as a radical departure from convention, 'since repressed homosexuality, undeclared and unexamined, would be a matter of course, as in the Nazi movement outside.'⁸⁶ For Scholar, the significance of Manuela and Fraulien von B's relationship lies in its symbolic juxtaposition with the wider conditions of oppression in German society/fascism. This is evidenced by another example of Eisensteinian montage:

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Reich, 'Dialectical Materialism and Psychoanalysis,' *Sex-Pol Essays 1929-1934*, ed. Lee Baxandall (New York: Vintage, 1972), 31, in Scholar, 70.

⁸¹ Scholar, 70.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid, 69.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid, 70.

That Sagan wishes to place the relationship between the two women in a wider context is unquestionable, since she proceeds [sic] the shot of the two women in haloed embrace with the replay of Prussian imagery: clock, military statues, garrison bugle [...] This juxtaposition suggests both the inevitability of conflict between these values and the progression from one to the other.⁸⁷

Conclusions

As this chapter has tried to show, *Women & Film* magazine was an important site for the dissemination of information about women filmmakers and their work. This primarily took the form of filmographic articles that listed and briefly discussed directors and their work. But eventually the magazine included foundational texts on individual directors, such as Flitterman's and Van Wert's, who were writing about Dulac at time when the majority of texts on the director were in French.

The issue of sexual identity and the fight for gay and lesbian rights does not appear to have been part of *Women & Film's* initial agenda. As its editors declare in issue one, they support 'the liberation of workers, blacks and third world people and children,' but a similar liberation for LGBT people is not mentioned. The failure to consider non-heterosexual identities is somewhat in keeping with the late 1960s/early 1970s leftist, Marxist-Leninist position, which was similarly oblivious to gender, sexual identity and homophobia, despite the arising of the gay liberation movements at the end of the 1960s. 'Intersectionality' – the idea that class, race, gender and other forms of oppression interact and intersect one another within society and are experienced to different degrees by individuals – was not formally recognised in 1970s second wave feminism, although in Beh and Salyer's editorial, the interplay between class, race and age and its relevance to feminism is acknowledged.⁸⁸ It is therefore not so surprising that the feminist interrogation of cinema that takes places in *Women & Film* is at times blind to the issue of gay and lesbian identity.

Whereas the magazine's earliest contributors appeared unsure of where to find women's film work – or whether historical examples existed at all – by 1973 its editors were calling for the establishment of a women's media centre as 'a logical consequence' to the data unearthed by festival organisers, researchers and scholars.⁸⁹ In the

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ The term was coined by feminist activist Kimberlé Crenshaw in a paper given in 1988 although the concept predates this. See Ange-Marie Hancock, *Intersectionality: An Intellectual History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016). The editors were clearly aware of the gay liberation movement and aware of its goals but don't appear to have been involved in any campaigns.

⁸⁹ Editors, 'A Note from the Editors,' *Women & Film* 3-4 (1973), 5.

following issue, they report 'requests for a wide-range of information from bibliographies of filmmakers to dates and details of media conferences, to frame enlargements from women's films.'⁹⁰ For them this presents 'a compelling argument for a national clearing house while our lack of funds for a research staff of any kind makes response [sic] slow and sometimes impossible.'⁹¹ By the final issue, no. 7, published in 1975, this aim of a women's media centre seems likely to become a reality. The magazine's editors announce that a Women's Film Archive is in the process of being established, made possible by a National Endowment for the Arts grant. Its rationale is to 'collect, preserve and exhibit women's films and videotapes.'⁹² They propose a collaboration between the magazine and the archive: the latter will 'provide access to women's films for research and *Women & Film* magazine will publish writings on these collections attempting to disseminate information beyond the immediate locality.'⁹³ Unfortunately, it would appear that these efforts did not succeed and the Women's Film Archive was either never established, or was extremely short-lived.⁹⁴

As my investigations have demonstrated, these articles required sustained research, specialist knowledge – the ability to read French for example – and access to archives, almost uniquely available to their authors as graduate students. As earlier chapters have indicated, this research took place before film studies departments had been fully established; all the writers discussed here were studying in comparative literature or English departments. Van Wert was at the time a doctoral student in comparative literature at Indiana University, writing his thesis on the films of Alain Robbe-Grillet, Marguerite Duras and Agnès Varda, among others.⁹⁵ Scholar was an assistant professor in English at the Illinois Institute of Technology, with an interest in women's literature, having written on Marge Piercy and Anaïs Nin.⁹⁶ Taken as whole, these articles can be seen to make a considerable challenge to the canon represented by, for *Women & Film* at least, Andrew Sarris' pantheon of male directors. As the

⁹⁰ Editors, 'A Note from the Editors,' *Women & Film* 5-6 (1974), 4.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Editors, 'Editorial,' *Women & Film* 7 (1975), 3.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ The NEA's Annual Report for 1975 confirms that \$10,000 was awarded to Siew-Hwa Beh of Santa Monica, California from its General Programs funds for Public Media. According to the report, these grants were intended to 'assist projects which do not fall into other Public Media categories because of their experimental nature or because they represent an emerging area,' (81). The panel included the filmmakers Stan Vanderbeek and Richard Leacock, among others. See National Endowment for the Arts website, <https://www.arts.gov/publications/1975-annual-report> (24.04.2016). Unfortunately, neither the NEA nor the magazine's founders have retained any further documents relating to the grant or the Women's Film Archive, so little more about it or its fate can be revealed at this time.

⁹⁵ Van Wert, 'The Theory and Practice of the Ciné-Roman,' PhD dissertation, Indiana University, 1975.

⁹⁶ See 'Notes on Contributors,' *Women & Film* 7 (1975), 126.

writing on Dulac in particular demonstrates, in searching for women's film history, feminist scholars were also seeking feminist auteurs, whose outlooks, politics and filmmaking styles might propose alternatives – a feminist counter-cinema as Claire Johnston coined it – to the commercial and hierarchal mainstream. This will be explored in the ensuing chapter



Figure 41: The illustration accompanying the editorial for *Women & Film* 3-4 (1973), 5.

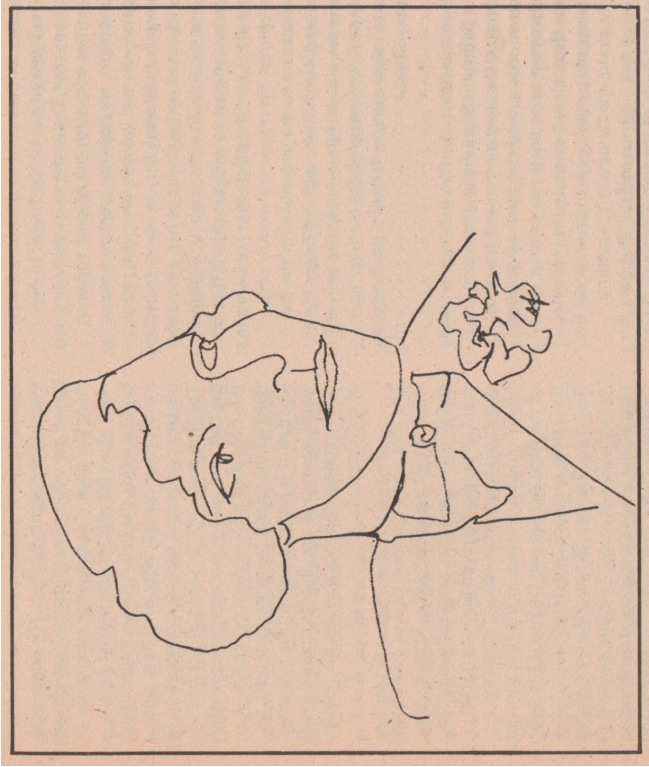


Figure 42: Sandy Flitterman-Lewis' portrait of Germaine Dulac that accompanied her article in *Women & Film* 5-6 (1974), 58.

VII

The Quest for Feminist Auteurs

It is important to remember that the obstacles barring women from employment and training in the film industry were especially pertinent to *Women & Film's* editors and many of their contributors as aspiring filmmakers themselves. 'Prejudice in film schools' is listed as one of the six factors contributing to women's exclusion from the industry and perpetuating the cinema's capitalist and patriarchal hegemony, according to the editorial in issue 1.¹ And experience of such prejudice appears to have been shared by several women involved in the magazine. Siew-Hwa Beh recalls that during her filmmaking studies at UCLA, the male students would refuse to crew for her and the other female students on her course; the men hid equipment and 'kept asking us to make sandwiches for them or crew for them in their student films.'² Sharon Smith remembers that at Middlebury,

You had to form your own film crews in order to get the experience. You weren't assigned to crews; you had to wrangle your way onto a crew of three or four people. And as a female I simply was not wanted.³

She also recalls that when she expressed an interest in cinematography, she was told that she 'couldn't be allowed to carry a camera because "your little old mini skirt would just drag on the ground." I didn't wear mini skirts, I wore jeans, like practically every other person my age in that era!⁴ She became acutely aware that sexism would be a barrier to paid employment. These attitudes are neatly summed up by an early *Cineaste* cover, showing a long-haired woman in a flowing gown posing while a man takes her picture from behind: women belong in front of the camera, not behind it (fig. 43).⁵ At parties, she recalls, when she told people she was doing a Masters in filmmaking, they would assume she was aiming to be a 'script girl.' It was also clear that her professors were oblivious to such attitudes and when she produced scripts or treatments that dealt with women's issues, they would be dismissed as 'women's lib.' 'Why didn't I try

¹ Editors, 'Overview,' *Women & Film* 1 (1972), 5-6.

² Beh, email to author, 13 May 2012.

³ Sharon Smith, interview with author, 6 May 2015, Canaan, ME.

⁴ Smith, interview.

⁵ It is in fact an image of Leonard Whiting and Olivia Hussey on the set of *Romeo and Juliet* (Franco Zeffirelli, 1968).

to form an all female crew?' she wondered in our interview; 'I suspect that I had internalised the concept of 'we'll just get shouted down as women's libbers.'⁶ Barbara Hammer also found herself at odds with the sexism exhibited by her classmates. She got her revenge by including footage of one fellow male student remarking 'She's got a million dollar ass' about a female student in her early film *I WAS/I AM* (1973).⁷

In the first issue of *Women & Film*, a page torn from Andrew Sarris's *The American Cinema* (1968) is reprinted as a visual reminder that while women may have participated in the film industry from its early days, their contributions have not been taken seriously (fig. 10). Beh and Salyer's critique of Sarris in issue 1 is an aspect of the magazine's complicated relationship with notions of cinema authorship. The editors clearly express disdain for Sarris' brand of auteurism, with its adoption of pantheon-making, an exercise that had so far excluded women. But as they also make clear, even if this did 'include an equal number of women directors, it is still an oppressive theory making the director a superstar as if filmmaking were a one-man show.'⁸ Yet as several of *Women & Film's* articles demonstrate, Beh and Salyer's anti-auteurist stance appears at odds with that of other contributors, such as April Ford, Ellen Keneshea, Beverley Walker (see Chapter IV). What's more, the desire to legitimise the work of individual women working in film, particularly as directors, was seemingly as strong as the desire to challenge oppressive hierarchies.

In this Chapter I examine the writing in the magazine on contemporary women's filmmaking and discussions of directors that are deemed to fit the mould of feminist auteurs. Much of the writing on women directors in *Women & Film* deploys an auteurist conception of filmmaking, not only in their emphasis on the director's role over other filmmaking roles, but also in the notion that these women may have managed to make films that are different from men's, and potentially more interesting to feminists, by subtly overriding some of the conventions of commercial cinema. The conflation of female and feminist, a filmmaker's gender and a supposed feminist content in their films or politics, is for the most part, not addressed by those publishing on women directors.⁹ The implicit assumption is often that becoming a woman director or making a film in an environment so seemingly hostile to women's expression is, in itself, a feminist act.

⁶ Smith, interview.

⁷ Barbara Hammer, interview with author, 30 April 2015, New York, NY.

⁸ Editors, 'Overview,' 5-6.

⁹ Thw editors, Bill Nichols, Irwin Silber, Sharon Smith, and Christine Mohanna all note this in their respective articles for *Women & Film* 1.

New Wave Mothers: Nelly Kaplan and Agnès Varda

For researchers like Sharon Smith and others contributing to *Women & Film*, the most visible contemporary women filmmakers in the early 1970s are Francophone directors rather than their US counterparts. This is not only due to the popularity of European film in the US, but also down to the very different landscape of the European film industry, and its comparative accessibility for women compared to Hollywood. The smaller scale and more artisanal production methods of filmmaking in France, particularly within 1960s New Wave cinema, allowed some women to circumvent the gender restrictions which characterized the Hollywood system. Nelly Kaplan and Agnès Varda established their careers during the 1950s and their films reached US audiences thanks to the popularity of the European New Wave, then being screened in arthouse cinemas, international film festivals, and student film clubs. As such, when feminists began searching for contemporary women auteurs, European auteurs like Kaplan and Varda were some of the first that they lighted on.

Nelly Kaplan and La Fiancée du Pirate

Kaplan is the most frequently and consistently discussed director in *Women & Film*. Her portrait appears on the front and back cover of issue 2, rendered in a halftone style, composed of printed dots (fig. 45 and fig. 46).¹⁰ Originally from Argentina, Kaplan had lived and worked in France since emigrating there at the age of 18. She initially found work as a journalist, writing on film for the Buenos Aires-based Argentine Cinémathèque. She eventually worked as an assistant to the director Abel Gance (1889-1981) on *La Tour de Nesle* (1955). She then went on to direct several short documentaries on artists such as Pablo Picasso (*Le regard Picasso*, 1967) and Victor Hugo (*Dessins et merveilles*, 1966). Aside from Gance, Kaplan collaborated with several figures from French cinema during the 1970s, including Claude Makovski, René Guyonnet and Jean Chapot. Some critics have indicated that Kaplan's close association with the male-dominated French film world led her to be rejected by some feminist film critics; her frequent exploration of male and female sexuality in her films may also be a factor.¹¹ Her work has certainly received less attention from feminists post-1975 than Varda.

¹⁰ This image by Sam Picone also features on the cover of Bonnie Dawson's *An Annotated Guide to 800 16mm Films by Women* (San Francisco: Booklegger Press, 1975).

¹¹ See Chris Holmlund, 'The Eyes of Nelly Kaplan,' *Screen* 37, no. 4 (Winter 1996): 351-367. More recently, feminist critics have pointed to the relationship between the women characters

Kaplan's first feature, *La Fiancée du pirate* (1969), is the subject of a review by Brenda Roman in *Women & Film's* first issue. The film tells the story of Marie (Bernadette Lafont), a young woman who lives with her mother in a small French village. The pair are impoverished, outcasts, and generally looked down on by the other villagers. When her mother is killed in a hit and run accident, her body is dumped at Marie's shack and the townspeople make little effort to seek out the culprit. Marie decides to trick some of the villagers into getting drunk and digging her mother's grave for her. As Roman points out, Marie decides to 'accept the villagers' labelling of her as an outcast and to create out of her oppression an identity at once proud and rebellious' by 'charging for what she previously gave away for free' – sex – and asserting the shift in power relations this brings about by raising her prices at random.¹² Once she has financial control over several of the villagers, including the mayor and parish priest, she exposes their hypocrisy with sound recordings from their liaisons. She burns down her shack before the outraged villagers get the chance and leaves town. The film ends with the suggestion that Marie will rejoin her only friend and possible lover, a movie projectionist, as she sets off in the direction of a neighbouring village where he is screening a film called *La Fiancée du pirate*.

Brenda Roman, who refers to the director as 'the French film historian,' writes that Kaplan 'skilfully enhances the farcical qualities of [Marie's] revolt by playing with the witch-gypsy characterization the townspeople have attributed to her,' and compares the screenplay to a stage farce.¹³ This feature, she argues, is emphasized by the use of a static camera and medium-long shots, with characters 'dashing into and out of [...] shots much as they would enter and leave a stage.'¹⁴ Roman asserts that, as a result, the subsequent use of close-ups appears 'heavy-handed.'¹⁵ In one example, she describes its effect as 'self-conscious' and stylistically 'out of keeping with the movie': 'It starts in a slow zoom along the blood-stained path [...], to the grave where [Marie] is standing with a spade, and then up to her face where it holds far too long.'¹⁶ Although this is a generally positive review, Roman concludes with the suggestion that Kaplan's ending is too optimistic. She prefers instead the 'sobering' epilogue with which the film's source text – Bertolt Brecht's play *The Three-Penny Opera* (1928) – ends. 'In real life,' Roman contends, 'the townsmen would impose their "price control" in earnest. Mary would be

and the camera; see Geetha Ramanathna, *Feminist Auteurs: Reading Women's Films* (London: Wallflower, 2006).

¹² Brenda Roman, 'Dirty Mary,' *Women & Film* 1 (1972), 67-68.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 68.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 68-69.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 69.

reduced to servitude again, her rebellion crushed. [...] She would unlikely have such an ideal means of escape.’¹⁷

In *Women & Film 2*, Kaplan is interviewed by the New York-based photographer Kay Harris, one of the women involved in organizing the 1972 First International Festival of Women’s Films in New York City.¹⁸ *La Fiancée* was one of thirteen features shown during the festival, and was screened three times over the course of its two-week run. Two of Kaplan’s other works were shown at the festival: her second feature, *Papa les petits bateaux* (1971), and the documentary short, *Abel Gance, hier et demain* (1963).¹⁹ After briefly recounting the details of Kaplan’s earlier career as a writer, Harris opens the interview by asking her about the revenge theme at the heart of her film and its relevance to women’s liberation. Kaplan answers that women ‘have been wounded for over 40,000 years. To take possession of their strength again, they must have revenge.’²⁰ This wounding is said to include the suppression of women’s freedoms by religious institutions. When asked about the oppressive role of the Catholic Church, Kaplan claims it is necessary to ‘fight every church.’²¹ They also discuss the difficult reception enjoyed by *La Fiancée* when she first sought to distribute it:

They told me – when I had problems with showing the film – “If at least she was killed” ... but I don’t want to have her killed! It’s so incredible! She can make a mess but she should be killed like in westerns [...]? No! I like witches to win.²²

The conversation eventually turns to Kaplan’s thoughts on sexism in the industry and the difficulties women face in achieving the success of their male counterparts. Kaplan claims that prejudice exists ‘against all of us – all women,’ and against her as a director in particular ‘because my films are not too sweet.’²³ When asked if she would compromise this stance in order to finance her work, she replies that ‘If it’s to eat I prefer making documentaries...then at least I will not betray something.’²⁴ She also reflects on the difficulties of finding an all-female crew for her films, particularly camerawomen, and remarks that women ‘have to push...to kick’ to gain access to these roles.²⁵ The interview ends on a question about the women’s movement in France;

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Interview most likely took place in late 1971, as Harris refers to an upcoming vote on New York abortion laws as taking place in January 1972. The image is somewhat reminiscent of the pop art of Roy Lichtenstein.

¹⁹ *Papa* was added at a later date to the schedule, according to an ad for that day’s screenings in the *New York Times*, 16 June 1972.

²⁰ Kaplan in Kay Harris, ‘An Interview with Nelly Kaplan,’ *Women & Film 2* (1972), 34.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid, 35.

²³ Ibid, 36.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

Harris asks Kaplan if it is growing, to which Kaplan replies that 'it is like an underground stream – you cannot see it until the river comes out.'²⁶

Kaplan's films act as a kind of touchstone throughout the magazine, with *La fiancée du pirate* referred to by at least one contributor in every issue (see index in Appendix D). Not only did her films screen at nearly every women's film festival of the period, she also attended several of them, giving interviews like the one published in *Women & Film*. As Harris' article reveals, despite her close ties with the male status quo in French filmmaking, Kaplan was openly supportive of the women's movement and the rebellious women protagonists in her films offered her audiences intriguing feminist heroines that challenged their patriarchal oppression.

Agnes Varda

Born in Belgium in 1928, Agnès Varda had initially been a student of art history at the École du Louvre, shifting to still photography at the École de Vaugirard and eventually working as a freelance photographer for most of the 1950s. Alain Resnais edited her first foray in filmmaking, *La Pointe Courte* (1955) and later introduced her to the writers and filmmakers associated with *Cahiers du cinéma*: André Bazin, Francois Truffaut, Eric Rohmer and Jean-Luc Godard.²⁷ She eventually became part of the Nouvelle Vague-affiliated *Groupe Rive Gauche* or Left Bank group along with Resnais and film-essayist Chris Marker. In 1958, she married fellow director Jacques Demy; Varda's biographer Alison Smith states that an 'explicit mutual influence [between Varda and Demy] is minimal or absent,' but she also acknowledges that 'events in Demy's career undoubtedly influenced Varda and vice versa.'²⁸

Varda is interviewed in issue 5-6 (1974) by filmmaker Jacqueline Levitin, in an article entitled 'Mother of the New Wave.' The interview is prefaced by an annotated filmography, which lists her work up to 1970 and includes her six features and seven shorts made since 1954. Varda is upfront about her attitude to feminism and her

²⁶ Ibid. Kaplan was of interest to feminist critics outside of the magazine. Writing in 1973, Claire Johnston highlights two significant aspects of her work of particular relevance to feminism – her interest in surrealism (married with a strong anti-clericalism) with its interest in the unconscious and the erotic, and the influence of Hollywood on her cinema, and subsequently her emphasis on pleasure and entertainment. Johnston, 'Women's Cinema as Counter-Cinema,' *Notes on Women's Cinema*, ed. Johnston (London: SEFT; BFI, 1973), 24-31.

²⁷ Alison Smith, *Agnès Varda* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), 6.

²⁸ Ibid, 7. For example, the couple spent three years in California thanks to Demy's contract with Columbia Pictures, during which time Varda made *Lion's Love* and two shorts made with the help of the Pacific Film Archive's Tom Luddy. Alison Smith, 8.

reluctance to embrace certain aspects of the women's movement, particularly as it relates to filmmaking.

If society is anti-women,' she explains, 'let's face that little by little. But that shouldn't be your starting point of view. [...] I never thought of myself as a limited human being because of being a woman. I never thought I was "half a man." I never wanted to be a man.²⁹

Furthermore, she dismisses the idea that her career has been affected by her gender, remarking that 'I never had any problem such as the camera man saying "[...] I can't listen to you because you are merely a woman." [...] No one said it was a minor film because I was a woman.'³⁰ She talks instead about the challenges posed by the conservatism and bureaucratic tendencies of the 1950s French film industry, in which directors had to complete five apprenticeships before being allowed the title of director. As Varda recounts, while making *La Pointe Courte*, she 'didn't bother with laws or unions [...]. It was a way of eliminating the "taboo" of Cinema, of the closed world of cinema and its hierarchies.'³¹

As she reflects in the interview, despite the success of her first feature, *La Pointe Courte*, Varda believed her foray into cinema to be 'a one time thing.' It was only after making a series of shorts – *O Saisons, ô châteaux, Du côté de la côte* and *L'opéra-mouffe* (all 1958) – that she developed the ambition to become a filmmaker.³² Although she describes some of the difficulties she faced making her second feature *Cléo from 5 to 7* (1962), she is nonetheless reluctant to attribute this to any kind of sexism or industry prejudice against its female-centric subject. Speaking in 1974, Varda is skeptical of feminism becoming 'fashionable,' although she acknowledges that the recent growth of the movement is positive. She also voices her irritation with the idea of feminism as an exclusive lens through which to view her films, although she also admits that, thanks to her own 'self-education on feminism,' she 'can now see [her] own films with a new vision because of the things that have happened, because of the books which [she] has read.'³³ As she continues to reflect, her attitude appears to further shift from the start of the interview:

I agree with the new generation of women even though I think they are wrong to have a point of view even before starting anything, and want only to express the desire to change themselves and [...] the image of women in society. I think they are right, and I am myself willing to do the same. But I don't think it means

²⁹ Varda in Jacqueline Levitin, 'Mother of the New Wave: An Interview with Agnès Varda,' *Women & Film* 5-6 (1974), 63. This interview was reprinted in *Agnès Varda: Interviews*, ed. T. Jefferson Kline (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2013), 53-65.

³⁰ Varda in Levitin, 63.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² *Ibid.*

³³ *Ibid.*, 64.

we have to forget that whatever women have made previously, for or against women, has been a way of women to promote themselves, to come up enough so that other women could speak from a feminist point of view [...]. So I can say I am a feminist. But for other feminists, I am not feminist enough.'³⁴

Varda appears to be expressing her concern with feminism's perceived rejection of the feminine or perhaps of the achievements of an earlier generation of women (like herself) who have become a part of the status quo. When asked if she would like to make a feminist film, Varda replies, yes, 'but it would never be my only aim.'³⁵ Her discomfort with feminism as an exclusive perspective is reiterated in her rejection of women-only film festivals, explaining 'I don't think we should put so much importance on the sex of the filmmaker, but on what he is saying about women and how.'³⁶ Despite this, three of her films were screened at the 1972 International Festival of Women's Films in New York: *Cléo from 5 to 7*, *L'opéra mouffe* and *Black Panthers: A Report* (aka *Huey*, 1969).

Varda later appears to reverse her position when she is asked about the types of female characters that appear in her films. She acknowledges that

Something has to be changed because the image of women in film has been strongly built up by men, and accepted by them, but also accepted by women [...] as women we have accepted that women should always be beautiful, well dressed, loving [...]. It's always made me furious, but I haven't up till now been able to change that image. [...] In most films the main concern is a woman's relationship with love. And that should be changed.'³⁷

But she also expresses a belief in the importance of audience pleasure, remarking that audiences seek entertainment from film. 'We shouldn't forget,' she explains, 'that the movies is [sic] a popular art; people go to the movies to have a good time.'³⁸ As a result, she argues, 'we have to change the image of women, but we have to be careful not to become such bores that no one wants to listen.'³⁹

Levitin returns to the question of women in the industry, asking whether Varda feels a responsibility to champion other women in her field. 'If I can have a woman' for a position on one of her films, she explains, 'I take her. If there is a man who does the job better I take the man.'⁴⁰ Varda recounts the experience of working with an all-female crew on a film project about abortion, eventually moving on to discuss the

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid. Her use of other male pronoun is interesting; it may be a typo, a mistranslation, or simply showing her adherence to the grammatical convention of using 'he' as the default pronoun. Given the context however, it is particularly puzzling.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid, 65.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

challenges faced by women filmmakers, an issue she had earlier dismissed.⁴¹ She cites two issues: equality in the workplace and the problem of childcare. 'In the meantime,' she suggests, 'there is only one solution, and that is to be a kind of "super-woman" and lead several lives at once.'⁴² She has struggled to do this, she admits: 'to not give up children, to not give up the cinema, to not give up men.'⁴³

Levitin and Varda end the conversation by reflecting on the importance of the audience. Varda expresses her skepticism of the idea of a popular cinema specifically aimed at the working class. She disagrees with the approach of figures such as Jean-Luc Godard, remarking

I am not militantly political enough to say from now on I am going to make films for the fishermen of *La Pointe Courte* and for the workers of the Renault factory so that they will enjoy it, but also recognise themselves and identify [...]. I am not modest enough. And not militant enough. And too egotistical. I still participate in a bourgeois culture in which a film is made by an artist.⁴⁴

The impression one gets from Varda's interview in *Women & Film* is of a director trying to determine her position regarding the women's movement and its relation to her filmmaking. While she initially appears inimical to the movement, she later acknowledges its impact on her work and her involvement in feminist projects, such as her film on abortion. Given Varda's later, more explicit engagement with feminist issues in her later films, such as *L'une chante, l'autre pas* (1977), this 1972 interview reveals her at a turning point in her political consciousness.

It is clear from the repeated engagement of *Women & Film's* contributors with Kaplan and Varda that these filmmakers were of great interest to feminists in search of female auteurs. With their connections to French artistic and cinematic avant-gardes, and close ties to distinguished male directors - Abel Gance, Jacques Demy, and the Left Bank group - Kaplan and Varda offered feminist critics possible counterparts to the male auteurist directors they worked alongside. What's more, both filmmakers put women characters at the forefront of their narratives, frequently subverting stereotypes of heroines. It is perhaps this aspect that qualifies these women as auteurs of interest to feminists as it suggests a persistence of vision and their rejection of stereotypical depictions of women. A testament to this is the frequency with which their films were shown at women's film festivals between 1972 and 1976.⁴⁵ However,

⁴¹ The abortion film may refer to *Mon corps à moi* (unrealized) or *Réponse des femmes* (1975).

⁴² Varda in Levitin, 65.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 103.

⁴⁵ At least one of both directors' films were screened at the First International Festival of Women's Films 1972, New York; The Women's Event at Edinburgh, 1972; Toronto Women and

neither discussion of Kaplan or Varda offers much in the way of a detailed analysis of their work: Roman's review of *La Fiancée* focuses mostly on its plot and does not make any comparisons to Kaplan's other work, and unsurprisingly, Harris' interview does not provide much opportunity for textual analysis of her films. The same can be said for discussions of Varda. Given that Kaplan and Varda's films of this period mostly adhere to classical cinematic conventions, their work perhaps did not obviously demand a consideration of their aesthetic and narrative devices in the way that some of their contemporaries' deliberate subversion of cinematic codes and audiences' expectations did, as in Yvonne Rainer's films (discussed below). It is perhaps their resemblance to the male French New Wave and European art cinema directors that contributes to their status as potential feminist auteurs, at least at first glance.

As interviews, these articles share a similar format and follow a similar line of questioning: how did you get started in film? What have been your experiences as a woman director? How does your work relate to the feminist movement? This approach rarely provides the opportunity for a detailed discussion of the style and themes of these women's films. Instead these articles introduce readers to these directors and their oeuvres, presenting their careers within the context of French or European film culture. Often, their feminism lies not so much in the narratives or visual style of their films, but in their pursuit of a film career on a par with men. In each case, these women worked collaboratively or were apprenticed by more established male directors. This fact is frequently discussed but rarely dwelled on by interviewers, undoubtedly because it complicates these women's position as feminist auteurs through the inference of patronage, collusion with the 'enemy,' or simply being too close to the male status quo. Nonetheless, their presence in *Women & Film*, as well as other magazines, journals and selection for women's film festivals, led them to enjoy a privileged place in the development of feminist film studies.

American Auteurs: on the margins and outside the mainstream

Barbara Loden's Wanda

Women & Film features comparatively few discussions of women directors working within the context of commercial feature filmmaking in the US. Barbara Loden was primarily known as an actress for film and theatre, best known for her role in

Film International Festival, 1973; Women's Cinema, London, 1973; Films by Women/Chicago '74; Womanview, Iowa, 1974.

Splendour in the Grass (1961) and for playing the Marilyn Monore-inspired lead in Arthur Miller's play *After the Fall* (1964) both directed by Elia Kazan, whom she later married.⁴⁶ She is interviewed in issue 5-6 (1974) by the Madison Women's Media Collective about *Wanda*, the 1970 film she wrote, directed and starred in.⁴⁷ As the interviewers and Loden make clear, *Wanda* was made outside of the context of 1970s feminism, before Loden was aware of the women's liberation movement. She recounts that the film's plot was inspired by a news story in a local paper about a woman who became an accomplice to a bank robber, and was eventually sentenced to prison. Loden remembers, 'I always kept this article, although I didn't really know why. Then [...] I saw *Breathless*. Afterward I said, "I think this story should make a film like *Breathless*. Then I wrote it into screenplay form.'⁴⁸

In the film, Wanda is a young working class woman, living in a bleak industrial landscape in the coalmining country of the eastern United States. She loses her husband, custody of her children and a home with little protest and drifts into a casual relationship with Dennis, who turns out to be a petty criminal with plans to upgrade to bank robbery. Easily subdued and lacking in autonomy, Wanda soon becomes his accomplice, a job at which she is ultimately inept. She takes a wrong turn on the way to the bank and is therefore absent when Dennis is shot and killed by police. She continues to drift and at the end of the film is left drinking with a group of similarly purposeless wanderers. The film is in many ways reminiscent of Godard's *Vivre sa vie* (1962), with the aimless Nana who similarly loses her husband and home and drifts into a dangerous criminal world. However, while Wanda accidentally wanders off during Dennis' botched bank robbery, Nana is caught in the crossfire at the end of *Vivre sa vie*. As Loden further reveals, 'I made up the girl's character based on [the news story], and also from myself really, ways that I had felt in my life. It was all from my imagination or my feelings.'⁴⁹

As the interviewers explain in their introduction, some feminist commentators were critical of the film, particularly its bleak ending. Loden responds that 'The whole point of why I wanted to make the film was that these women never get a chance; nobody knows about their existence.'⁵⁰ Referring specifically to a review in *Ms.* magazine, she remarks that 'the woman who wrote this article really doesn't respect a

⁴⁶ She married Kazan (*A Streetcar Named Desire*, 1951; *On The Waterfront*, 1954) in 1968.

⁴⁷ The Wisconsin-based Madison Women's Media Collective, founded circa 1972-73, included Maureen Turim and Diane Waldman.

⁴⁸ Madison Women's Media Collective, 'Barbara Loden Revisited,' *Women & Film* 5-6 (1974), 68.

⁴⁹ Loden, 'Barbara Loden Revisited,' 68.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

human being like Wanda.’⁵¹ The Madison collective express their agreement with Loden, pointing to her importance ‘as a feminist artist explor[ing] the situation of women who are suffering, [...] destroyed.’⁵² They go on to comment

Wanda is never mythologized nor glamourized and women of her position are too rarely presented on screen. [...] Wanda is the ultimate victim of a sexist-capitalist society.⁵³

The group go on to ask about Loden’s experiences on set and being a director. She reveals that she had ‘never really aimed at making a commercial movie. I felt, at best, *Wanda* would be shown in YMCAs or something like that.’⁵⁴ As she recounts, she worked with a small-scale crew – camera, sound and runner – and herself. Loden in fact admits that she originally tried to convince her husband Kazan to direct the film instead of her: ‘I tried to get him to do *Wanda*, but he wasn’t interested. He said [...] I should do it myself.’⁵⁵

As Loden explains, ‘when I made *Wanda*, I didn’t know anything about consciousness raising or women’s liberation. [...] The picture was not about women’s liberation. It was really about the oppressions of women or people.’⁵⁶ She also expresses doubt about the effectiveness of the film for didactic or consciousness-raising purposes. ‘I don’t know about bringing about any social change. I think [films] can but not in any immediate way. I think it’s a very subliminal, slow process [...]. Yet I do think films have an influence in the sense that they are like myths.’⁵⁷ She is also skeptical of a pre-existing female aesthetic. ‘Being a woman is unexplored territory,’ she comments, ‘and we’re pioneers of a sort, discovering what it means to be a woman.’⁵⁸

She concludes with a reflection on her attitude to the female characters she has played as an actress. ‘A lot of actresses,’ she reports, ‘even before we heard anything about women’s liberation, just couldn’t bring ourselves to do certain parts. [...] They weren’t human or real. They had nothing to do with being a woman, but we didn’t know it then. We didn’t put our objections in terms of, “See how women are presented.” [...] We just instinctively rejected them as being bad.’⁵⁹

⁵¹ Ibid. Loden refers to a review in unspecified issue of *Ms. magazine*.

⁵² Madison Women’s Media Collective, ‘Barbara Loden Revisited,’ 67.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Loden, ‘Barbara Loden Revisited,’ 68.

⁵⁵ Ibid, 69.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid, 70.

Like *La Fiancée du pirate* and *Cléo from 5 to 7*, *Wanda* screened regularly at women's film festivals of the period. Loden clearly presented a compelling example of feminist cinematic authorship for critics. As an actress-turned-director and former chorus line dancer, she embodies the ultimate rejection of women's objectification on screen, having quite literally stepped out of it to get behind the camera.⁶⁰ In choosing to work with such a small crew and to herself portray its unglamorous working-class protagonist in this highly personal story, she further distanced herself from the artifice and machismo associated with Hollywood. Perhaps even more so than Kaplan or Varda, Loden resembles a female version of Jean-Luc Godard in her rejection of the trappings of studio filmmaking and embrace of small-scale artisanal production, although she too was closely connected to its male status quo through her marriage to Kazan. Unfortunately, her interview in *Women & Film* does not include much consideration of the film's *cinéma vérité* aesthetic. Given Eileen McGarry's attack on this style of filmmaking in the proceeding issue, this certainly seems like a missed opportunity, particularly since the interview is conducted by members of a women's filmmaking collective.

Yvonne Rainer

Experimental and avant-garde women filmmakers do not feature prominently in *Women & Film's* earlier issues. However, in issue 5-6 Chuck Kleinhans writes about Yvonne Rainer's *Lives of Performers* (1972). Rainer, whose film had premiered in New York the same year that *Women & Film* had first appeared, had migrated into filmmaking from the city's avant-garde dance community, where she was a celebrated dancer and choreographer. *Lives of Performers* draws on her experiences in dance, featuring a cast of dancers variously rehearsing sequences but also re-enacting personal dramas. Kleinhans begins by emphasizing the film's formal complexity, describing it as resembling a labyrinth. "There is an entrance, and an exit, but in between as one inexorably progresses in space/labyrinth (time/film), each viewer can move along various levels, side passages, parallel corridors, detours, and so forth."⁶¹ As a result, he argues, this is a 'profoundly personal film in the sense that each viewer will have a very individual and unique response.'⁶²

⁶⁰ This is later employed as a device in later feminist films, such as by Sally Potter *Thriller* (1979) and in her casting of Julie Christie in *The Gold Diggers* (1983).

⁶¹ Chuck Kleinhans, 'Lives of Performers,' *Women & Film* 5-6 (1974), 52.

⁶² *Ibid.*

He contrasts the approach of *Lives* with the mimetic, 'window on the world' qualities of Hollywood narrative film, referring instead to Rainer's film as 'self-reflective': 'Rather than seeking closeness to life, Rainer's film eschews the concept of mimesis and substitutes a critique of mimesis. [...] We could say such films are like blueprints for windows and greenhouses on the world.'⁶³ One of the film's devices, he notes, is the use of a narrator, whose effect is 'to make obvious the clichés of the script [which is being read]. The mimetic Hollywood film never betrays a consciousness of its verbal/behavioural clichés; in fact it does its best to hide them.'⁶⁴ He asserts that *Lives*, on the other hand, is 'highly conscious of its artistry, of its artificiality, of its assault on the easy "identification" demanded by more representational films.'⁶⁵

Kleinhans ends by remarking on the film's utility as a text for understanding film; 'it is especially useful,' he explains, 'for filmmakers and film students interested in breaking with older forms of film,' although he warns against assigning it to those 'unfamiliar with or unsympathetic to experimental film.'⁶⁶ He does not reflect on the film within the context of feminism, or to a notion of feminist counter-cinema, although Rainer's films would later be held up as key examples of such filmmaking.

Rainer's *A Film About A Woman Who* (1975) is briefly reviewed in the Women's Independent Cinema section of issue 7 (1975) by associate editor Carol Wikarska. She refers to a 'tightly structured film' that 'thwarts all expectations of a continuous narrative' but is also 'unusually beautiful.'⁶⁷ She points out that language and communication, both verbal and physical, are the central concerns of this film. She quotes Rainer from an unknown source, as saying '

I wanted to reveal some very painful realities [...] which I had suffered through [...] and I could not think of any presentation of these realities that surpasses the impact of the written form. I had experimented with language in dance. Now, in this film, I was faced with the problem of creating a continuity through image and text without encouraging the anticipation of a continuous story, and yet not subverting the content of such a story which I wanted to reveal with as much clarity and nakedness as possible.⁶⁸

For Wikarska, Rainer achieves this through the film's structure, 'which mirrors the complexity and difficulty with which we become clear to one another.' 'Perhaps,' she finally ventures, 'this is a story about a woman who pretends to be asleep so to avoid

⁶³ Ibid, 53.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid, 54.

⁶⁷ Carol Wikarska, 'Independent Women's Cinema: A Film About a Woman Who,' *Women & Film* 7 (1975), 86.

⁶⁸ Yvonne Rainer in Ibid.

communication; and about another woman who reluctantly gives up being lost in a sleeping town.’⁶⁹

Loden and Rainer represent two quite different authorial modes as filmmakers. As a woman working well outside Hollywood, and from her long association with New York’s avant-garde art scene, Rainer is an artist-filmmaker, whose films are as likely to screen in a gallery as in a cinema or film festival. However, Loden’s involvement in Hollywood as an actress, positioned her film within the US independent filmmaking model that took inspiration from the French New Wave and would later underpin New Hollywood cinema. Key for feminists in both cases is these women’s independence from ‘the system,’ and their engagement with women’s lives and power dynamics at work in their relationships with men. But Rainer’s explicit subversion of narrative convention and cinematic visual codes presented a potentially radical feminist engagement with film as a medium. Her work featured prominently in *Camera Obscura*’s first issue. Recalling her first encounter with Rainer’s films, Sandy Flitterman relates ‘*Lives of Performers* and *A Story About a Woman Who, I was just knocked out when I saw those.*’⁷⁰ *Camera Obscura*’s debut editorial refers to her films as specifically ‘contribut[ing] to the development of a feminist counter-cinema both by having as their central concern a feminist problematic, and by operating specific challenges to cinematic codes and narrative conventions of illusionist cinema.’⁷¹

Beyond Europe and the US: Sarah Maldoror

As these articles and interviews indicate, very little attention was at this time being paid to women filmmakers from outside Europe and the US. Sharon Smith’s article provides chapters on women from North America, France, England, Germany, USSR, Italy and Eastern Europe. A final section, entitled ‘Other Countries’ lists some directors from Spain, Belgium, Canada, Australia, Argentina, Mexico, Egypt and Austria, sometimes only naming one director from a country.⁷² Issue 5-6 of the magazine

⁶⁹ Wikarska, 86.

⁷⁰ She also notes that *ArtForum*’s coverage of her work was instrumental in instigating *Camera Obscura*’s interest in her work. Flitterman, interview with author, Hoboken, NJ, 3 November 2013.

⁷¹ Camera Obscura Collective, ‘Feminism and Film: Critical Approaches,’ *Camera Obscura* 1, no. 1 (1976), 4. The editors later write that their discussions with Rainer forced them to rethink some of these assumptions. See ‘Chronology: Camera Obscura Collective,’ *Camera Obscura* 1-2, no. 3-4 (Summer 1979), 11.

⁷² In her later book from which this article is extracted, Smith does survey the African continent more thoroughly, identifying Sarah Maldoror, Hashim el Nahhas (Egypt), Sofia Ferchiou, Najet Mabaouj, Fatma Scandrani (all Tunisia), Thérèse Sita-Bella (Cameroon), Efua Sutherland (Ghana). She also provides names of women directors from China, India and several Latin

features a report on the Tokyo-New York Video Express, a three-day screening of films by Japanese and American video and filmmakers that took place in Japan in January 1974.⁷³ Nonetheless, an obvious geographical and cultural gap existed between US feminist critics and the work of women active outside of the United States and Europe, despite the efforts of Third World Liberation activism to build bridges between Western radical politics and those in developing nations. Those organising the early women's film festivals clearly had difficulty finding films from beyond Europe and English-speaking countries. The majority of films shown at the First International Festival of Women's Films in New York in 1972 were US productions, with the rest coming from Canada, Australia and Europe. A programme entitled 'Women in Arabia and Africa' featured no films by women from these countries, but experimental or documentary films by American and European women: Marie Mencken's *Arabesque for Kenneth Anger* (1961), *Magic Horse* by Lotte Reiniger (1953) and Eve Arnold's *Behind the Veil* (1972).

However, in issue 5-6 of *Women & Film*, Sylvia Harvey, then an associate editor at *Screen*, published the magazine's only article on a black woman director working outside the West.⁷⁴ Harvey's article is a collection of documents relating to the work of Sarah Maldoror. Born Sarah Ducados in France to a Guadeloupean father and French mother, she began her career during the 1950s as an actress in Paris theatres, founding her own troupe, Les Griotes, in 1956. She eventually became involved in African independence movements and liberation politics, marrying the Angolan poet and writer Mario de Andrade. Deciding that cinema was the ideal political medium to assist in African political struggles, she trained at the Moscow Film Academy between 1961 and 1962. After gaining experience in militant filmmaking working with Mark Donskoy of the Moscow Film Academy on *Hello Children* (1962); Gillo Pontecorvo on *Battle of Algiers* (1966); and Ahmed Lalleem on *Elles* (1966), Maldoror made her first short film, *Monangambée*, in 1970 in Algeria.

American countries. See Smith, *Women Who Make Movies* (New York: Hopkinson and Blake, 1975) 91-144.

⁷³ Kyoko Michishita, 'Tokyo-New York Video Express,' *Women & Film* 5-6 (1975): 86-87. See index in Appendix D for filmmakers discussed.

⁷⁴ Harvey was another member of Nichols' cohort of PhD students at UCLA at this time; she later published her thesis as *May '68 and Film Culture* (London: BFI, 1978). Although several articles and interviews relating to Maldoror had appeared in French periodicals as early as 1969, this is one of the few articles in English of the period to look at Maldoror and her work in any detail. The director is briefly mentioned in several English articles predating Harvey's: Hannes Kamphausen, 'Cinema in Africa Survey,' *Cineaste* 5, no. 3 (Summer 1972); Lyle Pearson, 'Four Years of African Film,' *Film Quarterly* 26, no. 3 (Spring 1973). *Sambizanga*, which was screened in 1973 at the Toronto Women and Film International Festival, was reviewed in *Variety* (25 April 1973) and by Michael Kerbel in the *Village Voice* (6 Dec 1973).

Harvey's article opens with some thoughts on Maldoror's feature *Sambizanga* (1970). *Sambizanga* was screened at the 1973 Women's Cinema season in London, the Toronto Women and Film International Festival and Chicago/Films by Women '74. Harvey's observations begin somewhat confusingly, with no introduction to the film under discussion: 'It is these images of closeness, collective responsibility and sharing, rather than any speeches, that form the semantic substance of the film.'⁷⁵ Harvey remarks that *Sambizanga* 'does not show [...] the levels of colonial oppression,' nor does it show 'the causes of that brutality which lie in the economic relationship between Portugal and its colonies.'⁷⁶ What's more, she continues, it fails to show 'how the developing consciousness of the woman' – Maria (played by Elisa Andrade) – 'is translated into political action,' although she acknowledges the significance of being shown 'the beginnings of that change in consciousness.'⁷⁷ Harvey's observations are followed by 'Some Notes on Recent African Struggles' and 'Some Notes on Sarah Maldoror,' also by Harvey, that provide a background of the political conflicts between Portugal and its colonies relevant to the Angolan setting of *Sambizanga*, and details of Maldoror's life and films. In the subsequent sections, 'It Takes Time to March,' Maldoror reflects on making *Sambizanga*. This is prefaced by a synopsis written by the editors of the Swedish magazine, *Film & TV*. In the next section, '*Monangambéee*,' Nadja Kasji discusses Maldoror's short film in an article reprinted from the Paris-based journal *Africasie*.⁷⁸ An interview with Maldoror, also reprinted from *Film & TV*, provides the third and final part of this article.

Maldoror was part of a vanguard of filmmakers working in Africa and influenced by Pan-Africanism, Third World Liberation politics, and anti-colonial struggles in Africa and beyond, as well as the militant filmmaking theories of figures such as Fernando Solanas and Octavia Getino (see Chapter I). While contemporaries like Lalleem worked in documentary filmmaking, Maldoror employed fictional narratives and was sceptical of overly didactic political film. She explains in Harvey's article that she made *Sambizanga* to draw the attentions of European audiences to the conflicts in Angola, Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau but had no intention of making "a good little Negro"

⁷⁵ Sylvia Harvey, 'Third World Perspectives: Focus on Sarah Maldoror,' *Women & Film* 5-6 (1974), 71. Underneath is an image from *Sambizanga*, of a scene that arguably could be taken as an example of such a scene of 'closeness,' and therefore points to the film being discussed.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ *Ibid.* Based on real events, in *Sambizanga*, a member of Angola's independence campaign, Domingos Xavier (Domingos Oliviera), dies after being tortured by police while his wife (Andrade), tries to uncover his fate.

⁷⁸ This is cited from a 1969 edition of *Africasie*, although no other reference details are provided. Harvey, 73. Maldoror's own writing, translated and reprinted from the Swedish *Film & TV* magazine, was later reprinted in *Women and the Cinema*, ed. Karyn Kay and Gerald Peary (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1977), 305-310.

film' and has 'no time for films filled with political rhetoric.'⁷⁹ She goes on to reveal that 'people often reproach me for [...] making a technically perfect film like any other European could do. But, technology belongs to everyone.'⁸⁰ This criticism can be related to her choice to work with conventional narrative fiction rather than the self-reflexive, Brechtian mode favoured by Third Cinema. What's more, she also rejects the catch-all concept of Third World liberation politics or identity: 'I make films so that people – no matter what race or color they are – can understand them. For me there are only exploiters and the exploited, that's all.'⁸¹ She concludes that 'What I wanted to show in *Sambizanga* is the aloneness of a woman and the time it takes to march.'⁸²

Maldoror's interview with Elin Clason of *Film & TV* opens with the director asserting that she is 'one of those modern women who try to combine work and family life, and just like it is for all the others, it's a problem.'⁸³ She reflects on the different attitudes to childcare in Africa and Europe, identifying a more collective sense of responsibility in African communities. She claims that she has faced few problems as a woman director, although, she notes, some commentators point to her focus on women and women's issues; 'Of course,' she counters, 'I as a woman, am interested in the problems of women.' However, she rejects the notion that films by women share 'common "female characteristics".'⁸⁴ Clason reports that Maldoror wants to 'show women who appear on the screen as they are in real life. These women can be beautiful, but they aren't lifeless dolls.'⁸⁵ Maldoror further asserts 'I'm only interested in women who struggle. These are the women I want to have in my films, not the others.'⁸⁶ She also claims to want to help other women working in film, and

Offer work to as many women as possible during the time I'm shooting my films. You have to support those women who want to work with film. Up until now, we are still few in number, but if you support those women in film who are around, then slowly our numbers will grow.⁸⁷

While she emphasises her support for women's liberation across the globe, her main interest, she admits, is 'the struggle against imperialism.'⁸⁸ This provokes her to reveal the ironic fact that she has so far only been able make her films with funding from the colonial powers, as financial support for her work is impossible to find in Africa. On the

⁷⁹ Maldoror, Harvey, 73.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 74.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 75.

⁸⁵ Clason, Harvey, 75.

⁸⁶ Maldoror, Harvey, 75.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

other hand, Clason reports that following a screening of *Sambizanga* and *Monangamgbée* at Stockholm's People's Theatre, an alternative movie house, some members of this European, leftist audience appeared 'obviously let down.'⁸⁹ In the post-screening discussion with the director, they complained that 'the woman in *Sambizanga* was too pretty, that the film was more about a single person than a political movement, that the woman's political consciousness wasn't completely made clear, etc. In short, the film wasn't revolutionary enough!'⁹⁰ Maldoror reportedly responded by pointing out that her protagonist's actions 'broke with the traditional passive role given to African women.'⁹¹ What's more, she countered according to Clason, 'it's not enough to just use documentary material when you're trying to educate people. It's easier to get people to go to a feature film which is about a man and a woman.'⁹² She further defends her choices, questioning 'why do Africans who are thrown on the screen have to be fat and ugly, why can't they be beautiful?'⁹³ While she feels the need to entertain her audience, she is reluctant to conform to others' expectations of her work:

I love freedom [...]. I won't be told what to do by any producer who doesn't like my subject matter. I'd rather wait the three years it would take me to scrape together the money I need. I want to make my films the way *I* want to make them.⁹⁴

She also outlines her intentions for her next film: 'to show that Africa also has a history, that Africans are not history-less savages, but that there have been many outstanding people coming out of the culture of Africa.'⁹⁵ The project in question is *King Christopher*, about the former Haitian slave Henry Christopher who led a rebellion against the French that eventually brought about Haiti's independence.⁹⁶

The interview concludes with a discussion of 'the greatest problem the African film faces': distribution. Maldoror reveals in her discussion of *Sambizanga* that her it is French distributors who will decide whether her film will be shown in Africa and therefore whether it will ever be seen by the kind of people it represents. Here she points to the fact that Algeria is the only African country to have its own distribution company; as a result, France has a monopoly on distribution across Africa. The

⁸⁹ Clason, Harvey, 75.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ Maldoror, quoted by Clason, Harvey, 110.

⁹⁵ Maldoror, Harvey, 75.

⁹⁶ According to Françoise Pfaff, Maldoror was still trying to get this film made in 1988. It does not appear to have ever been realized. See *Twenty-Five Black African Filmmakers: A Critical Study, with Filmography and Bio-Bibliography* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1988).

development of homegrown distribution networks is a priority, argues Maldoror. 'We have to develop a cultural policy which can help us, she insists, to 'show the world that such a thing as African film does exist. We have to teach ourselves to sell our films and then get them distributed.'⁹⁷

Maldoror's interview points to some of the complexities surrounding the notion of feminist auteurism and its intersection with colonial and racial oppression. As her story about screening her films for Western leftist audiences demonstrates, her work presented challenges to audiences from outside the particular African revolutionary filmmaking tradition in which she was operating. This perhaps reveals some of 1970s feminism's shortcomings in regards to race and broader geopolitical inequalities. Nonetheless, Maldoror's films became a staple of the women's film festivals and represent an important part of the canon of women's cinema that emerged during this period.

Conclusions

This chapter has looked at the discussion surrounding several key figures in the women's film movement of the 1970s. For American feminist critics already infatuated with European cinema, Kaplan and Varda appeared as two potentially readymade women auteurs, working in the French new wave tradition but producing films with female protagonists and themes. Despite their seeming distance from the women's liberation movement and initial reluctance to self-identify as feminists, interviews like those published in *Women & Film* allowed their reflections on their careers and their filmmaking to provide insight into the pervasiveness of sexism and discrimination beyond Hollywood. Their discovery by feminists in the early 1970s brought renewed interest in their existing oeuvres and both directors enjoyed significant attention at the women's film festivals of the period.

Barbara Loden represents a US version of the original auteur of the French new wave working with the American tradition of *cinema vérité* developed in the 1960s. Her tiny crew and adoption of *cinema vérité* positioned her as an alternative to mainstream, male-directed cinema of the period. Unlike Kaplan, Loden, Maldoror and Varda, the start of Rainer's career in filmmaking coincided with the rise of the women's liberation movement. Rainer also differs from these others in her background in contemporary dance and membership to the avant-garde New York cultural scene of the 1960s. Her work was first exhibited in art galleries rather than making its way onto

⁹⁷ Maldoror, quoted by Clason, Harvey, 110.

the traditional film distribution circuits, which is perhaps why it didn't appear in the first women's film festivals. Nonetheless, her engagement with 1970s film theory made her of particular interest to feminist critics seeking examples of feminist counter-cinema. Ultimately, *Women & Film's* coverage of these directors helped to generate and reinforce the canon of women's cinema of this era. Some have fared better than others in the decades since. Varda and Rainer have continued to produce work since the 1970s with their films often screened at festivals and venues like the BFI and the AFI.⁹⁸ Kaplan and Maldoror's films have enjoyed less attention in the decades since, although their films are also occasionally screened at women's film events.⁹⁹ However, Loden's *Wanda* has received renewed attention of late; it was restored in 2011 by the UCLA Film & Television Archive and has since screened at festivals and film venues around the world.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ A retrospective of Rainer's feature films was held at Siobhan Davies Dance studios in February 2018. Varda screened her 2016 film *Faces Places*, co-directed with contemporary artist JR at various festivals throughout 2017.

⁹⁹ *La fiancée du pirate* was screened in March 2017, introduced by Laura Mulvey at the Genesis Cinema in London. Showings of Maldoror's films appear even more rarely.

¹⁰⁰ In February 2017, a four-day women's film event was held in Belfast under the name *WANDA: Feminism and the Moving Image*. See <http://www.wandabelfast.com/>.



Figure 43, left: The cover of Cineaste no. 7 (1969), a photo from the filming of Romeo and Juliet (Franco Zeffirelli, 1968) featuring the leads Leonard Whiting and Olivia Hussey.

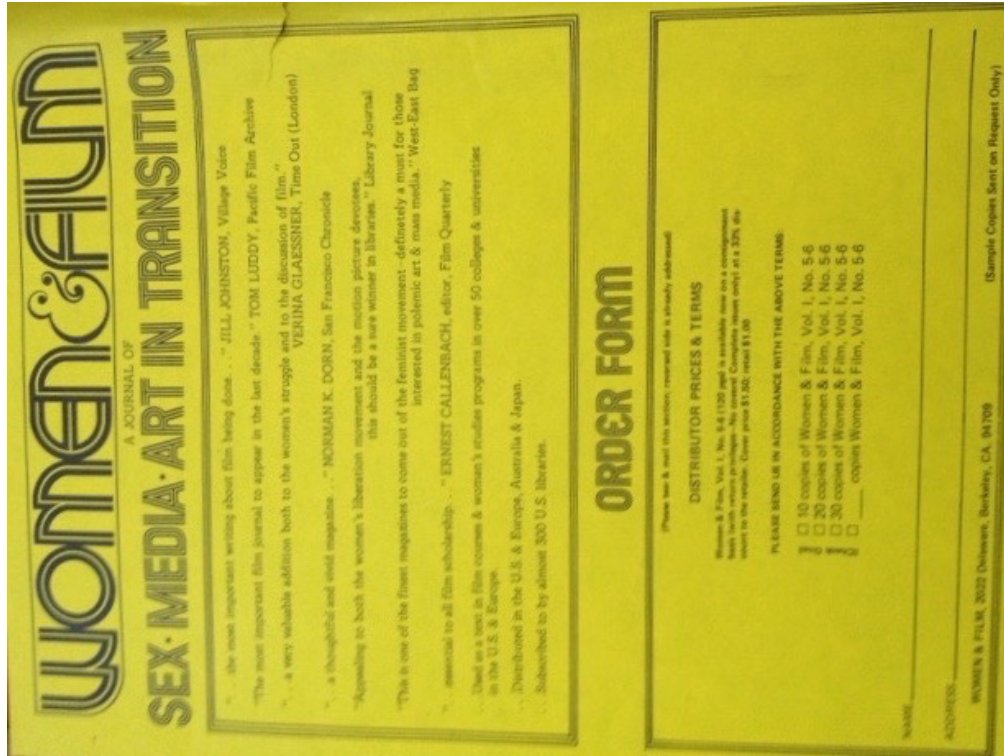
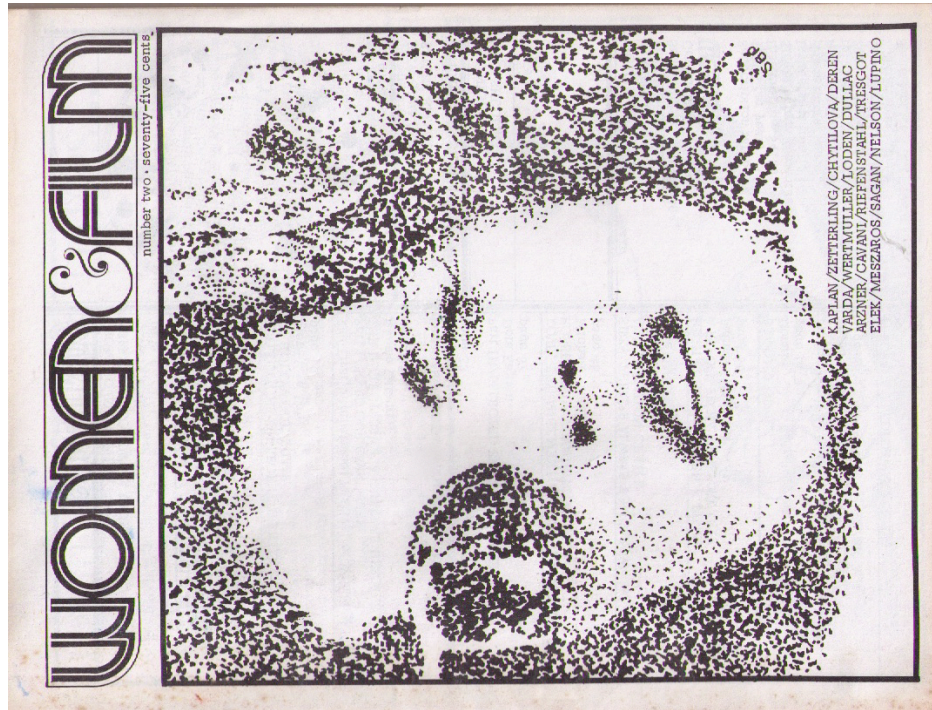


Figure 44, right: An order form for the magazine, circa 1974.



Figures 45 & 46: The back and front covers of *Women & Film 2* (1972).

INSPIRING FEMALE ROLES

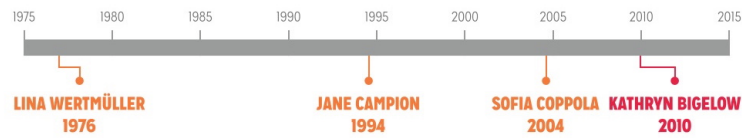
IN THE PAST DECADE



<p>KATNISS EVERDEEN <i>The Hunger Games</i></p> <p>AGE: 16</p> <p>TRAITS: Honorable, Determined, Courageous, Cunning, Protective, Practical</p>	<p>LISBETH SALANDER <i>The Girl With The Dragon Tattoo</i></p> <p>AGE: 25</p> <p>TRAITS: Intelligent, Rebellious, Anti-Social, Photographic Memory, Persistent, Knowledgeable</p>	<p>HELEN <i>Diary of a Mad Black Woman</i></p> <p>AGE: 30s</p> <p>TRAITS: Resilient, Romantic, Loyal, Trusting, Vengeful</p>	<p>MARJANE SATRAPI <i>Persepolis</i></p> <p>AGE: 10-22</p> <p>TRAITS: Precocious, Aggressive, Over-Confident, Passionate, Survival Skills, Stubborn</p>	<p>MERIDA <i>Brave</i></p> <p>AGE: 16</p> <p>TRAITS: Outgoing, Forceful, Headstrong, Willful, Fighter, Strong</p>
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GENDER BIAS IN AWARDS

IN ACADEMY AWARD HISTORY, FOUR FEMALE FILMMAKERS HAVE BEEN NOMINATED FOR BEST DIRECTOR, BUT ONLY BIGELOW HAS WON.



IN 2013, DURING THE 85TH ACADEMY AWARDS, ACROSS 19 CATEGORIES



THERE WERE NO FEMALE NOMINEES FOR DIRECTING, CINEMATOGRAPHY, FILM EDITING, WRITING (ORIGINAL SCREENPLAY), OR MUSIC (ORIGINAL SCORE).

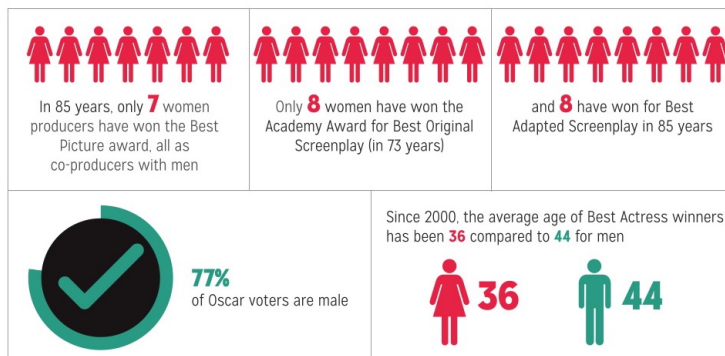


Figure 47: A detail from 'Gender Inequality in Film', New York Film Academy Blog, 25 November 2013.

CONCLUSIONS

The most important writing about film being done.

Jill Johnston¹

Essential to all film scholarship.

Ernest Callenbach²

The issues that [*Women & Film*] brought up about representations of women, about women in the industry, about women being their own leaders [...] are still current today.

Barbara Hammer³

One of the purposes of this thesis is to fill a lacuna in the history of feminist film criticism, a lacuna that I drew attention to in my introduction. In the textbooks and anthologies that discuss the development of feminist film criticism, *Women & Film* is rarely discussed at any length, if it is discussed at all. When it is mentioned, it is relegated to an embryonic stage in the development of feminist film criticism, at best characterized as sociological in its outlook and, at worst, lacking in theoretical sophistication or medium-specific insight. This characterization not only overlooks the magazine's later issues, which featured articles that ventured beyond the 'images of women' criticism with which it is so often associated, but also downplays its contribution to women's film history more generally.

Women & Film, as the first magazine dedicated to feminist perspectives on film, played a crucial role in fostering early feminist film criticism and supporting the women's film movement of the 1970s. Through its short run, one can trace the evolution of women's writing on cinema from the critique of mainstream films by men informed by feminist and Marxist theory to the nascent stages of feminist film theory,

¹ Jill Johnston was a critic for the *Village Voice* and author of *Lesbian Nation* (1973). The quote is from a *Women & Film* order from around 1974-1975 (fig. 44).

² Ibid. Ernest Callenbach was the editor of *Film Quarterly* between 1958-1991, published by University of California Press in Berkeley.

³ Hammer, interview with author, New York, NY, 30 April 2015.

informed by structuralism and 1970s film theory. It was also the first exclusive forum for scholarly research on women directors and published significant reportage on women's film festivals and contemporary women directors.

I have attempted to reconstruct the history, development and demise of the magazine, using a combination of methodological approaches. My starting point has been to situate *Women & Film's* conjunctural moment, beginning with the general historical overview provided in my introduction and continuing throughout my chapters. I also took advantage of the fact that many of the magazine's contributors were living and my interviews with its founding editors and many writers provide the backbone of this project.

My first two chapters tell the story of the magazine's founding and early issues, using the biographies of its two founding co-editors as routes by which to navigate this period. Siew-Hwa Beh and Sandra Salyer's deep connection to the political movements and counterculture of the late 1960s and early 1970s, specifically shaped by their California locales, forge linkages between the women's liberation movement and feminist film theory of the latter half of the 1970s. Their writing demonstrates the influences of Third Cinema theorists and activists like Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino as well as the towering presence of Jean-Luc Godard in US film culture at the time. It also speaks of the groundbreaking role played by Marxist theorists such as Herbert Marcuse and Wilhelm Reich, and radical feminists like Shulamith Firestone.

The magazine's early issues coincided with a particularly vibrant moment for women's film culture. 1972 saw the convening of the first women's film festivals, and over the following years, the number of events being held across the United States, Canada and Europe rose steeply. Not only did these events reveal the sheer number of films by women, both old and new; they brought people together, forging connections that helped build networks and, ultimately, a movement. *Women & Film* played a crucial role in supporting this burgeoning women's film movement: it provided coverage of these events when mainstream publications often did not, and extended their legitimizing effects beyond their initial audiences. The writings of Barbara Martineau, with their inclusion of extracts from festival programmes and reviews from other publications, provide a unique historical record of women's film festivals. Her reports also offer insights into the experience of being a women's film festival attendee and the subtle differences in the organizational, political and cultural contexts of these events.

I traced the development of the magazine's critical approaches in Chapters IV and V, and examined their theoretical underpinnings, from sociological conceptions of

media and representation to classical aesthetics. For some *Women & Film* contributors, these approaches are combined with the auteur theory, the attribution of a film's authorship to its director, the dominant scholarly methodology in film studies of that era. The arrival of a new wave of contributors brought more varied ways of understanding and writing about film. Some of these new contributors were engaged with film theories informed by semiotics and structuralism, developing in Europe and promoted in publications such as *Screen*. Some contributors went on to found their own journals: Chuck Kleinhans and Julia Lesage founded *Jump Cut* (with John Hess) in 1974; Janet Bergstrom, Sandy Flitterman, Elisabeth Lyon and Constance Penley began working on *Camera Obscura* in late 1974, publishing issue 1 in 1976. The latter four attempted to form a collective with Beh and Salyer but the co-founders were resistant to making 1970s film theory the magazine's central approach and so refused to give up their editorial authority. The four resigned but the magazine continued to publish articles informed by 1970s theory, as my discussion of Eileen McGarry reveals.

My final two chapters examined the magazine's shift in focus from a critique of films directed by men to a multi-faceted engagement with women filmmakers. The magazine published several significant interventions that sought to redress the balance in film history, such as Sharon Smith's filmographies of hundreds of women directors extracted from her book *Women Who Make Movies* (1975). It also featured the first English-language scholarship on the experimental filmmaker Germaine Dulac. Articles such as these informed women's film festival programmers and those teaching on the first women's film courses at the time, as well laying the foundation for the retrieval of women's film history that continues to this day.

Women & Film also recognized the European directors Nelly Kaplan and Agnès Varda, as well as figures such as Barbara Loden and Sarah Maldoror, as potential feminist auteurs to rival their male counterparts from new wave and independent film circles. Directors such as Yvonne Rainer and filmmaking collectives also received attention, with their experimental approaches posited as the feminist counter-cinema being called for by critics like Claire Johnston. Many of the filmmakers discussed now constitute the canon of women's cinema.

Although I have tried to provide a detailed and many-sided account of the magazine's development, many opportunities remain for further research into *Women & Film* and its circle of contributors. Earlier drafts of this thesis contained discussions of many more of the magazine's articles, but in order to be succinct I have had to narrow my focus to a smaller selection of texts. The magazine's treatment of genre cinema and New Hollywood filmmakers remains an appealing area to explore. A whole

thesis could be written on its sustained engagement with Jean-Luc Godard, traced through the various contributors from Beh and Chuck Kleinhans to Constance Penley and Carol Wikarska. Penley even revealed that a now unavailable short film was made by some of the women involved in the editorial group, called *Letter to Jean-Luc*, in response to his film about Jane Fonda's anti-war activism.⁴ Barbara Martineau's work also warrants further investigation, particularly her unpublished book *Women Imagine Women*, composed of interviews with women filmmakers and writers, including Alice Munro, Anaïs Nin and Agnès Varda. Finally, the inception and development of women's film festivals of this period demands scholarly attention, particularly given the recent reappearance of such festivals in the 21st century.⁵

It is only since feminist film critics have found a home in the academy that in depth research has been possible and institutional funding available for ventures like The Women Film Pioneers Project (1993/2013, Columbia University), The Women's Film Preservation Fund (1995, New York Women in Film and Television/Museum of Modern Art), The Celluloid Ceiling report (1997-present, San Diego State University).⁶ It took until 2009 for Dulac's *The Seashell and the Clergyman* to be restored and new discoveries about her work continue to be made, as evidenced by Tami Williams' *Germaine Dulac: A Cinema of Sensations* (2014).

My own research has met with certain obstacles. A major challenge has been in the recovery of accurate dates and details. There is no official archive for *Women & Film* and I learned when I first made contact with Salyer, much of the materials from that period – several boxes of manuscripts and correspondence – she had discarded some time in the 1980s. In a recent email, Beh reflects: 'I lived my life as someone unimportant and fleeting like most women, and what I did, as insignificant and temporary. Hence it never occurred to me to keep diaries or entries for those years.'⁷ The facts recalled by interviewees were difficult to corroborate and I discovered that people's memories were reliably inconsistent. I must acknowledge, therefore, the possibility of unforeseen gaps and inaccuracies that may come to light in the future.

When I began this research in 2011, it appeared that a new era of feminism was

⁴ Penley, interview with author, London, 25 June 2017.

⁵ The London Feminist Film Festival was set up in 2012 in 'response to the underrepresentation of women in the film industry, as well as to the lack of films addressing feminist issues and the fact that the representation of women on screen is often narrow and stereotypical.' London Feminist Film Festival, 'Brand New Festival for London', press release, 23 August 2012.

⁶ The Women Film Pioneers project was initiated by Jane Gaines as a series of books in 1993 but relaunched in 2013 as an online resource on women in silent film. See the project's site, <https://wfpp.cdrs.columbia.edu/> (25.01.2018). The Celluloid Ceiling is a yearly report on women's employment in the film industry, carried out by the Center for the Study of Women in Television and Film.

⁷ Beh, email to author, 21 January 2018.

dawning.⁸ Writing now in 2018, as the UK celebrates the centenary of women's suffrage, this fourth wave now has its own Wikipedia page, which has been viewed by over a quarter of a million users, just under 300 a day.⁹ This fourth wave has come to encompass discussions within international politics, the global economy and national social policy as well as the cultural sphere, particularly within mainstream commercial cinema and television.

A plethora of studies and publications have appeared in the last decade documenting the imbalance in women's employment in Hollywood and their portrayal on the screen. Some are even reminiscent of the illustration featured in *Women & Film* 1, showing the dearth of women with memberships to the various screen guilds (fig. 10). This could be considered a very early prototype of the infographics now circulated online, like the one published by the New York Film Academy, 'Gender Inequality in Film' (fig. 47). The report features a series of charts presenting data relating to women's roles both on and off screen, predominantly in the Hollywood film industry.¹⁰ The report surfaced in the wake of renewed debate about women's treatment in the industry and its concerns have been further amplified by other women filmmakers. For the last few years, the major award ceremonies have provided an annual platform for actors to decry sexism in the industry; more recently this has taken the shape of coordinated actions, geared toward and amplified by social media, such as #askhermore (2014) and #timesup (2018).¹¹ In the aftermath of Harvey Weinstein's downfall and the #metoo movement, issues such as sexual harassment, discrimination, radically unequal pay and the imbalance of power in the film industry are finally being recognized and discussed by its institutions, the mainstream press and by audiences. When Beh sued the AFI in the mid-1970s after one of its representatives refused to release her stipend unless she spent the weekend with him, the term sexual harassment barely existed.¹²

⁸ Deborah Solomon, 'Fourth-Wave Feminism: Questions for Jessica Valenti,' *New York Times Magazine*, 13 November 2009; Kira Cochrane, 'The Fourth Wave of Feminism: Meet the Rebel Women,' *Guardian*, 10 December 2013.

⁹ 'Fourth-wave feminism,' Wikipedia, page created 1 July 2015, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fourth-wave_feminism (29.01.2018).

¹⁰ New York Film Academy, 'Gender Inequality in Film', *New York Film Academy Blog*, 25 November 2013, <http://www.nyfa.edu/film-school-blog/gender-inequality-in-film> (06.12.2013). The figures derive from the metadata of several scholarly and journalistic surveys, including the 2012 Celluloid Ceiling Report, and data generated and published online by the Women's Media Center, *Forbes*, the *New York Times* and feminist websites such as Jezebel, Bitch Flicks and Indiewire-hosted blog, *Women & Hollywood*.

¹¹ For example: Cate Blanchett (2014) and Patricia Arquette (2015) at the Oscars; Meryl Streep (2017) and Oprah Winfrey (2018) at the Golden Globes.

¹² The term was first used by activist Lin Farley in 1975. See Farley, 'Reclaiming 'Sexual Harassment,' *New York Times*, 18 October 2017, 27.

Many of the questions being asked and assertions being made about women in cinema today echo those posed by *Women & Film's* writers.¹³ The sociological interpretation of on screen representation and its incorporation into feminist campaigning continues to be articulated alongside popular conceptions of the 'male gaze' in journalism and online media sites. However, contemporary considerations of 'images of women' can carry out quantitative analyses of gender portrayals on screen on a huge scale thanks to online data and automated analysis techniques.¹⁴ Audiences can now ask if a film has passed the Bechdel test or is 'triple F-rated.'¹⁵ Regardless of its flaws, the evaluation of 'images of women' and the desire for different kinds of images is still an important concern for feminist consumers of cinema.

Women & Film occupies an important space in the genealogy of these feminist considerations of film as well as within academic feminist film theory. Its significance is beginning to be recognized; since I initiated my study, the magazine has been digitized by the BFI Reuben Library, one of the few UK institutions to hold copies. Almost simultaneously, another digitization scheme was instigated by Bill Nichols, Chuck Kleinhans and Julia Lesage. The magazine's complete run is now freely available online via *Jump Cut* and the UC Berkeley Library. What's more, Siew-Hwa Beh's short film *The Stripper*, missing since the mid-1970s, is now slated for restoration by the Academy Film Archive.¹⁶

It is ultimately difficult to measure the full impact of *Women & Film* on feminist film criticism as it developed through the 1970s to the present day. Its articles have been cited and reprinted in many publications that came after it. Many of its contributors have gone on to shape the field of film studies, with *Women & Film* often providing the platform for their earliest published writings.¹⁷ Beh and Salyer did not

¹³ Brent Lang, 'Study Finds Fewer Lead Roles for Women in Hollywood,' *Variety*, 9 February 2017; Gwilym Mumford, 'Jessica Chastain: the portrayal of women in films is disturbing,' *Guardian*, 30 May 2017; David Sanderson, 'Why Hollywood's female stars get all the worst lines,' *Times*, 12 August 2017.

¹⁴ One study by USC's Signal Analysis and Interpretation Lab (Sail), within the Viterbi School of Engineering, assessed the dialogue and characters' genders in 1,000 scripts and concluded that, among other findings, the presence of women screenwriters increased the number of women characters in a film by 50% on average. Amy Blumenthal, 'How Central are Female Characters to a Movie?' USC Viterbi, 1 August 2017, <https://viterbischool.usc.edu/news/2017/08/central-female-characters-movie/> (31.01.2018).

¹⁵ The Bechdel Test derives from a 1985 comic by Alison Bechdel, in which a character claims they only watch films that feature two women who talk to each other about something besides a man. The F-rating was developed by Bristol Film Festival director Holly Tarquini in 2014 and is awarded to films directed or written by a woman. Films featuring women protagonists receive Triple F-rating. See <http://f-rated.org/>. It has since been implemented as a category by IMDb and adopted by numerous festivals and cinemas.

¹⁶ Beh, email to author, 18 September 2017.

¹⁷ This is the case for Flitterman, Lesage, Kleinhans, Penley, according to their current CVs.

consider themselves film scholars at the time of *Women & Film* and neither pursued academic careers. I am certain that, if they had, *Women & Film's* legacy would have been more firmly established in the history of film studies. In our interviews, both expressed surprise that the magazine was still remembered. In an early email, Salyer writes it is 'wonderful to hear that *Women & Film* is still meaningful to people. I had no idea that it would be "often referred to" in film studies but had imagined it might still be a small voice in some women's studies departments.'¹⁸ Salyer states that while she was aware that the magazine had an impact at the time, she 'had no idea that there was a legacy.'¹⁹ But this impression was not shared by their former contributors: 'We missed *Women & Film* when it stopped,' recalls Lesage, 'it felt like a huge loss.'²⁰ The filmmaker and poet Alexis Krasilovsky declared 'I loved *Women & Film* magazine from its very first issue, it was a reason to be alive!'²¹

¹⁸ Salyer, email to author, 3 March 2012.

¹⁹ Salyer, interview with author, Montclair, CA, 11 October 2013.

²⁰ Lesage and Chuck Kleinhans, interview with author, Eugene, OR, 19 October 2013.

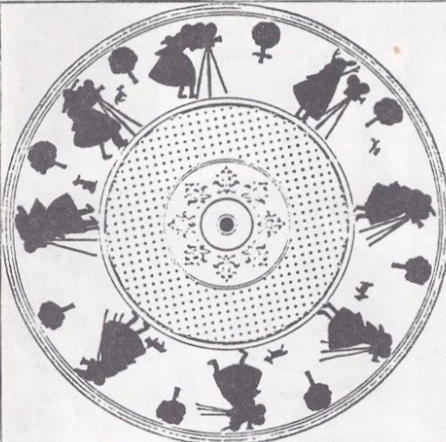
²¹ Krasilovsky, interview with author, Los Angeles, CA, 29 October 2013.

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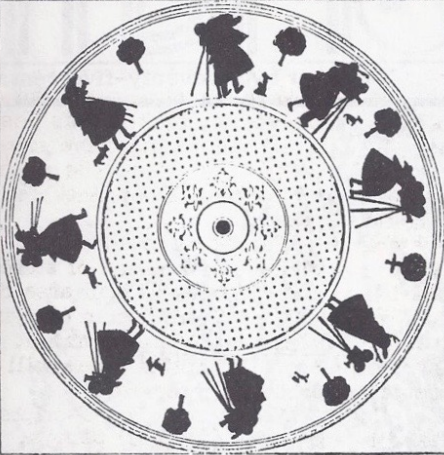
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STAFF

CO-EDITORS:

Siew-Hwa Beh
Saunie Salyer

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS:

Jacoba Atlas, Jeanne Betancourt
Joanna Boudreaux, Carol Davidson
Naome Gilbert, Beverle Houston
Marsha Kinder, Julia Lesage
Robin Mencken, Bill Nichols
Janet Parker, Constance Penley
Ellen Stiller, Beverly Walker

DESIGN:

Nancy Young

DRAWINGS:

F. Spauth Warner

SUBSCRIPTIONS:

Denise Williams

TYPESETTING:

Evening-Dawn Graphics

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(oil on canvas, 72 x 48")

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STAFF

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Siew-Hwa Beh
Sannie Salyer

ASSOCIATE EDITORS:
Sandy Flitterman
Julia Lesage
Elisabeth Hart Lyon
Janet Parker
Constance Penley
Bill Nichols

CONTRIBUTING
EDITORS:
Joanna Boudreaux
Beverle Houston
Marsha Kinder
Chuck Kleinhans
Carol Wikarska

COVER:
Anthony Dubovsky

COVER PHOTOGRAPHY:
Lew Watts

TYPESETTING:
Evening-Dawn Graphics

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Siew-Hwa Beh
Sannie Salyer

Associate Editors

Julia Lesage
Barbara H Martineau
Bill Nichols
Carol Wikarska

Contributing Editors

Beverle Houston
Marsha Kinder
Chuck Kleinhans
Judith Taylor

Designer

Marjorie Spiegelman

Assistant to the Designer

David Curry

Typesetter

Evening-Dawn Graphics & Associates

Cover Illustration

Thelma Soderquist

Printer

Warren's Waller Press

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Appendix B

Women & Film Contributors

Linda Artel

Artel had been a student at Berkeley and had taken part in the Free Speech Movement in 1964. In 1972, she established the PFA Library and Film Study Centre in 1972 and later wrote *Positive Images: Non-Sexist Films for Young People* (San Francisco: Booklegger Press, 1976) with Susan Wengraf.

'Review: Put Yourself in My Place,' *Women & Film* 5-6 (1974): 77.

Jacoba Atlas

Contributing editor, 1973

According to her profile in issue 3-4, Atlas was a journalist for the *Los Angeles Free Press*, *L.A. Magazine*, *Show Magazine*, and *Rolling Stone*. She was a student at Berkeley and on the graduate program in Film and Theatre Arts with Bill Nichols between 1972 and 1974, where she received an MFA. She is the daughter of screenwriter Leopold Atlas, who was forced to testify during the HUAC Hollywood blacklist era. She worked as a writer and producer for film and television, including the documentary series *A Century of Women* (1994). She is currently president of Creative Visions Productions, a multimedia company.

'Beauty/Enigma/Mother: Woman in *Children of Paradise*, *Jules and Jim*, and *Alice's Restaurant*,' *Women & Film* 3-4 (1973): 38-41; 53.

Fredue Bartlett

Born in 1942, was a filmmaker and founder of distributor Serious Business Company. She married fellow experimental filmmaker Scott Bartlett in 1969 and founded Serious Business Co in 1972, which focused on avant-garde and women's filmmaking. In 1986, she founded a communications company, Metropolis Media. She died in 2009.

'Review: Self-Health,' *Women & Film* 7 (1975): 81.

Siew-Hwa Beh

Founder and co-editor, 1972-1975

Beh was born in Penang, Malaysia in 1946 and moved to the United States in 1964 thanks to a Presidential Scholars award for training as a performance. She enrolled at UCLA to study film in 1965 where she met Bill Nichols, whom she married in 1970. While at UCLA, she made a short film, *The Stripper*, which screened at the San Francisco International Film Festival (1972) and the Melbourne International Film Festival (1973). Beh and Nichols moved to Canada when Nichols got his first teaching position at Queen's University in Ontario but their relationship ended in late 1974. Beh returned to San Francisco and began a two-year relationship with the writer and poet Richard Brautigan. After *Women & Film* came to an end, she worked as an editor on TV shows such as *The Six Million Dollar Man*. She remarried in 1980, and had two sons. She currently lives in Berkeley.

'Vivre Sa Vie,' *Women & Film* 1 (1972): 70-73.

'Red Detachment of Women,' *Women & Film* 1 (1972): 43-45.

'Reflections on Recent Trends in Hollywood Films,' 2 (1972): 16-24.

'Review: Women of the Rhondda,' *Women & Film* 5-6 (1974): 78.

'Review: Women Against the (Industrial) Bill,' *Women & Film* 5-6 (1974): 79.

'Review: Sylvia, Fran and Joy,' *Women & Film* 5-6 (1974): 79.

'Review: A 7 ½ Minute Film,' *Women & Film* 5-6 (1974): 80.

'Review: Take Her, She's Mad,' *Women & Film* 5-6 (1974): 81.

Janet Bergstrom (Janet Parker)

Contributing editor, 1973; associate editor, 1974

Born in 1946, Bergstrom studied Comparative Literature at the University of Wisconsin in Madison and moved to Berkeley in 1972. She worked at the bookstore in the Berkeley Art Museum, where the PFA was also housed. After working on *Women & Film* for two issues, she left with Flitterman, Penley and Lyon to found Camera Obscura in 1974. She moved to LA in 1976 and began a PhD at UCLA and studied in France on the Paris Film Program set up by Augst in 1977-78.

Jeanne Betancourt

Contributing editor, 1973

Born in Vermont in 1941, Betancourt was a former Catholic nun originand teacher in New York, where she worked with pregant high school students. She encoutered the women's movement in the late 1960s. She enroled on a Masters in the new Film Studies department at New York University during the early 1970s, attending her classes at night and teaching by day. Her MA thesis became *Women in Focus* (1974). She later became a children's author in the early 1980s and has gone to write several series of children's and young adult books as well as screenplays for children's TV programmes. She currently lives in New York.

'High School *Women & Film*: A Report from New York City,' *Women & Film* 2 (1972): 56-60.

'Report from New York: Women's Video Festival at the Kitchen,' *Women & Film* 3-4 (1973): 97-100.

E. Servi Burgess

Elena Servi Burgess was an alumnus of University of California, Berkeley, and former faculty member of its Italian department. During the late 1950s, she had worked for in Dino de Laurentiis' production company in Rome, and between 1972 and 1974, she returned to Italy, living in Padua. Burgess eventually worked for the San Francisco Opera as their Italian diction coach. She died in 2014.

'Towards a Popular Feminist Cinema: An Interview with Lina Wertmuller,' *Women & Film* 5-6 (1974): 6-11.

Carol Davidson see Carol Wikarska

DONNIE

This anonymous contributor is described in his magazine bio as 'a "SWAM" (Straight, White, Adult, Male) who does not use his last name because it is a patronym – and thereby sexist. "I used to be a so-called 'radical professor' until I realized that even if I radicalized 10% of 'my' students – making them interested in changing the status quo – I was giving skills, information and certification to 90% of the students who wanted to maintain the status quo. A self-defeating situation making 'radical' and 'professor' mutually exclusive terms." He is currently involved in writing and in politics and has published poems and other pieces in various movement publications.' 'Notes on

Contributors' *Women & Film* 3-4.

'Bondage Series.'" *Women & Film* 2 (1972): 61-65.

"The Movie Channel." *Women & Film* 3-4 (1973): 105-08.

Patricia Erens

Erens received a MA in English from the University of Chicago in 1963 and a PhD in Film Studies from Northwestern University in 1981. She was an organizer for the Films by Women/Chicago festival in 1974. She published *Issues in Feminist Film Criticism* in 1990. She is currently Adjunct professor in Art History, Theory and Criticism at the School of Art Institute of Chicago.

'Interview with Jill Godmilow,' *Women & Film* 7 (1975): 34-43.

Sandy Flitterman-Lewis (Sandy Flitterman)

Associate editor, 1974

Flitterman was born in 1946 and prior to her involvement in *Women & Film* was undergraduate student in French and Comparative Literature at UC Berkeley. She had spent a year in Bordeaux between 1966-67, graduated in 1968 and received her MA in Comparative Literature in 1971. She joined the *Women & Film* editorial group in 1973 and left in 1974 to found *Camera Obscura*. She embarked on her doctorate in 1976, which was eventually published as *To Desire Differently: Feminism and the French Cinema* (1990). She is an associate Professor in English, Cinema and Women's Studies departments at Rutgers. She lives in Hoboken, New Jersey.

'Heart of the Avant-Garde: Some Biographical Notes of Germaine Dulac,' *Women & Film* 5-6 (1974): 58-61.

April Ford

Ford was a friend of Siew-Hwa Beh's from Los Angeles.

'Hawk's Women: Don't You Think I Could Know a Girl?' *Women & Film* 1 (1972): 26-29.

Naome Gilbert

I have found no information about Gilbert. A Noame R. Gilbert, born in 1944, is listed as having died in 1975 in New York; this may well be her.

'To Be Our Own Muse: The Dialectics of a Culture Heroine,' *Women & Film 2* (1972): 25-32.

Kay Harris

Journalist and photographer involved in organizing the First International Festival of Women's Film in New York, 1972.

'Interview with Nelly Kaplan' *Women & Film 2* (1972): 33-36

Sylvia Harvey

Harvey was one of the seven students in Bill Nichols' graduate film group at the Film and Theatre Department at UCLA in the mid-1970s. She completed her PhD in 1976 and published her thesis as book, *May '68 and Film Culture*, in 1978. She has continued to write and teach film in universities in the UK and is currently Visiting Professor in Communications Studies at the University of Leeds.

'Third World Perspectives: Focus on Sarah Maladoror' *Women & Film 5-6* (1974): 71

Beverle Ann Houston

Contributing editor, 1973-75

Born in 1935, Houston met Marsha Kinder at an during her doctorate in the English department at UCLA in 1962. The two writing collaboratively in 1968 and eventually published *Close-Up: A Critical Perspective on Film* in 1972. She appeared in Chick Strand's film *Soft Fiction* (1980). She was a professor at Pitzer college when she contributed to *Women & Film* and later became Director of Critical Studies at University of Southern California (1982-86). She died in 1988.

'Review: *Legacy*,' *Women & Film 7* (1975): 87 - 88.

Co-written with Marsha Kinder

'Odd Couple: Woman and Manchild in *Harold & Maude*, *Minnie & Moskowitz*, *Murmur of the Heart*,' *Women & Film 2* (1972): 11-15.

'Woman and Manchild in the Land of Broken Promise: Ken Russell's *Savage Messiah* and Paul Morrissey's *Heat*,' *Women & Film 3-4* (1973): 31-37.

Ellen Keneshea

Keneshea did an undergraduate degree at Occidental College followed by an MA in Film at UCLA in the early 1970s. She now works for DreamWorks animation as an animation editor.

'The Not So Tender Trap: Sirk: There's Always Tomorrow and Imitation of Life,' *Women & Film 2* (1972): 51-55.

Marsha Kinder

Contributing editor, 1973-75

Kinder was born in 1940 and completed her undergraduate degree (1961), MA (1963) and PhD (1966) at UCLA in English. She taught literature and film at Occidental College from 1965 to 1980 and is now Emerita Professor in Film and Media Studies at University of Southern California, where she has worked since 1980.

See Houston for articles written for *Women & Film*.

Chuck Kleinhans

Contributing editor, 1973-75

Born in 1942, Kleinhans served in the Navy between 1964-66 after graduating from the University of Wisconsin. He attended graduate school at Indiana University, received his MA in Comparative Literature in 1969 and embarked on a doctorate in 1970. He met Julia Lesage in 1971, with whom he co-founded *Jump Cut*, alongside John Hess, in 1974. He was professor in Radio/Television/Film at Northwestern University from 1977-2009. He died in 2017.

'Two or Three Things I Know About Her,' *Women & Film 3-4* (1973): 65-72.

'Lives of Performers,' *Women & Film 5-6* (1974): 52-56.

Alexis Krasilovsky

Krasilovsky (b. 1950) studied film history at Yale, followed by an MFA in film and video at California Institute of the Arts. She made her first film, *The End of the Art World* in 1971 and worked on the 2nd International Festival of Women's Films in New York, 1976. She is currently Professor in the Department of Cinema and Television Arts at California State University.

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Julia Lesage

Contributing editor, 1973; Associate editor 1974-75

Lesage completed her undergraduate degree at Cornell University in 1960 and her MA in 1962. Between 1967 and 1970, she taught English at the Pontifical Catholic University of Peru, in Lima, where she also became involved in a filmmaking school run by the Peruvian director Armando Robles Godoy (1923-2010). In 1971, she embarked on a doctorate in Comparative Literature at the University of Indiana, and met Chuck Kleinhans, with whom she would collaborate on numerous projects, including editing *Jump Cut*. She completed her thesis on Godard in 1976 and lectured and taught at Indiana University and the University of Illinois between 1972 and 1979 and at the University of Oregon from 1988 to the present. She lives in Eugene, Oregon.

'The Green Wall: The Peruvian Woman and Us,' *Women & Film* 3-4 (1973): 62-64.

'Feminist Film Criticism: Theory and Practice,' *Women & Film* 5-6 (1974): 12-19.

'Review: Compilation of Films shown at the Ann Arbor Women's Film Festival (Feb. 6-10, 1974),' *Women & Film* 5-6 (1974): 80-81.

Jacqueline Levitin

Originally from Seattle, Levitin received her MA from the University of Washington and holds a PhD from the State University of New York at Buffalo, where she wrote her thesis on Godard. She is a filmmaker and critic and former Professor in Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies at Simon Fraser University, Canada.

'Mother of the New Wave: An Interview with Agnès Varda,' *Women & Film* 5-6 (1974): 62-66

Elisabeth Lyon

Associate editor, 1974

Lyon had received her BA from Berkeley in 1972, where she studied film under Bertrand August of the French department. She undertook an MA in Cinema Studies department at NYU. She returned to Berkeley in 1973 and began working part-time at the PFA, assisting in the production of the PFA's monthly *Filmcalendar*, edited by Linda Weiner. She is currently a professor of English at Hobart and William Smith Colleges, New York.

Barbara Martineau (Halpern-Martineau; Sarah Halprin)

Associate editor, 1975

Born Barbara Joan Sakofsky, Martineau was professor of film and literature in the English department of Scarborough College at University of Toronto, Canada from 1967. She gained her PhD in comparative literature from Columbia University in 1970. Between 1971 and 1972, she helped found the University's first Women's Studies programme with a group that included Kay Armatage, who would go on to co-organise the 1973 Toronto Women's Film Festival. During this time she also compiled a book of interviews with women writers and filmmakers such as Alice Munro, Anaïs Nin and Agnès Varda, titled *Women Imagine Women*, which was never published. Martineau later wrote under the surname Halpern Martineau, the former her maternal grandmother's name, a move she says was inspired by the 'Womanifesto' devised at the 1975 New York Conference of Feminists in the Media. She changed her name again in 1982, to Sara Halprin, following her divorce. She later remarried and retrained as a process work therapist (a school of depth psychology associated with Carl Jung's teachings that focuses on dream analysis and bodily experiences). She died in 2006.

'Women's Film Daily.' *Women & Film* 5-6 (1974): 36-44.

'Paris/Chicago: Women's Film Festivals 1974.' *Women & Film* 7 (1975): 10 - 27.

Eileen McGarry

McGarry was a doctoral student at UCLA along with Bill Nichols, and wrote her thesis on the American animation company Jay Ward productions. She is currently Executive Director of Career

Services and Student Engagement at the University of Arizona.

'Documentary, Realism & Women's Cinema,' *Women & Film* 7 50-59 7

Robin Mencken

Contributing editor, 1973

Took part in the interview with Christiane Rochefort, published in *Women & Film* 3-4 (1973). She was the wife of Joe McDonald, of the psychedelic band Country Joe and the Fish (1967-74?). Her house was the Artist-in-residence house for PFA where she hosted filmmakers like Dušan Makavejev.

Kyoko Michishita

Born in Japan in 1942, Michishita studied journalism at University of Wisconsin. She is a film and video maker. She made *Being Women in Japan: Liberation within My Family*, a 30 min video, in 1973-1974.

'Tokyo-New York Video Express,' *Women & Film* 5-6 (1974): 86-87

Christine Mohanna

Mohanna was a California-based filmmaker and possibly also a film student at UCLA, and later made a film, *Ninja*, in 1977.

'A One-sided Story: Women in the Movies,' *Women & Film* 1 (1972): 7-12

Joyce Newman

Newman was editor of *Super-8 Filmmaker* and also worked as TV scriptwriter in New York.

'Super-8 News,' *Women & Film* 5-6 (1974): 95

'Super-8 News,' *Women & Film* 7 (1975): 110-112

Bill Nichols

Editorial assistant, 1972; contributing editor, 1973; associate editor, 1974-75

After dropping out of Stanford Medical school in 1965, Nichols spend time in Kenya with the Peace Corps. He then worked as a secretary for Judith Crist, *New York* magazine's first film critic. It was in New York that he first encountered the emerging New York Newsreel collective. Nichols enrolled at UCLA unsure whether to pursue filmmaking and met Siew-Hwa Beh. The couple married in late 1970. Nichols completed his Masters in Theater Arts in 1972 and joined the department's first group of PhD students. He took up a teaching post at Queens University in Canada in 1974 and not long after he and Beh separated. He published *Movies and Methods*, one of the earliest anthologies of scholarly film theory and criticism, in 1976. He completed his doctorate in 1978, writing his thesis on the Newsreel collectives of New York, Los Angeles and San Francisco. He joined the department of Cinema at San Francisco State in 1987, where he continues to teach. He lives in San Fransico.

'Confronting the Consciousness Industry,' *Women & Film* 1 (1972): 38-42.

'Books,' *Women & Film* 3-4 (1973): 108-110.

'Books,' *Women & Film* 5-6 (1974): 100-02.

'Book Reviews,' *Women & Film* 7 (1975): 114-19.

Kristina Nordstrom

Nordstrom organized the First Festival of Women's Films in New York City in 1972 and the follow-up staged in 1976. According to her bio in issue 3-4, she also taught a '*Women & Film*' course at the New School for Social Research. She subsequently worked as a screenwriter for film and TV. She lives in Los Angeles.

'Mae West in Venice' *Women & Film* 3-4 93-96

Gerald Peary

Born in 1944, Peary wrote for numerous film magazines and jouranls during the 1970s and recieved a PhD in Communications from the University of Wisconsin in 1977. Peary collaborated with his then girlfriend, Karyn Kay, an undergraduate student at Madison on research into the director Dorothy Arzner. This was later published in the BFI's pamphlet, *The Work of Dorothy Arzner: Toward a Feminist Cinema* (1975), edited by Claire Johnston and later culminated in their book, *Women & Cinema: a Critical Anthology* (Dutton & Co, 1977). He works as a film critic and has written and directed several docuementaries, including *For the Love of Movies: The Story of American Film Criticism* (2009).

'Sanka, Pink Ladies, and Virginia Slims,' *Women & Film* 5-6 (1974): 82-84

Constance Penley

Contributing editor, 1973; Associate editor, 1974

Penley did her undergraduate in English at the University of Florida. After graduating with a Masters in Education from Florida in 1971, Penley moved to Berkeley, began working at the PFA. After meeting Salyer around 1972, she began working on *Women & Film* and the pair became roommates in a series of house shares. She began her Masters in Rhetoric at University of California, Berkeley in 1974 and that same year joined Flitterman, Bergstrom and Lyon in founding Camera Obscura.

'Cries and Whispers,' *Women & Film* 3-4 (1973): 55-56.

'Theory of Film Practice: Analysis and Review,' *Women & Film* 5-6 (1974): 32-34.

Sandra 'Saunie' Salyer

Founder and co-editor 1972-75

Born in 1946, Sandra 'Saunie' Salyer spent much of her early childhood in Germany and her teenage years in Virginia and Japan. She attended Santa Monica College between 1966 and 1967, joining San Francisco State in 1968 to study English literature, drama and psychology. She took part in a sit-in at the administration building and was arrested along with 26 other students. She became involved with *Everywoman*, a feminist newspaper based in Los Angeles and collaborated on a book, *Laughing Gas* with her then boyfriend, Mike Shedlin and friend David Wallechinsky. Following her work on *Women & Film*, she completed a BA in Transpersonal Psychology at San Francisco State in 1979 and worked in education for most of her life. She currently lives in Big Sur, California.

As *Everywoman*

'Stances a Sophie.' *Women & Film* 1 (1972): 69-70.

'Selected Short Subjects.' *Women & Film* 2 (1972): 37-45.

As Dora Kaplan

'A Woman Looks at the S.F.I.F.F.,' *Women & Film* 1 (1972): 46-64.

Michael 'Mike' Shedlin

Editorial assistant, 1972

Salyer's boyfriend and collaborator on *Laughing Gas* (1973).

'Love, Estrangement & Coadunation in Rossellini's Voyage to Italy,' *Women & Film* 2 (1972): 46-50.

'The Ideological Massage: 15 Notes on Freebie and the Bean,' *Women & Film* 7 (1975): 90-106

Sharon Smith

Smith, studying film at Middlebury College and later embarked on a Masters at the University of Southern California. Her research into women directors became a book, *Women Who Make Movies*, published in 1975. After publishing her book, she and her husband set up a small holding in Maine and she retrained as a neuropsychologist in her forties. She lives in Maine.

'The Image of Women in Film: Some Suggestions for Future Research', *Women & Film* 1 (1972): 13-21.

'Women Who Make Movies,' *Women & Film* 3-4 (1973): 77-92.

William Van Wert

Van Wert was a graduate student at Indiana University alongside Chuck Kleinhans and Julia Lesage. He taught at Temple University, Philadelphia. He died in 2003.

'Germaine Dulac: First Feminist Filmmaker.' *Women & Film* 5-6 (1974): 55-57.

Beverly Walker

Contributing editor, 1973

Walker began working in film in 1968, when she joined Michelangelo Antonioni's *Zabriskie Point* (1970, USA) as a publicist while the director was filming in the California desert. She later worked on *American Graffiti* (George Lucas, 1973) and contributed regularly to *Film Comment* and other film publications throughout the 1970s.

'From Novel to Film: Stanley Kubrick's Clockwork Orange,' *Women & Film* 2 (1972): 4-10

'Moral Tales: Eric Rohmer Reviewed and Interviewed,' *Women & Film* 3-4 (1973): 15 - 22.

Teena Webb

Webb was a member of Kartequim filmmaker's collective, based in Chicago, producing several documentary films including *Public Art in Chicago* (1973-74) and *Viva la Causa* (1974).

'Myths, Women, Movies,' *Women & Film* 2 (1972): 66-69

Carol Wikarska

Contributing editor, 1973-74; Associate editor, 1975

Wikarska (formerly Davidson) is described as a freelance writer and projectionist at PFA in her bio in issue 5-6. She and Janet Bergstrom were roommates.

'Letter to Jane: A Critique,' *Women & Film* 3-4

'An Interview with Tra Giang at the Moscow Film Festival,' *Women & Film* 5-6 (1974): 45-47

'Attica.' *Women & Film* 7 (1975): 60-67.

Review: Plumb Line,' *Women & Film* 7 (1975): 81.

Review: Woman to Woman,' *Women & Film* 7 (1975): 95-86.

'Review: A Film About a Woman Who,' *Women & Film* 7 (1975): 86.

'Old-Fashioned Woman,' *Women & Film* 7 (1975): 89.

Appendix C

1. Women & Film timeline, 1963-70

1963

Siew-Hwa Beh arrives in the United States for the first time and attends Laguna Beach High School.

May **EQUAL PAY ACT**

Saundra Salyer and her family move from Virginia to Japan.

Aug

28 Aug

MARCH ON WASHINGTON

Martin Luther King gives his famous 'I Have a Dream' speech at a march in Washington DC.

THE FEMININE MYSTIQUE

Betty Freidan's book about women's role in American society is published.

22 Nov

JF KENNEDY ASSASSINATION

The president is shot and killed during a motorcade in Dallas, Texas. Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson becomes president and serves until 1969.

1964

Beh returns to the United States to study dance and drama at Mills College, Oakland.

Feb

CIVIL RIGHTS AMENDMENT

The addition of 'sex' to Title VII, prohibiting discrimination in employment.

23 May	LA FREE PRESS	Art Kucin publishes the first ever issue of the Los Angeles Free Press.
	ONE-DIMENSIONAL MAN	Herbert Marcuse publishes his Marxist analysis of advanced industrial capitalist society in USA.
Jun	CIVIL RIGHTS ACT	Passage of the Civil Rights Act outlawing racial segregation.

Salyer graduates high school in Japan and begins freshman year at University of Kansas that fall.

Oct	FREE SPEECH MOVEMENT	Free Speech Movement begins at Berkeley.
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1965

Salyer returns to Japan and begins a semester at Sophia University, Tokyo.

21 Feb	MALCOLM X ASSASSINATION	Malcolm X shot down in Harlem, New York City.
13 Aug	BERKELEY BARB	Max Scherck founds one of the earliest underground newspapers.

Salyer starts at University of Hawaii. Fall

Beh begins her undergraduate degree in filmmaking at UCLA

1966

Salyer moves to LA with Mike Shedlin and starts spring semester at Santa Monica College.

29 Oct	N.O.W. FORMED	National Organisation for Women founded, with Betty Friedan as president, in Washington D.C.
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1967

2 Jan	REAGAN BECOMES GOVERNOR	Ronald Reagan takes office as 33 rd Governor of California, serving until 1975.
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14 Jan	HUMAN BE-IN	An event that took place in San Francisco's Golden Gate park, to mark the banning of LSD by the US government, but also a celebration of hippie music, culture and philosophy.
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Summer	SUMMER OF LOVE	Thousands of young people arrive in Haight-Ashbury district in San Francisco.
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1968

Salyer moves to Berkeley and begins a degree at San Francisco State.

30 Jan	TET OFFENSIVE	
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16 Mar	MY LAI	Massacre of villagers in My Lai in Vietnam by US soldiers.
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4 Apr	KING ASSASSINATION	Dr. Martin Luther King is gunned down in Memphis, Tennessee.
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Salyer is arrested and spends the night in a jail cell talking to women from SDS.

21 May	SAN FRANCISCO STATE UNIVERSITY SIT-IN	Police arrest 26 students taking part in a 400-strong sit-in at the administration building, as part of a campaign for a black studies department.
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	5 Jun	ROBERT KENNEDY ASSASSINATION	Senator Robert F. Kennedy murdered by gunman in Los Angeles.
	Jul	REAGAN RECALL ATTEMPT	Campaigners attempts to recall California Governor Richard Reagan.
	7 Sep	MISS AMERICA DEMO	Feminists storm the Miss America pageant in Atlantic City and burn 'instruments of oppression' in a 'Freedom Trash can.'
	5 Nov	NIXON ELECTED	Richard Nixon elected 37 th president of US. He takes office in Jan of 1969. He was elected in 1972 serves until the Watergate scandal and his impeachment in 1974.
	Nov	SAN FRANCISCO STATE STRIKE	A five-month long strike by students begins, led by members of the Black Students Union and Third World Liberation Front.
1969			
	21 Mar	SF STATE STRIKE ENDS	The BSU and the Third World Liberation Front reach agreement with the university, following a botched bomb attack by a student.
<i>Sandra Salyer witnesses violence between protesters and police. Not long after she decides to drop out of SFU and moves back to LA at the end of the year.</i>	15-30 May	PEOPLE'S PARK PROTEST	Students and activists clash with local law enforcement and eventually, the National Guard, at a series of violent demonstrations in Berkeley over a vacant lot known as People's Park.

15 Oct	UCLA ANTIWAR DEMO	20,000 strong antiwar demo at UCLA
	MY LAI MASSACRE UNCOVERED	My Lai massacre covered in Time, Life and Newsweek
6 Dec	ALTAMONT FESTIVAL	Altamont Free Concert, 30 miles outside San Francisco, takes place. One festival-goer is killed and many injured as event erupts into violence.

1970

6 Mar	WEATHERMEN TOWNHOUSE EXPLOSION	Weathermen townhouse explodes in Greenwich Village, killing 3 members.
18 Mar	LADIES HOME JOURNAL SIT-IN	Women occupy the offices of <i>Ladies Home Journal</i> in protest over dominance of male staff and sexism. Included members of Media Women, the Redstockings, New York Radical Feminists and NOW.
8 May	EVERYWOMAN	The first issue of <i>Everywoman</i> feminist newspaper is published in Los Angeles by Ann Forfreedom and Varda One (aka Ann Herschfang and Varda Murrell).
Nov	SEXUAL POLITICS	Kate Millett's <i>Sexual Politics</i> is first published in America.

1971

	Jul	SERIOUS BUSINESS COMPANY FOUNDED	Women's and avant-garde film distribution company founded by Freude Bartlett, wife of filmmaker Scott Bartlett.
	Jul	NEW DAY FOUNDED	New Day Films distribution co-op founded by Amalie Rothschild, Liane Brandon, Claudia Weill, Joyce Chopra, Jim Klein and Julia Reichert.
	3 Sep	NOW CONFERENCE IN LA	
	Oct	SAN FRANCISCO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL	
1972			
<i>First issue of Women & Film magazine is published in California in early Spring.</i>	Spring	WOMEN & FILM No. 1	
<i>Siew-Hwa Beh is awarded the AFI fellowship in filmmaking.</i>			
<i>Salyer moves back to Berkeley and begins living as a collective with friend at 'the Rose Garden house.'</i>			
<i>Siew-Hwa Beh attends the Oberlin conference with Bill Nichols and presents a paper on Andy Warhol. She meets Lesage and Kleinhans there.</i>	Apr	OBERLIN CONFERENCE	The OBERLIN STUDENT CONFERENCE ON FILM STUDY Christian Metz and Yves de Lauriot attend the conference held at Oberlin College in Ohio.

<i>Sandra Salyer travels across country to attend the festival and eventually publishes her report in Women & Film 2 later that year.</i>	Jun	FIRST INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF WOMEN'S FILMS	The first major women's film festival ever is held in New York. The festival is covered by the feminist press, including <i>Women & Film</i> .
	4 Aug	CAHIERS DU CINEMA SUMMER SCHOOL	Kleinhans and Lesage attend the summer school in Avignon on 'New Cinema theory' organised by <i>Cahiers du cinéma</i> .
	7 Aug	BFI SUMMER SCHOOL	Kleinhans and Lesage attend the 2-week summer school held by the BFI on "Technique, Style and Meaning", covered Bellour, Bazin and Metz.
	12 Aug	LIVES OF PERFORMERS	Yvonne Rainer's film <i>Lives of Performers</i> first shown at the Guggenheim
	21 Aug	VENICE FILM FESTIVAL	Kristina Nordstrom attends and reviews the Venice Film festival for <i>Women & Film</i> 3-4.
		WOMEN MAKE MOVIES FOUNDED	
<i>The magazine's second issue is published in the fall.</i>		WOMEN & FILM NO. 2	
<i>Siew-Hwa Beh's 1min film The Stripper screens at the 1972 San Francisco International Film Festival alongside Solaris (Andrei Tarkovsky, 1972, USSR).</i>	12-22 Oct	SF INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL	Director Albert Johnson's last festival.

	24 Nov	SCREEN METZ ISSUE	<i>Screen</i> publishes special summer issue on film semiotics and the work of Christian Metz. Vol. 14 No. 1/2 double issue
1973			
	12 Apr	OBERLIN CONFERENCE	Chuck Kleinhans and Julia Lesage present their paper 'A Systematic Approach to Audience Response in Film'. The conference's specific focus: Cinema and Ideology: Systems, Semiotics, and Society. Washington, D.C.
<i>Salyer, Penley and others interview the French screenwriter and novelist Christiane Rochefort.</i>	14 May	Rochefort interview	The interview would be published in issue 3-4 1973.
<i>A double issue is released mid-year. The format and style has changed and there are far more contributors, such as the future Jump Cut editor Chuck Kleinhans.</i>		WOMEN & FILM NO. 3	
Several women from the magazine interview the theorist and filmmaker Noel Burch at Tom Luddy's house in Berkeley.	Autumn	Interview with Noel Burch	published in 5-6 (1974)
1974			
<i>The first issue of Jump Cut appears.</i>	May-June	JUMP CUT no. 1	
<i>Another double issue, this time with several future founders of Camera Obscura on the editorial board.</i>	June	WOMEN & FILM NO. 5-6	

Beh and Nichols drive to Kingston in Ontario, Canada, where Nichols started his first teaching job that fall.

Siew-Hwa meets Richard Brautigan in San Francisco and leaves Canada sometime between Nov 74 and spring of 75.

Bergstrom, Flitterman, Lyon and Penley leave Women & Film following several months of mediation and begin working on Camera Obscura.

1975

The February issue of feminist newspaper Plexus publishes a resignation letter from Bergstrom, Flitterman, Lyon and Penley, announcing the formation of Camera Obscura

The final issue to appear was not a double issue but was as long!

1976

First issue of Camera Obscura published

2. Timeline of women's film festivals and other events, 1971-76

1971	
Event	Notes
<p style="text-align: right;">Spring</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Women's Film Festival New Haven, CT; USA</p>	<p>The Connecticut and Ann Arbour festivals are discussed in a 1971 article in <i>Everywoman</i>: 'We received a packet on how to organize a Women's Film Festival from the Women's Film Co-Operative, 66 Second St, New Haven, Conn which staged such a festival and is now distributing films. The packet included lists of suitable films and addresses of leading distributors,' 'Women's Health Learn-In,' <i>Everywoman</i> II No. 9 Issue 20 (18 June 1971), 2.</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">March</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Ann Arbour Women's Film Festival Ann Arbour, MI; USA</p>	<p>It gives Jill Hultin of Columbus, Ohio as a contact. It also describes a similar pack sent by 'Ann Arbour women who held a four day festival last March. This kit includes information on distributors, films, equipment, program notes, finances (they used a bake sale), publicity, workshops, and a women's music tape.' Discussion groups followed screenings of Agnès Varda's <i>Le bonheur</i> (1965) as well as <i>The Pumpkin Eater</i> (Jack Clayton, 1964), adapted from Penelope Mortimer's novel and <i>Woman of the Year</i> (George Stevens, 1942), starring Katherine Hepburn.</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">7 November</p> <p style="text-align: center;">NYRF Fundraising Film Festival New York City, NY; USA Elgin Theatre</p>	<p>Advertised in <i>Majority Report</i> 1, no. 6 (November 1971). It lists a 'Mae West Movie' as its feature presentation as well as <i>Woo Hoo May Wilson?</i> (Amalie Rothschild, 1971), <i>Adolescence Coming Back</i> (Anne Lewis) and unspecified work by Claudia Weill. NYRF member and journalist Minda Bikman is the contact for ticket sales.</p>

18 November

LA Women's Films Series
Los Angeles, CA; USA
LA Feminist Theatre

This event is advertised in the calendar section of *Everywoman* II No. 16 Issue 27 (1971), 17, and maybe have been organized by filmmaker Donna Deitch. Beh, interview by Judy Chicago, Pacifica Radio, broadcast 3 February 1972.

1972

13 - 21 June

**THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL
FESTIVAL OF WOMEN'S FILMS**
New York City, NY; USA
Fifth Avenue Cinema

Naome Gilbert, 'To Be Our Own Muse: The Dialectics of a Culture Heroine,' *Women & Film* 2 (1972): 29-32.

Dora Kaplan [Saundra Salyer], 'Selected Short Subjects,' *Women & Film* 2 (1972): 37 - 45.

Barbara Martineau, 'Women's Film Daily,' *Women & Film* 5-6 (1974): 36-44.

21 - 26 August

THE WOMEN'S EVENT
**Edinburgh International Film
Festival**
Edinburgh, Scotland; UK
Filmhouse

Barbara Martineau, 'Women's Film Daily,' *Women & Film* 5-6 (1974): 36-44.

14 - 30 September

WOMEN'S VIDEO FESTIVAL
New York City, NY; USA
The Kitchen

Jeanne Betancourt, 'Report from New York: Women's Video Festival at the Kitchen,' *Women & Film* 3-4 (1973): 97-100.

1973

<p>1 April – 2 June</p> <p>WOMEN'S CINEMA London, England; UK National Film Theatre (BFI)</p>	<p>Barbara Martineau, 'Women's Film Daily,' <i>Women & Film</i> 5-6 (1974): 36-44.</p> <p>Verina Glaessner writes briefly about two films shown at the Women's Cinema festival at the NFT in London in 1973: <i>Jemima, Daughter of the Mountains</i> (Anielle Weinberger and Ginette Gablot, 1972) and <i>The Point is to Change It</i> (Claudia Alemann [organizer of Berlin's women's film festival in 1973], 1973).</p>
<hr/>	
<p>April 1973</p> <p>Women's Week Symposium Los Angeles, CA Women's Resource Center, UCLA</p>	<p>Sashi, 'I Seen It In The Picture Show,' <i>Women & Film</i> 3-4 (1973), 100-101.</p>
<hr/>	
<p>8 – 17 June</p> <p>TORONTO WOMEN & FILM (LA FEMME ET LE FILM) Toronto, Canada St. Lawrence Centre</p>	<p>Barbara Martineau, 'Women's Film Daily,' <i>Women & Film</i> 5-6 (1974): 36-44.</p>
<hr/>	
<p>19 September – 2 October</p> <p>Washington D.C. festival Washington, D.C.; USA Women's Centre & Janus Theatre</p>	<p>Barbara Martineau, 'Paris/Chicago: Women's Film Festivals 1974,' <i>Women & Film</i> 7 (1975), 10.</p>
<hr/>	
<p>28 September – 14 October</p> <p>2ND WOMEN'S VIDEO FESTIVAL New York City, NY; USA The Kitchen</p>	<p>Pat Sullivan, 'The Second Annual New York Women's Video Festival,' <i>Women & Film</i> 5-6 (1974), 96.</p>
<hr/>	
<p>November</p> <p>1ST INTERNATIONALE FRAUENFILMSEMINAR Berlin, Germany Berlin Arsenale</p>	<p>Barbara Martineau, 'Paris/Chicago: Women's Film Festivals 1974,' <i>Women & Film</i> 7 (1975), 10.</p>

1974

6 - 10 February

WOMEN IN THE REEL WORLD
Ann Arbor, MI; USA

Julia Lesage, 'Women's Independent Cinema,' *Women & Film* 5-6 [1974].

3-11 April

MUSIDORA
Paris, France

Connie Greenbaum, 'Musidora: The Organization of the First Women's Film Festival in Paris,' *Women & Film* 7 (1975): 4-9.

Barbara Martineau, 'Paris/Chicago: Women's Film Festivals 1974,' *Women & Film* 7 (1975): 10-27.

3-17 September

FILMS BY WOMEN/CHICAGO
Chicago, IL; USA

Barbara Martineau, 'Paris/Chicago: Women's Film Festivals 1974,' *Women & Film* 7 (1975): 10-27.

30 October - 3 November

WOMANVIEW
Iowa City, IA
The University of Iowa

Barbara Martineau, 'Paris/Chicago: Women's Film Festivals 1974,' *Women & Film* 7 (1975), 10.

1975

2 February

**New York Conference of
Feminists in the Media**
New York

Barbara Martineau, 'Paris/Chicago: Women's Film Festivals 1974,' *Women & Film* 7 (1975): 10-27. The event is mentioned briefly and the 'Womanifesto' written there is reprinted.

1976

13 - 26 September

**2ND INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL
OF WOMEN'S FILMS**
New York, NY
Cinema Studio

The second festival organized by Kristina Nordstrom. Alexis Krasilovsky was also an organizer.

Appendix D

Women & Film Films by Women Index

References to articles have been abbreviated to Author and Issue No. When there is more than one article by an author in an issue, I have indicated the article or review title to differentiate. This list includes films co-directed with men.

- 17/05. Anja Breien. 1969. Norway. Smith, W&F 3-4
1984. Joy Batchelor and John Halas. UK. Smith, W&F 3-4
26757. Michele Citron. Lesage, 'Women's Independent Cinema reviews,' W&F 5-6
- 7 Minute Film. Marni McCormack. USA. Walker, 'Women's Independent Cinema reviews,' W&F 5-6
- A Bagful of Fleas*. Věra Chytilová. 1962. Czechoslovakia. Gilbert, W&F 2; Smith, W&F 3-4
- A Close Call*. Miriam Nesbitt. USA Peary, W&F 5-6
- A Female Reporter*. Essanay Studios. 1909. USA. Bataille, W&F 3-4
- A Film About a Woman Who*. Yvonne Rainer. 1974. USA. Wikarska, 'Independent Women's Cinema reviews,' W&F 7
- A Film of Love and Anarchy*. Lina Wertmüller. 1973. Italy. Burgess, W&F 5-6
- À la source, la femme aimée*. Nelly Kaplan. 1965. France. Harris, W&F 2; Smith, W&F 3-4
- A Man and a Woman*. Alice Guy Blaché. 1917. France. Smith, W&F 3-4
- A Man For Man*. Nevena Tosheva. 1966. Bulgaria. Smith, W&F 3-4
- A Matter of Conscience*. Eva Petelska. 1967. Poland. Smith, W&F 3-4
- A New Leaf*. Elaine May. 1971. USA. Smith, W&F 3-4
- A Novel Affair*. Muriel Box. 1957. UK. Smith, W&F 3-4
- A Rape*. Anja Breien. 1971. Norway. Smith, W&F 3-4
- A Sketch*. Nevena Tosheva. 1963. Bulgaria. Smith, W&F 3-4
- A Stranger Knocks*. Annelise Hovmand. 1959. Denmark. Smith, W&F 3-4
- A Stravinsky Portrait*. Richard and Sarah Hudson Leacock. 1967. USA. McGarry, W&F 7
- A Study For Two Hands*. Lenka Weissova. Czechoslovakia. Smith, W&F 3-4
- A to B*. Nell Cox. 1969. USA. Salyer, W&F 2
- A Trip*. Lada Boyadgieva. 1963. Bulgaria. Smith, W&F 3-4
- Abahn, Sabana, David*. Marguerite Duras. 1971. France. Smith, W&F 3-4
- Abel Gance: Hier et demain*. Nelly Kaplan. 1963. France. Harris, W&F 2; Salyer, W&F 2; Smith, W&F 3-4.
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All For Mary. Wendy Toye. 1956. UK. Smith, W&F 3-4

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Angela: Portrait of a Revolutionary. Yolande du Luart. 1971. USA. Salyer, 'A Woman Looks at the SFIFF,' W&F 1

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Anything You Want to Be. Liane Brandon. 1971. USA. Salyer, W&F 2; Emmens, W&F 7

Apple Pie. Cheryl Gaudio. Lesage, 'Women's Independent Cinema reviews,' W&F 5-6

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Beauty In Chains. Elsie Jane Wilson. 1918. USA. Smith, W&F 3-4

Bed and Sofa. Abran Room. 1926. USSR. Sullivan, W&F 1

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Berkeley 12 to 1. Donna Deitch. 1968. USA. Wikarska, 'Independent Women's Cinema reviews,' W&F 7

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Beware My Lovely. Ida Lupino. 1952. USA. Smith, W&F 3-4

Binding Sentiments. Marta Meszros. 1969. Hungary. Gilbert, W&F 2; Smith, W&F 3-4

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Black Pudding. Nancy Edell. 1969. UK. Salyer, W&F 2

Black Wings. Eva Petelska. 1962. Poland. Smith, W&F 3-4

Blue Light. Leni Riefenstahl. 1932. Germany. Martineau, W&F 7

Bobe. Judit Vas. 1965. Hungary. Smith, W&F 3-4

Body Collage. Carolee Schneemann. 1967. Wikarska, 'Independent Women's Cinema reviews,' W&F 7

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Bondage. Ida May Park. 1917. USA. Smith, W&F 3-4

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Both Sides of the Law. Muriel Box. 1954. UK. Smith, W&F 3-4

Boxiganga. Else Gress Wright. 1968. Denmark. Smith, W&F 3-4

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Brother Carl. Susan Sontag. 1972. Sweden. Salyer, 'A Woman Looks at the SFIFF,' W&F 1; Martineau, W&F 5-6

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Butterfly Man. Ida May Park. 1920. USA. Smith, W&F 3-4

By the Arax. Esther Shub. 1947. USSR. Smith, W&F 3-4

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Ca n'arrive qu'aux autres. Nadine Marquand Trintignant. 1971 France. Smith, W&F 3-4

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Calvary of a Child. Alice O'Fredricks. 1950. Denmark. Smith, W&F 3-4

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Cash on Delivery. Muriel Box. 1956. UK. Smith, W&F 3-4

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Christopher Strong. Dorothy Arzner. 1933. USA. Smith, W&F 3-4

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Circadian Rhythms. Judit Vas. 1965. Hungary. Smith, W&F 3-4

Cléo from 5 to 7. Agnès Varda. 1962. France. Gilbert, W&F 2; Smith, W&F 3-4; Levitin, W&F 5-6

Color Rhapsody. Mary Ellen Bute. 1954. USA. Smith, W&F 3-4

Coney Island of the Mind. Sylvianna Goldsmith. Newman, W&F 7

Confidence Girl. Virginia Stone and Andrew Stone. 1951. USA. Smith, W&F 3-4

Confidences. Wanda Jakubowska. 1955. Poland. Smith, W&F 3-4

Conflict. Dorothy Arzner. 1936. USA. Smith, W&F 3-4

Congorilla. Osa and Martin Johnson. 1932. USA. Smith, W&F 3-4

Conjugal Love. Dacia Maraini. 1972. Italy. Smith, W&F 3-

Continuous Woman. Twin Cities Film Collective. USA. 1973. Lesage, 'Women's Independent Cinema reviews,' W&F 5-6

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Craig's Wife. Dorothy Arzner. 1936. USA. Smith, W&F 3-4

Croyances. Marie-Anne Colson-Malleville. France. Smith, W&F 3-4

Cry Terror. Virginia Stone and Andrew Stone. 1957. USA. Smith, W&F 3-4

Cycles. Judith Scott and Elsa Tambellini. 1972. USA. Betancourt, W&F 3-4

Daddy. Nikki De St Phalle. 1973. UK, France. Martineau, W&F 7

Daisies. Věra Chytilová. 1966. Czechoslovakia. Gilbert, W&F 2; Smith, W&F 3-4

Dance, Girl, Dance. Dorothy Arzner. 1940. USA. Smith, W&F 3-4

Danish Brigade in Sweden. Astrid and Bjarn Henning-Jansen. 1945. Denmark. Smith, W&F 3-4

Dans l'ouragan de la vie. Germaine Dulac. 1916. Flitterman, W&F 5-6

Das Grosse Eis. Else Wegener, Paul Kuhenn, Svend Noldan. 1936. Germany. Smith, W&F 3-4

Das Russische Wunder. Annelie and Andrew Thorndike. 1963. Germany. Smith, W&F 3-4

Dear Murderer. Arthur Crabtree. 1947. UK. Smith, W&F 3-4

Deceitful Goshe. Radka Buchvarova. 1963. Bulgaria. Smith, W&F 3-4

Delacroix, peintre de l'Islam. Marie-Anne Colson-Malleville. 1961. France. Smith, W&F 3-4

Déménagement à la cloche de bois. Alice Guy Blaché. 1898. France. Smith, W&F 3-4

Des fusils pour Banta. Sarah Maladoror. 1970. Angola. Harvey, W&F 5-6

Des raies sous les palmiers. Marie-Anne Colson-Malleville. France. Smith, W&F 3-4

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Destroy She Said. Marguerite Duras. 1969. France. Nordstrom, W&F 3-4; Smith, W&F 3-4; Martineau, W&F 7

Devotion For Sandrews. Ingrid Thulin. 1964. Sweden. Smith, W&F 3-4

Diane. Mary Feldhaus Weber. USA. 1976. Lesage, 'Women's Independent Cinema reviews,' W&F 5-6

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Disque 927. Germaine Dulac. 1928. France. Smith, W&F 3-4; Flitterman, W&F 5-6

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Djamilia. Irina Poplavskaia. 1969. USSR. Martineau, W&F 7

Do You Know Sunday-Monday? Livia Gyarmathy. 1969. Hungary. Smith, W&F 3-4

Doctor Glas. Mai Zetterling. 1967. Sweden. Smith, W&F 3-4

Dog's Heaven. Hermina Tyrlova. 1967. Czechoslovakia. Smith, W&F 3-4

Don Gabriel. Eva Petelska. 1966. Poland. Smith, W&F 3-4

Don't Look Back. D.A. Pennebaker. 1967. USA. Lesage, W&F 5-6

Don't Cry Pretty Girls. Marta Meszros. 1970. Hungary. Gilbert, W&F 2

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Dream Life/La vie rêvée. Mireille Dansereau. 1972. Canada. Martineau, W&F 7

Drips and Strips. Marie Menken. 1963. USA. Smith, W&F 3-4

Du Bist Min, Ein Deutsches Tagesbuch. Annelie & Andrew Thorndike. 1969. Germany. Smith, W&F 3-4

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Du Und Mancher Kamerad. Annelie & Andrew Thorndike. 1956. Germany. Smith, W&F 3-4

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Dustbin Parade. Joy Batchelor and John Halas. 1942. UK. Smith, W&F 3-4

Dwightania. Marie Menken. 1957. USA. Smith, W&F 3-4

Eileen. Karen Arthur. 1971. Houston, W&F 7

El Ghorba. Annie Tresgot. 1971. France. Smith, W&F 3-4

El Maestro. Chick Strand. 1975. Strand, W&F 7

El Oued la ville aux Milles coupoles. Marie-Anne Colson-Malleville. France. Smith, W&F 3-4

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Eleven Years Old. Winifred Junge. 1966. Germany. Smith, W&F 3-4

Elizabeth Und Der Narr. Thea von Harbou. 1934. Germany. Smith, W&F 3-4

Emergency: The Living Theatre. Gwen Brown. 1968. USA. Salyer, W&F 2

Empty Eyes. Eva Petelska. 1969. Poland. Smith, W&F 3-4

En cabinet particulier. Alice Guy Blaché. 1902. France. Smith, W&F 3-4

Encounter in the Shadows. Wanda Jakubowska. 1960. Poland. Smith, W&F 3-4

Encounter. Judit Elek. 1963. Hungary. Gilbert, W&F 2

Enemies of Children. Lillian Ducey. 1923. USA. Smith, W&F 3-4

Enthusiasm. Dziga Vertov. 1931. Soviet Union. Noel Burch interview, W&F 5-6

Escale a Oran. Marie-Anne Colson-Malleville. France. Smith, W&F 3-4

Escape. Mary Ellen Bute. 1940. USA. Smith, W&F 3-4

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Everything Ready, Nothing Works/All Screwed Up. Lina Wertmüller. 1974. Italy. Wikaskra, 'Filmex,' W&F 7

Eye Music in Red Major. Marie Menken. 1961. USA. Smith, W&F 3-4

Fable. Radka Buchvarova. 1964. Bulgaria. Smith, W&F 3-4

Face at the Window. Alice Guy Blaché. 1912. France. Smith, W&F 3-4

Fall of the Romanovs. Esther Shub. 1927. USSR. Smith, W&F 3-4

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Far From Vietnam. Agnès Varda et al. 1967. France. Levitin, W&F 5-6

Fashions for Women. Dorothy Arzner. 1927. USA. Smith, W&F 3-4; Peary, W&F 5-6

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Ferda The Aunt. Hermina Tyrlova. 1944. Czechoslovakia. Smith, W&F 3-4

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First Comes Courage. Dorothy Arzner. 1943. USA. Smith, W&F 3-4

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First Line of Defense. Joy Batchelor and John Halas. 1949. UK. Smith, W&F 3-4

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Friedman. 1971. USA/West Germany. Iverson, W&F 3-4

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Fruits Amers. Jacqueline Audry. 1967. France. Smith, W&F 3-4

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Generation of Conquerors. Vera Stroyeva. 1936. USSR. Smith, W&F 3-4

George le mysterieux. Germaine Dulac. 1917. France. Smith, W&F 3-4, Flitterman, W&F 5-6

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Gertrude Stein: When You See This Remember Me. Perry Miller Adato. 1970. USA. Salyer, W&F 2

Get Your Man. Dorothy Arzner. 1927. USA. Smith, W&F 3-4

Gigi. Jacqueline Audry. 1949. France. Smith, W&F 3-4; Greenbaum W&F 7

Girl Students: Impressions of A Technical College. Winifred Junge. 1965. Germany. Smith, W&F 3-4

Glimpse of The Garden. Marie Menken. 1957. USA. Smith, W&F 3-4

Go Go Go. Marie Menken. 1963. USA. Smith, W&F 3-4

Goemons. Yannick Bellon. 1948. France. Smith, W&F 3-4

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Guacamole. Chick Strand. 1976. Strand, W&F 7

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Hanneles Himmelfahrt. Thea von Harbou. 1934. Germany. Smith, W&F 3-4

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Hari-Kari. Iribe Marie-Louise. 1928. France. Smith, W&F 3-4

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Headhunters of the South Seas. Osa and Martin Johnson. 1923. USA. Smith, W&F 3-4

Heat. Larissa Shepitka. 1963. USSR. Smith, W&F 3-4

Her Bitter Cup. Cleo Madison. 1916. USA. Smith, W&F 3-4

Here and There. Gitta Nickel. 1969. East Germany. Seider, W&F 5-6

Hers. Karen Arthur. 1971. Houston, W&F 7

Herstory. San Francisco Newsreel. 1970. McGarry, W&F 7

Holding. Constance Beeson. 1971. USA. Iverson, W&F 3-4

Holidays. Winifred Junge. 1963. Germany. Smith, W&F 3-4

Home Born Baby. Sally Pugh. 1973. USA. Pugh, W&F 3-4

Home Movie. Jan Oxenberg. 1973. Lesage, 'Women's Independent Cinema reviews,' W&F 5-6

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Honor Among Lovers. Dorothy Arzner. 1931. USA. Smith, W&F 3-4

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Houis Clos. Jacqueline Audry. 1954. France. Smith, W&F 3-4

House On Wheels. Radka Buchvarova. 1966. Bulgaria. Smith, W&F 3-4

How Long Does Man Matter. Judit Elek. 1967. Hungary. Gilbert, W&F 2

How Tales Come To Life. Lada Boyadgieva. 1956. Bulgaria. Smith, W&F 3-4

Hunger. Phyllis B. Pigorsch. 1971. USA. Salyer, W&F 2

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Hypocrites. Lois Weber. 1915. USA. Smith, W&F 3-4

I Am Somebody. Madeline Anderson. 1970. USA. Betancourt, W&F 2; Lesage, W&F 5-6

I Vitelloni. Lina Wertmuller. 1953. Italy. Smith, W&F 3-4

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It Happened Yesterday. Wanda Jakubowska. 1960. Poland. Smith, W&F 3-4

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Jaune le Soleil. Marguerite Duras. 1971. France. Nordstrom, W&F 3-4

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Jemima, Daughter of the Mountains. Anielle Weinberger and Ginette Gablot. 1972. France. Glaessner, 'Women's Independent Cinema reviews,' W&F 5-6

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June. Martha Haslanger. Lesage, 'Women's Independent Cinema reviews,' W&F 5-6

Jungle d'un Grande Ville. Marguerite and Leo Marten Viel. 1930. France. Smith, W&F 3-4

Just Around The Corner. Frances Marion. 1921. USA. Smith, W&F 3-4; Peary, W&F 5-6

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Kashima Paradise. Benie Deswarte and Yann le Masson. 1973. France. Martineau, W&F 7

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King of Destiny. Cleo Madison. 1915. USA. Smith, W&F 3-4

King of the Turf. Elizabeth Pickett-Chevalier. 1923. USA. Peary, W&F 5-6

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Koenigsmark. Solange Bussi. 1952. France. Smith, W&F 3-4

Komsomol. Esther Shub. 1932. USSR. Smith, W&F 3-4

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L'industrie de Verre. Lucette Gaudard. 1942. France. Smith, W&F 3-4

L'ingenue Libertine. Jacqueline Audry. 1950. France. Smith, W&F 3-4

L'invitation au voyage. Germaine Dulac. 1927. France. Flitterman, W&F 5-6

L'Opéra Mouffe. Agnès Varda. 1958. France. Smith, W&F 3-4; Levitin, W&F 5-6

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La belle dame sans merci. Germaine Dulac. 1921. France. Flitterman, W&F 5-6

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